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## Is There Any Hope Left?

**Romans 15:13:** (NASB) *Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*

Hope is perhaps the most vital element of life. With it one can do amazing things, overcome seemingly impossible odds, achieve remarkable results and find true and deep meaning in life. Without hope, we doubt, falter and crumble. Without hope we often leave the greatest achievements unachieved, the greatest discoveries undiscovered and the greatest opportunities unfulfilled. So, what is hope and how can we have it transform our lives?

Hope literally means, "desire accompanied by expectation of or belief in fulfillment."  
**Desire + Expectation**



Biblical definition of hope:

**Hope:** Strong's #1680 *elpis* (el-pece'); to anticipate, usually with pleasure; expectation or confidence KJV-- faith, hope

**Hebrews 11:1:** (NKJV) *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*

A hope is NOT a wish!

**Merriam Webster** wish

(transitive verb) to have a desire for (as something unattainable) <wished he could live his life over>

Where does hope come from?

- The source of our hope will determine the power of that hope.
- The power of our hope will feed the strength of our action.
- The strength of our action will increase the quality of our life.
- The quality of our life will influence the quality of those lives around us.

**Romans 5:1-5**

**Verses 1-2:** These are some of the things that drive us:

- Justification (meaning "made right") by faith brings us peace with God through Jesus. In such a world as this, peace with God is a very good thing!
- Peace with God brings access to God's grace (unmerited favor). We can rely on something bigger than ourselves.
- God's grace brings us the *opportunity to exult the hope of God's glory*. There is something big we can look forward to, beyond just going to heaven.

**Verses 3-5:** How do we turn the *opportunity* into a reality?

- Because of the spiritual promises, we know tribulation brings perseverance.
- Perseverance brings proven character.
- Proven character brings HOPE.
- This hope lives up to expectation because it is driven by God's love and His Spirit! It comes through our transformation to become more Christ-like.

Is my hope based in higher godly power or is it just a wish in disguise?

**What is transformative hope built upon?**

One of the absolute keys to a hope that can truly transform people is for that hope to be founded in a unifying belief. Early Christianity had a real problem with this as Jewish Christians rebelled against the pagan backgrounds of the Gentile Christians, and the Gentile Christians rebelled against the restrictive laws of the Jewish Christians. Christianity would have been hopeless if this issue had not been worked out.



**Romans 15:1-13** gives us a clear view of what makes hope work. These particular verses are focused on the problem of disunity and lay out several practical and necessary building blocks for Christianity to build a solid structure of hope. For hope to be transformative it must be built on several things: Courage, faith, focus and vision.

Unfortunately this audio clip begins to uncover where our present society has gone in relation to any hope outside of one's own mind. We are so tied up in the tragedy of selfish thinking - what is good for me, what I deserve.

**TRANSFORMATIVE HOPE NEEDS COURAGE:** **Romans 15:1-3:** Just because you might have strength does not mean you are positioned to use it. Our hope focuses our strength for use in its service and this often takes courage.

**Our hope gives us the courage to walk away from what may have been a previously successful life:** **Philippians 3:7-8:** (NASB) *<sup>7</sup>But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. <sup>8</sup>More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ...*

The Apostle Paul was a *Pharisee of Pharisees*, a leader of the Sanhedrin. He was very successful but found a hope that made him walk away from it. What makes someone walk away from his or her previous life? A greater hope!

All hope is not transformative. We are talking about a higher, godly hope.

**Philippians 3:9-10:** This shows the transition between what the Apostle Paul was and what he changed into. He was successful in stature, comfort and control. His previous success was to apply his personal righteousness derived from his interpretation of the Law. His hope was based on the achievement of "doing" the Law.

*...the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith* - as opposed to being righteous in himself by fulfilling the Law. Paul's higher hope came through Christ, even though he lost his stature and comfort.

**This hope inspires the courage and fortitude necessary to attain it:** **Philippians 3:11-14**

### What is the difference between faith and hope?

We suggest faith and hope are two inseparable parts of the same equation.

**Faith** = a firm conviction towards someone or something that is deemed credible. We have faith in God because we see strong and persuasive evidence of His being, character, creation and plan.

**Hope** = desire accompanied by expectation of or belief in fulfillment. Hope is what faith sees and strives towards.

God gives us our hope - His being, character and creation show us His plan and that plan exudes hope! We give God our faith - our conviction of thought and action - because of the hope He gave us!

Please see the program called "How Much of Our Life is Pagan?" (October 25, 2015). Paganism takes away the "bigness" of God and puts the emphasis on a god in you. Such a perspective produces ethical weakness because ethics are based on what you believe and not on something bigger and stable.

Ethical weakness inevitably produces hopelessness. When there is nothing bigger than you, it is hard to have hope outside of just "you."

**TRANSFORMATIVE HOPE NEEDS FAITH:** **Romans 15:4:** The hope that God gives is given with extraordinary proof so our faith can be SURE! The Scriptures give us evidence upon which to build our faith. Faith in a clear future hope causes radical action! **1 John 3:1-3**

**Our hope is strong when it guides us in faith to the unseen:** **Hebrews 11:8-10:** Abraham left his home in faith because he had a greater hope. Faith was the action to pursue the greater hope.

