



Holding onto HOPE

Week 12 | August 19, 2024

The biblical definition of HOPE is “a *confident expectation* that God will do what He has **promised**”.

However, God’s design for **hope** is not what most Christians are experiencing today. His hope was created to survive *every circumstance*, last *beyond the ages*, and overcome *any doubt*. Instead, most believers live lives of **limited**, **suppressed**, or **stifled** hope that is easily broken and quickly forgotten. Two main reasons lie behind this sad reality: 1.) Our Enemy HATES our hope. He always has and always will *attack it* with a vengeance through **discouragement**, **deceit**, and **distraction**. 2.) Our hope has been *misplaced*. It’s not in the God of the Bible who is **ALL-Powerful**, **ALL-Knowing**, and **DESPERATELY** in love with us. (1 Peter 1:3)

Hope is essential to the Christian’s life. It is *the natural by-product* of the **faith** and **love** that we hold so dear and it is what God has given us to help overcome this evil world we live in. Pray against the **attacks of the Enemy** and the **misdirection of hope**, also asking God to give His people:

1. Hope that **ENDURES**: (1 Corinthians 13:13)

- a. **NOTE**: The hope of the Lord can and will survive **all circumstances**. It is not simply a *feeling*, otherwise it would ebb and flow as situations change. Hope is a function of faith (believing God) and can therefore operate **outside of the influence** of what goes on around us. Too often though, our “hope” is based on what we can see, *hear*, and *understand* instead of being based on its source, the **author** and **perfector** of our faith. Pray that God would bless us with hope that is *centered on Him* and thereby **unshakeable** when the storms of life come.” (Hebrews 6:19)
 - i. **For Ex.** “Father God, thank You for **the gift of hope** that You have given us through Jesus. I ask that You would strengthen it *within our hearts*, fixing our eyes on You in every circumstance so that no scheme of the evil one is able to **rob us** of this gift. I thank You Lord for being *unchangeable*, *unmovable*, and *unending*. Teach us to know You more deeply so that our hope might be as well.”
 1. **REMEMBER**: **Joy**, **patience**, and **prayer** are *fruits* of and *fuel* for our hope. (Romans 12:12)

2. Hope that **ENCOURAGES**: (Jeremiah 29:11)

- a. **NOTE**: If **hope** is the by-product of God’s *faith* then **discouragement** is the natural result of the devil’s *doubt*. As God strengthens our faith in WHO He is we must also be reminded of WHAT He has done. He has never failed His people in the past and He will never fail us in the future. He has always done **what was best** for His children and He will always act out of the same *heart of love* for us moving forward. Focusing on God’s goodness **in the past** and His promised goodness **in the future** will give us courage to *face the present* even when it seems far from our definition of “good”. (Psalm 31:24)

- i. **For Ex.** “Lord God, I thank You and praise You for all You have done in the **past** and all You have promised for the **future**. You speak *nothing but the truth*, so I know that what You say will come to pass. But God, we are **weak**. Our souls are often crushed with *despair* and *desperation*. We are so surrounded by darkness that sometimes we **can’t see the light**. We know it’s there though, we know that YOU are there. Help us to *see, remember, and cling to Your word* that we might find strength and encouragement in these dark days. We can’t do it without You.”
 1. **REMEMBER:** **Praise** and **thanksgiving** as well as *time spent in scripture* are tried and true methods to strengthen hope. (**Psalms 42:11**; **Rom. 15:4**)

3. Hope that **INSPIRES**: (**Matthew 12:21**; **Psalms 71:14**)

- a. **NOTE:** Satan knows that if he can steal your **hope** then he will simultaneously rob you of your **passion**. After all, who would pursue a goal if they thought there was *little chance* it would be successful? Thus, the devil sows lies in our heart to lead us into a state of **useless depression**. As in every situation though, God’s gifts are more powerful than anything the Enemy has at his disposal. Holding onto hope *allows, enables, and motivates* us to live out **boldly passionate** lives completely and totally dedicated to serving our Lord and Savior! (**2 Corinthians 3:12**)
 - i. **For Ex.** “Holy Spirit, we need You more than *the air in our lungs*. Please lead us into **all truth** that we might be rescued from Satan’s deception. Fill us with hope that daily *rekindles the flames* of our passion so that we might live **bold** and **courageous** lives in honor of our Creator! Thank You for the *grace gifts* You give us on a daily basis, please use them to rescue us from the trap of **useless complacency** that has been set to ensnare us.”
 1. **REMEMBER:** The Holy Spirit is **the source** of our hope, to be *filled with Him* is to be filled with HOPE! (**Romans 15:13**)

Questions for Reflection:

- Have you allowed Satan to steal, dilute, or limit your hope?
 - **Rebuke** him and **reject** his lies. He that is in you is *greater than* he that is in the world.
- Have you placed your hope in an unbiblical version of God?
 - Remember that He is GOOD, POWERFUL, and IN CONTROL. He loves you and wants **nothing but the best** for you.
- Have you placed your hope in something/someone else besides God?
 - Whether it be *yourself, a spouse, or any other relationship* or thing the solution is the same: **Renounce** the idol through **confession** before it leads to your destruction and return to God in **repentance**. He alone is *worthy of your hope*.