

How Do We Keep Hope Alive?

Romans 8:25: (NASB) *But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.*



Hope is a critical part of the human experience. Without it our lives would be overrun with despair, doubt and difficulty. Hope is intertwined in every part of any experience that contains even the smallest measure of doubt. Without it, we would end up meeting the uncertainties of each day with our own internal and unanswerable uncertainties. The results would be disastrous! The fact is, hope has many different interpretations. If we place our hopes in seriously questionable ideas, circumstances or people, we will undoubtedly end up with high levels of disappointment. So, how do we keep true hope alive?

For Christians, it all begins with striving to understand the true meaning of biblical. Once we grasp this, we begin to see that hope in its most complete form is absolutely transformational.

Hope

noun:

/hōp/

desire accompanied by expectation of or belief in fulfillment

The biblical definition of “hope” is:

Hope: Strongs Exhaustive Concordance #1680 *elpis*; (to anticipate, usually with pleasure); expectation (abstractly or concretely) or confidence

Hebrews 11:1: (NASB) *Now faith is the assurance of things hoped <1680> for, the conviction of things not seen.*



We will focus on the word “expectation” in the biblical definition. If hope is an expectation of something, 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”

Genuine hope has a basis in reality, whereas a wish has its basis in imaginary circumstances or unrealistic perspectives regarding actual events.

There is a fundamental difference between having true hope versus having a wish. Too often our hopes are really wishes. We mix the things we would like to see with those things we have firm expectations of and water down the potency of a true hope.

WE WILL SUGGEST FOUR KEY TRUTHS ABOUT HOPE:



1. Genuine hope is based on truth:

John 8:31-32: (NASB) ³¹So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed him, *If you continue in my word, then you are truly disciples of mine; ³²and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.*

You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free - being in Christ is the place to find truth, and truth is the BEST thing to pin our hopes upon!

What NOT to pin our hopes upon:

Philippians 3:3: (NASB) *For we are the true circumcision, who worship in the spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no **confidence** <3982> (reliance) in the flesh.*

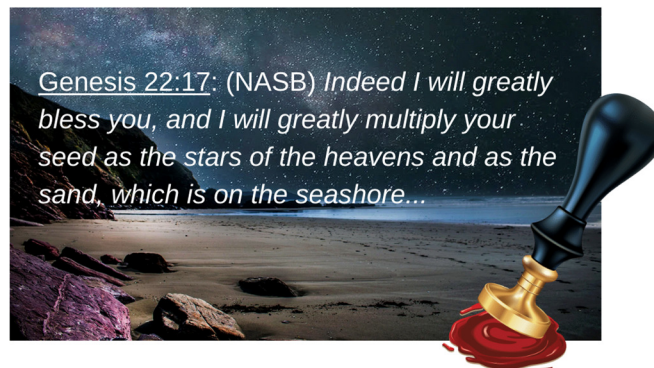
It is far too easy for our emotions to cloud and crowd truth and principles. This is why the apostle says we *put no confidence in the flesh*. Our Christian hopes should not be based upon our unreliable flesh to create the expectation a true hope should be based upon.

We believe these next scriptures are the most hopeful in the Bible. They have immense power.

Our highest and most solid hope is in God:

Hebrews 6:13-19: (NASB) ¹³For when God made the promise to Abraham, since He could swear by no one greater, *He swore by Himself*, ¹⁴saying, *I will surely bless you and I will surely multiply you.* ¹⁵And so, *having patiently waited, he obtained the promise.*

God's promise to Abraham:



¹⁶For men swear by one greater than themselves, and with them an oath given as confirmation is an end of every dispute. ¹⁷In the same way God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness (fixed, unalterable) of His purpose, interposed with an oath (a sacred restraint) ...

Men swear by one greater than themselves to show how serious they are. There is nothing greater than God! Yet He adds to His promise this oath, this "sacred restraint," to make sure the heirs of the promise understand His purpose is unalterable. There is nothing stronger than God making a promise. These scriptures do not just stop with God making a promise, they build on it. He swears by Himself and makes it unalterable, then adds an oath on the top of it. We can see the seriousness of what God is saying and doing here.

¹⁸so that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have taken refuge would have strong encouragement to take hold of the hope set before us. ¹⁹This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast (secure and stable) ...



