

Hope is a precious commodity. Water? Yes, it's important. We'd only survive a few days without it. But hope? Now there's something we need every day, continually, for survival. We might not realize how essential hope is because we carry a well of it around with us. But we notice as soon as hope dwindles. Indeed, the moment hope dissipates, we cry like babies in desperate self-pity. And meet someone truly without hope, and you'll see how deadly its utter absence is. Give us hope and a future, and we're energized bunnies. Make us face hopelessness, even for a deluded moment, and we're ready to pack it in. Otherwise-solid citizens arrested on drunk-driving charges are substantial suicide risks at their first moment alone in jail. Remove hope, even for a confused moment, and life doesn't even look worth living.



The Bible recognizes how deeply spiritual and how essential hope is. One of the most popular Bible verses recounts God promising, as part of his plan for us, to give us *hope and a future*. Paul's love chapter ends leaves us with only three things remaining: *faith, hope, and love*. The Bible also tells us where to place our hope: in Christ's return judging and restoring all things. We hope to *share in his glory*, the *riches of his glorious inheritance*. The Bible reminds us to *hold unswervingly to this hope we profess*, for *God promises it*, and *God is faithful*. And Isaiah tells us the result of our holding to that hope, that we will *soar on wings like eagles*, running without weariness, and walking without faint.

So, we don't place our hope in circumstances and conditions. Placing hope in the conditions around us, whether at home, on the job, or at school, in roles or relationships, even in personal health and welfare, is a sure-fire way to disappointment. At some point for everyone, life becomes tremendously hard. For some of us, life is tremendously hard at many points, for a few of us all the time. If in those times you want to avoid the added stress of kicking and screaming like a self-pitying baby, and instead want to respect those around you and honor God, then hold to the hope God promises. Hardship today ends up in glory tomorrow. When Christ breathed his last saying *it is finished*, he knew of the glory to come. Your hardship will end. Endure it as you can, but endure it with your eyes on its glorious finish.