



## Hope - Making it through the tough times

James Lee, a young father, phoned a large city newspaper from a telephone booth to give a reporter a heart breaking story. The reporter frantically tried to have the call traced but was too late. By the time the police arrived, Lee had ended his life with a bullet in his head.

In Lee's coat pocket the police found a tattered crayon drawing signed in childish print by his daughter, Shirley, who had been burned to death in a fire five months earlier. On the drawing Lee had written, "Please leave in my coat pocket. I want to have it buried with me." At the time of Shirley's funeral Lee was so grief-stricken he had asked strangers to attend the funeral. Shirley's mother had passed away when Shirley was only two years old. There were no other family members to attend.

Immediately before his death, Lee told the reporter that he had nothing left to live for and felt alone in the world. He gave his few possessions to the church that Shirley attended and said, "Maybe in ten or twenty years someone will see her memorial plaque and wonder who Shirley Ellen Lee was and say, 'Someone must have loved her very much.'

James Lee lost all hope and ended his life in a lonely telephone booth. Tragically, his story is not an isolated case. Our world is filled with people who feel overcome with a sense of hopelessness. Hope is a powerful word, yet I wonder how many of us could define it? Defined in Webster's Dictionary hope means 'to want or wish for with a feeling of confident expectation.' We've all mastered the first part, to want or wish for but what of confident expectation? James Lee didn't have the confidence things would get better. His unfulfilled wants and wishes were so extensive hope was overshadowed. Sadly, this is one of life's greatest tragedies.

Hope, like love, is an indispensable quality of life. Many people, when they lose it, curse the day they were born. Modern society, with its slick promotion, promises hope in some very appealing packages, but when the chips are down we discover we have been sold a bill of goods.

We've discovered how to put man on the moon, fly spacecraft to Saturn and beyond, mastered instant global communications via radio and TV satellites, Internet, split the atom, built computers that can solve problems in seconds, and made remarkable advances in medical science. But, we still haven't learned the art of getting along with our fellow man or how to meet the needs of the human heart.

Maybe that's because we try to satisfy the needs of the human heart with material things, yet the needs of the human heart are intangible.

Our heart seeks love the ingredients of which are joy, peace, compassion and, yes, hope. Yet we are a people without hope. Searching for a glimmer of hope to enlighten us, we seek instant results rather than patiently wait for our world to unfold. And when we don't obtain instant gratification, we substitute with wealth, objects, unhealthy relationships, drinking, drugs, you name it. But the more we fill ourselves with garbage, the less hope we have. A quick fix doesn't actually fix anything. One of the most widely quoted verses in scripture, Romans 8:24-25, poignantly sums this up for us: "For if you have already something, you don't need to hope for it. But if we look forward to something we don't have yet, we must wait patiently and confidently."



# Priority

Developing Leaders from the Inside Out

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Wait for the things you can not see is not an easy concept. Maybe you want to fall in love but have found no one, maybe you or someone close to you is sick and you wish for healing, maybe you lost your job and want financial stability. The point is, we want and wish for important things. Without the confidence to persevere, how do we keep on? Hope injects strength and courage to help us fight through the turbulent times or the disheartening moments, days, weeks, months, even years.

Deep within we must believe things will improve. We must believe that our lives and the lives of others will be fully enriched and enlarged. If we look back to our most difficult moments it means we survived and the moment we are living in is better than what the difficult times experienced in our past. Yes, we've experienced so much disappointment. Let's experience hope. And let no one interfere with it.