Because God swore a promise and then added an oath to make it unalterable, it makes this hope *an anchor for our soul*. It holds us steady, anchors us with the security of God's word by *two unchangeable things*:



1. God's promise to Abraham was as unalterable as events which had already occurred (as unalterable as history)
2. His oath, which is the highest seal of surety in all creation

The apostle tells us that this hope of *all the families of the earth* being blessed is the anchor for our very lives. This is a hope we can hold onto for all eternity.

These could be THE most hopeful scriptures in the entire Bible.

The firmness of God's word and ways brings us to many clear expectations:

Titus 1:1-2: (NASB) ¹Paul, a bond-servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of those chosen of God and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness, ²in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago.

This *hope of eternal life* was given by God *long ages ago* - how long ago was that?

God's chosen disciples of Christ have this hope - this expectation of eternal life.

While this only came to light through Jesus, it was a firm element of God's plan long before Jesus came to earth:

Ephesians 1:4: (NASB) *Just as He chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love...*

God had planned for the followers of Christ to be part of this heavenly call (not by name, necessarily, but by position) *long before the foundation of the world*. Remember in Revelation 13:8 where it talks about the lamb (Jesus) being *slain from (before) the foundation of the world?* God had this all planned out before He did anything. If we want to have hope, we should consider how the Eternal Creator had this all put together before He began this creation. We can absolutely expect that His plan will come to fruition because He has been in control all along.

Based on this hope or expectation of the followers of Jesus, God's plan is designed for us to find and hold onto *a hope or expectation* for all humanity, even though things have always seemed futile:

Romans 8:22-25: (NASB) ²²For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. ²³And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body. ²⁴For in *hope <1680>* we have been saved, but *hope <1680>* that is seen is not *hope <1680>*; for who *hopes <1680>* for what he already sees? ²⁵But if we *hope <1679>* for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.

Hope: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #1679 *elpizo*; to expect or confide

We have hope not just for ourselves, but *the whole creation groans and suffers the pains... until now, waiting as we do, for our adoption as sons of God.* The blessing of the whole creation comes after the sons of God (the faithful followers of Jesus) have proven faithful. This is not a wish, but a solid hope. We do not see it happening yet, but God's plan puts it into place and the Hebrews scriptures assure us He swore it would happen by His oath. Therefore, we can be sure this will happen.

Remember, our first key truth: **Genuine hope is based on truth.**

Finding and holding hope's highest promise:



Truth-based hope is the only thing that can solve humanity's problems. We try to hope in many things but keep failing. When we place our hopes on truth from God's word, it creates an entirely different scenario.

Humanity will ultimately have its most profound hopes fulfilled simply because God has planned it to be so.

While it is inspiring to see God fulfilling our deepest hopes, how do we cope with our present world tragedies?

Having considered the big picture aspects of how biblical hope works, we need to consider the everyday applications of hope. Our world is a scary and unsettled place. Knowing that Bible prophecy tells us it will get worse before it gets better, we need to clearly focus our hope.

Our second key truth about hope:

2. Truth-based hope is built upon Reality-Based Expectations.

Here is the environment we live in as the last days are coming:

2 Timothy 3:1-5: (NASB) ¹*But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. ²For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, ³unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, ⁴treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, ⁵holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; avoid such men as these.*

Are we supposed to base our hope on this reality? No, we place our hope on the fact that God put these things in His word long before they happened. We base our hope on the fact that God has all this in control. We do not place our hope on the reality in 2 Timothy above, but on God's perspective on all this.

This further describes the position the true followers of Jesus are in at this time:

Luke 21:36: (NASB) But **keep on the alert <69>** at all times, *praying that you may have strength* to escape all these things that are about to take place, and to *stand before the son of man*.

When looking at such tumultuous times, how do we build hope or expectation when the reality is so bad?

There are three things we need to consider in locating our Reality-Based Expectations:



Keep on the Alert (watch): Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #69: *agrupneo*; ultimately from #5258; to be sleepless, i.e., keep awake

The King James Version translates this word as *watch*.