**Our hope is strong when it can undoubtedly assure us that we are cared for along our path:** **Romans 8:26-28:** Hope does not go away during present difficulty. We need to find how to



focus on it but it is not gone. In order for us to have true godly hope, it takes present everyday effort to remind ourselves what that hope is. God will take care of you each step of the way, but that does not mean it will be easy. Christian hope is not a wish; it requires transformative action on our parts. We want to keep our hope energized and active by reading the precious promises God provided for us in the Bible.

Our Christian hope cannot be achieved unless our lives are transformed. Our lives cannot be transformed unless our faith is active. Our faith cannot be active unless it is based in Scripture. How much more powerful is hope based on scriptural truths if we make that our sole source of hope?

**TRANSFORMATIVE HOPE REQUIRES FOCUS:** Romans 15:5-7: (NASB) <sup>5</sup>Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup>so that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>7</sup>Therefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God.

The necessity for a unified approach cannot be overstated. Acceptance of one another does not mean a compromising of one's conscience; it means a realizing of one's smallness!

Here are three quick steps to aid in focusing our hope: Recognize, narrow your sight and rise above.

Our hope is strong when it is truly recognized - and therein lies meaning!

**Recognize the goodness of God and His plan for us:** Ephesians 1:18-19

**Our hope is strong when it narrows and focuses our objective:** Philippians 3:10-14: We all make mistakes. Dwelling on those mistakes could bring us down and paralyze us from moving forward. We have to learn the lessons, believe in the forgiveness of the blood of Jesus and move forward. This should give us strength to go on without focusing on the past.

**Our hope is strong when we are lifted above the concerns of daily life:** Matthew 6:31-33

**What if we cannot see the vision that clearly? Does that diminish our hope?**

1 Corinthians 13:12-13: We cannot see all of the details clearly now, but we are not *meant* to. Now we are meant to live through faith in God and strive towards the hope of God. This can all be accomplished if we, as a body, strive to adopt in our lives the love that IS God!

We are not going to be able to change what the media reports, but we have the power to turn it off. They have a fictitious idea of what they think "a god" is. It certainly is not God Almighty, which is why we have to strengthen our own personal hope found in Scripture.

The world IS falling apart, but the Scriptures' prophecies explained long ago what would be happening now and in the future.

A clearly unified approach based on a clearly unified hope cannot be obtained without a clear vision that any and all "at odds" parties can all see! If you are at odds but see the same big picture, you can be drawn closer together.

**TRANSFORMATIVE HOPE REQUIRES VISION:** Romans 15:8-12: *Christ has become a servant to the circumcision* - The Jewish Christian should have been able to clearly see God's fulfilled promises in Christ and in following Christ. The Apostle Paul was encouraging them to build upon what they already knew from the Old Testament Scriptures.

The Apostle saw it necessary to quote many Old Testament prophecies that revealed the role of the Gentiles in the call of Christ. Why? He was paving the way for all to see that all who are called - though they come from vastly opposite backgrounds - are called forward by the same God, through the same Scriptures and to the same calling to follow Jesus. This approach focuses us all on the same hope!

This takes away the shackles that would prevent a unified stance. This approach focuses us all on the same hope, which is why scriptural hope is so important. It was difficult to attain even when the Apostles were around. Our world has become faithless. If we do not have a scriptural hope, we will not be able to cope with a world that is this evil.

**Our hope is strong when it provokes great self-discipline:** 1 Corinthians 9:24-27



Always be sure to "see" what you are running towards! Hebrews 12:2-3

**Great! Our hope lifts us as Christians, but what about everyone else?  
Are they left hopeless?**

**A unifying hope allies us with others of the same hope, even if we are from a different background:** Romans 15:13: God IS love and He IS the God of hope - put your faith to work!

**Our hope is the last best hope for the world:** Habakkuk 2:1-3: Why hasn't God destroyed all evil? Wait for it...it will come. It makes sense that the greatest hope the world has ever seen seems to take forever to develop!

**It also makes sense that the greatest hope the world has ever seen comes in stages:**  
1 Timothy 4:10

**These stages will aid the world in making the paradigm shift to be able to accept this hope:**  
1 Peter 2:9-12: As true and unified Christians, our hope should be so strong in our lives that we see the trials and persecutions that come our way as verifying proof of sonship - verifying proof of our hope, for our hope tells us the world will not see hope - not yet - not until it is time for them to see. We have the privilege of seeing now the hope for not only us but the whole world.

**Biblical prophecy is hope. It gives us a glimpse of the future through the eyes of God:**  
Micah 4:3-5: Here one of the great hopes of mankind is actually addressed and fulfilled - no more war and life without fear and life with enough!

*Every man under his vine* - remember when Jesus likened himself to the vine and said we are his branches? When man sits under his vine, he will be in effect sitting under the true church, called *the royal priesthood*.

*Under his fig tree* - the fig tree in Scripture represents Israel. Here they sit under the favor re-established with Israel, the earthly ruling law in the kingdom.

Resurrected man in the kingdom will "sit under" both a perfect heavenly rule and a perfect earthly rule. There is a happy ending to God's plan!

We have the opportunity in our Christian lives to look at God, the Scriptures and the sacrifice of Jesus and see hope beyond the grave, darkness and evil. If our hope is focused exactly on these things, our hope is eternal.

Look at the prophecies, history and how God planned for sin to play a limited role in the development of mankind. Jesus prayed, *Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven*. That is hope and not a wish.

Find the true hope of the Scriptures of God through Christ and the redemption of all mankind!

***So, is there any hope left?  
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...  
Think about it...!***