This Greek word is used four times in the New Testament. Three of those times are directed at individuals - **Luke 21:36** above and these next two verses:

Mark 13:33: (KJV) *Take ye heed, watch <69> and pray: for ye know not when the time is.*

Ephesians 6:18: (KJV) *Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, and watching <69> thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.*

We are told to *watch/keep on the alert* and *pray* in all three of these scriptures. This watching must be done in a prayerful way.

The end of the age challenges we face today are both blatant and subtle. They can be external or internal. They can overwhelm us on the outside or wound us on the inside. In all cases, watchfulness **MUST ALWAYS** be accompanied by prayer. If we want to have hope and keep it alive, we have to be alert - *watch and pray*.

The definition of **<69>**, *keep on the alert*, stated that the root of this word was the negative form of **<5258>**. This seldom-used word has a fascinating core meaning that applies in a profound way to the End Times.

Sleep: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #5258: *hupnos*; from an obsolete primary (perhaps akin to #5259 through the idea of subsilience); sleep, i.e. (figuratively) spiritual torpor

This word is used in these scriptures:
Matthew 1:24, Luke 9:32, John 11:13, Acts 20:9, Romans 13:11



Wikipedia:**Torpor:** noun

/'tɔrpər/

a state of decreased physiological activity in an animal, usually marked by a reduced body temperature and metabolic rate. Torpor enables animals to survive periods of reduced food availability.

This is not hibernation. In a **torpor** state, animals often continue to forage for food. The minimum metabolic rate in this state goes down as far as 35 percent of their basal metabolic rate. Contrarily, hibernation is a state of regulated hypothermia. There is no foraging or eating.

Over a prolonged period, the minimum metabolic

rate goes down as far as six percent of their basal metabolic rate. Torpor is trying to conserve the animal's energy when there is not much food available.



For us to maintain our hope, our **Reality-Based Expectations**, we must AVOID spiritual torpor. We must find our hope in the reality of God's care for us through Jesus, and not the tragedies of this life.

Spiritual torpor comes from **Reality-Based Reactions**. These can easily supersede our **Reality-Based Expectations**!

**Understanding this will help us keep our hope alive:**

Luke 21:34-35: (NASB) ³⁴Be on guard, so that your hearts will not be weighted down with **dissipation <2897>** and **drunkenness <3178>** and the **worries (cares) of life <3308>**, and that day will not come on you suddenly like a trap; ³⁵for it will come upon all those who dwell on the face of all the earth.

There are **three spiritual torpor symptoms** - three symptoms that show we are overrun with the reality of worldly fear and not overjoyed with reality of spiritual care. We will compare our **Reality-Based Reactions** with our **Reality-Based Expectations**. When we react, we are acting like we are in a torpor state; we tell ourselves there is not a lot of goodness around and we better hide. Also, we need to be careful and maybe not put ourselves out to help others. When we are *weighted down* with these three symptoms, we inevitably lose hope and are discouraged.

1

Dissipation: Greek-English Lexicon #2897 *kraipalé*; the giddiness and headache caused by drinking wine to excess

Reality-Based Reaction: Falling into giddiness/a hangover is the result of ungodly behavior. We want to ignore what is happening. The reality is too big for us, so we hold back, we do not want to make waves, and we keep a low profile. **The Reality-Based Reaction** is based on the world around us.

Reality-Based Expectation: Stepping up to a love and focus for the truth. Instead of ignoring what is happening, we want to understand what is happening:

Romans 8:28: (NASB) *And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.*

If we know that *all things work together for good* and are in a tough spot and feel like we need to lay low, we are falling for that spiritual torpor. We need to remember this verse and tell ourselves we DO need to extend ourselves and our faith. We should live our hope and not be afraid.

2 **Drunkenness:** Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #3178 *methē*; drunkenness

Behavior that abandons godliness.

Reality-Based Reaction: We fall into the numbness of abandoning godliness when we hide from the tragedies of our world. We want to get away from what is happening! In today's society, drug abuse does the same thing - even with legal prescription drugs and substances. It is easy to avoid these tragedies because they are too much for us to bear. This is a torpor reaction, a minimization of our capabilities.

Instead, we should have hope - a **Reality-Based Expectation**. This means reaching up and connecting with God to honor Him and to love His plan. We want to connect with the hope in Hebrews 6:13-19 we previously discussed.

We want to gain a clear perspective of what is happening:

Ephesians 6:10-11: (NASB) ¹⁰*Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might.* ¹¹*Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.*

Put on the full armor of God and fight the fight. Do not feel minimized. Go out there and maximize the hope within us. Live it!

3 **Cares of this life:** Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #3308 *merimna*; from #3307 (through the idea of distraction); solicitude

Solicitude *noun:*
 \ sə-'li-sə-'tüd
 the state of being concerned and anxious

Reality-Based Reaction: Getting swallowed up in cares that subvert the most important things and change our perspective. We just want to give in to the pressures we are feeling. Like spiritual sleepiness, we settle for this lower level of effectiveness - not making waves, not offending anyone - rather than standing for the principles we believe in. We want to give into the pressure of what we are feeling; it is easier this way.



Reality-Based Expectation: Reaching out to love and care for the brotherhood. Engaging in the lives of others!

Instead of giving into the pressure, we want to help others stand in hope with us:

Galatians 6:2: (NASB) *Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.*



We would like to share an experience of a 98-year-old sister in our Bible study group. She became depressed with the COVID experience dragging on because everyone was being isolated from one another. She testified several times about how down she felt. What pulled her out of this depression was engaging with others by phone. She was asked by the church comfort committee to call those going through difficult trials and sicknesses and give them encouragement. In working to help others, she was blessed and encouraged and brought out of her depression.

We can be depressed by our circumstances, or we can live in hope **BECAUSE OF** the circumstances. Love truth, love God, love the brotherhood - these are ways to avoid spiritual torpor.

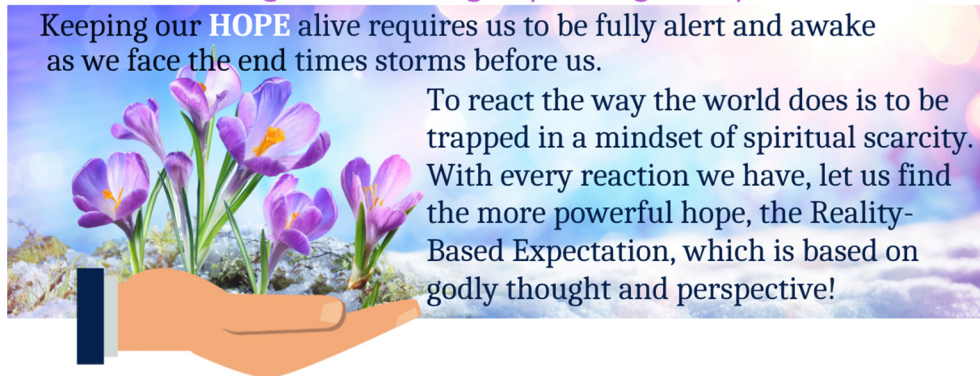
Job 8:11-15: (NASB) *¹¹Can the papyrus grow up without a marsh? Can the rushes grow without water? ¹²While it is still green and not cut down, yet it withers before any other plant. ¹³So are the paths of all who forget God; and the hope of the godless will perish, ¹⁴whose confidence is fragile, and whose trust a spider's web. ¹⁵He trusts in his house, but it does not stand; he holds fast to it, but it does not endure.*

These scriptures are making sure our trust is put on things that are solid. We would not want to lean on a spider's web for support (for so many reasons!). We do not want to base our hope on things that will perish. We go back to **Hebrews 6:13-19**. We hope in the assurance for all of the families of the earth.

Finding and holding hope's highest promise:

Keeping our **HOPE** alive requires us to be fully alert and awake as we face the end times storms before us.

To react the way the world does is to be trapped in a mindset of spiritual scarcity. With every reaction we have, let us find the more powerful hope, the Reality-Based Expectation, which is based on godly thought and perspective!



If we want to have hope, we must have our hope focused on the right things.

Looking at hope through the eyes of **God-driven Expectations** gives us a solid foundation to stand on in an unsure world.

Now that we know that hope's positive expectation is based on truth, what does that do for our focus?

When you think about it, hope is a function of focus. As we have already discussed, we essentially get what we focus on. In a world that is so broken and traumatic, it is difficult to observe these things without focusing on them. Finding a focus that features hope requires putting several elements together.

It is not easy, but as a Christian it is necessary - indeed, it is our responsibility - to LIVE a godly hope and BE that godly hope for those around us.



Our third key truth about hope:

3. Reality-Based Expectations refine the direction in which we focus.

Now that we have established what being fully alert and praying look like regarding **Reality-Based Expectations**, let's talk about the third point of the Luke 21 text.

Standing before Jesus:

Luke 21:36: (NASB) *But keep on the alert at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place, and to stand before the son of man.*

Keeping on the alert means not falling into this spiritual torpor state. We keep alert and pray so that we can *escape all these things* and to *stand before the son of man*. As disciples, our focused direction must point to Jesus. This can be difficult in today's world.

Our hope is based on God's actions. He raised Jesus from the dead, enabling us to look forward in hope:

1 Corinthians 15:16-19: (NASB) ¹⁶*For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised; ¹⁷and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. ¹⁸Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. ¹⁹If we have **hoped <1679>** in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied.*

We can understand an atheist feeling *we are of all men most to be pitied* for believing in the Bible. After all, we have our hope based in the fact that Jesus was raised from the dead as described. However, the Bible is a scientific book, a medically sound book, a prophetically accurate book and a historical book. It gives us a sense not only of morality, spirituality and legality, but it gives us a sense of eternity. When we look at that book, written by many authors but so connected in purpose, we cannot help but feel godly hope.



Yes, from the outside viewpoint, *we are of all men most to be pitied* for holding to such a hope, but for us this is eternal, and eternity is forever!





Here is how Jesus focused our direction; this is where our hope comes from. After healing the man who was blind from birth, Jesus said:

John 9:4-5: (NASB) ⁴We must work the works of Him who sent me as long as it is day; night is coming when no one can work. ⁵While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

I am the light of the world - this is a powerful statement for Jesus to make.

Jesus gave us this lesson right after the Beatitudes:

Matthew 5:13-14,16: (NASB) ¹³You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again... ¹⁴You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁶Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

Jesus refers to himself as *the light of the world* in **John 9:5**. Here in **Matthew 5:14**, he calls his disciples *the light of the world*. *A city set on a hill cannot be hidden*.

When there is difficulty, when the lights go out and it is dark, it is scary. Where there is light, there is hope. Jesus was the hope of the world, and we carry that hope in us. That is what the world can rely on if we let them see it.

We are the preservation of the earth and the light of the world.



Where there is light, there is hope.



Like an oil lamp, the true Christian has the anointing of the holy spirit, as represented in the oil. When lit, the lamp's wick lets God's power and influence shine out to those around us. Our commission in Christ is to share our hope - the good news - that Jesus died for ALL.

For Christian hope to have a clear focus, we need the reminders of the powerful promises of God made to those who truly honor Him.

Here are two of the myriad promises made to us by God:

Psalms 91:1-4: (NASB) ¹He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. ²I will say to the LORD, My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust! ³For it is He who delivers you from the snare of the trapper and from the deadly pestilence. ⁴He will cover you with His pinions, and under His wings you may seek refuge; His faithfulness is a shield and bulwark.

God IS our protection. He WILL cover us in trouble! This is where our hope needs to stay focused.

Let's look at all the ways He protects us, as listed in these verses:

- We dwell in the shelter of the Most High.
- He is our refuge and fortress.
- He will cover us with His pinions (wings.)
- Under His wings we may seek refuge.
- His faithfulness is our shield and bulwark.





We have all of this surrounding us - how much more hope could we want than to have God's presence all around us? He loves us because we are trying to follow Him through following in the footsteps of Jesus.

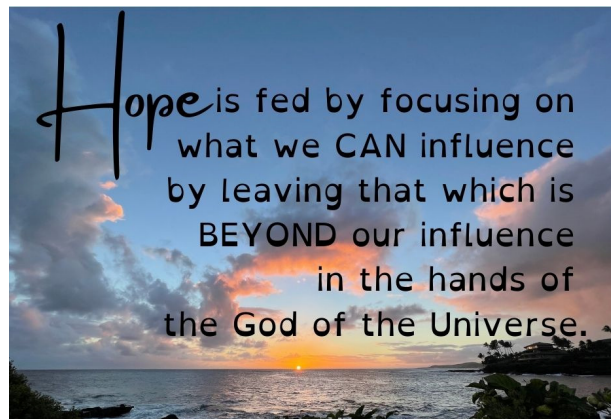
Let's look at another promise. Even when the ending of this present evil world is spoken of in prophecy, we still have hope:

Psalms 46:1-3: (NASB) ¹*God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. ²Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change and though the mountains slip into the heart of the sea; ³Though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains quake at its swelling pride. Selah.*

We will be covering the details of this Psalm in light of the present world conditions in a future episode.



When we see the conditions in this world such as the Russian invasion of Ukraine, we can see the current world order crumbling. This Psalm speaks of the *mountains* (governments) slipping *into the...sea* (ungovernable masses of people in a state of unrest). But it promises that *God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble*. We keep hope alive by realizing the greatness of God, the incredible focus of His word and plan, and clinging to those things through Christ. This is how we keep our true hope alive. Our **Reality-Based Expectations** refine how we focus ourselves.



John verifies our hope, our expectation, by reminding us of what we have already received and how this gift focuses us:

1 John 3:1-3: (NASB) ¹*See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know him. ²Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when he (Jesus) appears, we will be like him, because we will see him just as he is. ³And everyone who has this hope fixed on him purifies himself, just as he is pure.*

Do we imagine seeing Jesus in all his glory? And then he says: *Come with me. I want to introduce you to our Father.* Do we have our hope fixed on *this* hope? This is an incredible hope to have, and it is promised to us.

We are also promised to be *children of God*. Think about that. We can go back to **Hebrews 6:13-19** and review all the assurances around His promises and think, *He is our Father!* That is how strong our hope is. If we had a positive

experience with our own natural father and multiplied that by a few million, we get the sense of how much we can count on our Father in heaven.

Peter plainly speaks of the focus we are to have. Our hopes are not just fulfilled now in this life, but also in the life to come. This future hope requires us to focus ourselves here and now.

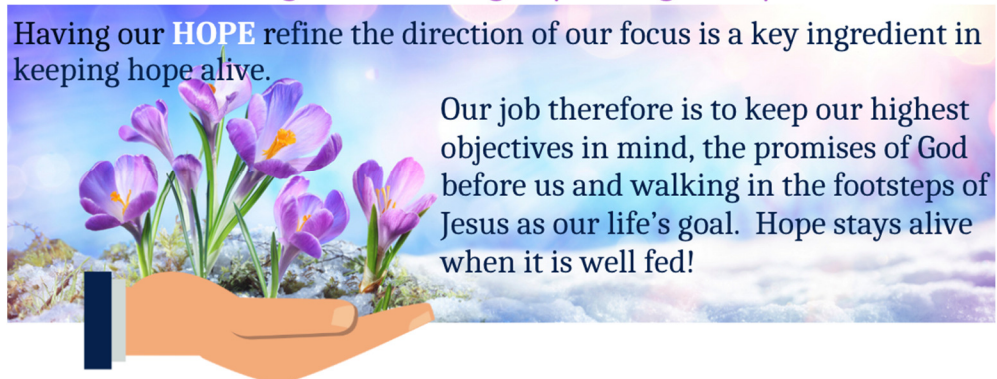
What about thinking, *But I'm saved... I'm good. I'm born again. No worries; I go to church a couple times a year. That's enough, right?* These are wishes, not hopes. Being a Christian is not just a proclamation - it is a lifestyle!

It is a transformation of how we live and why we live this way:

1 Peter 1:13-16: (NASB) ¹³Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your **hope <1679>** completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. ¹⁴As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, ¹⁵but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; ¹⁶because it is written, You shall be holy, for I am holy.

These verses are all about the actions of hope: being holy right now, not being conformed to our former selves, and standing in line with the life and example of Jesus as we fix our hope on the grace will come later. There is action and a present work to be done.

Finding and holding hope's highest promise:



If we do not feed our hope with our actions, intensity and focus, it will not support us. It is a two-way street. God has given us so much.

Transformational hope is clearly not something we just fall into. It needs us to want it, to work for it and to live it.

**True hope absolutely changes how we see the world around us.
So, what are we supposed to do about it?**

As with every other lesson we draw from the Bible, believing in something is powerfully important. However, the MOST important thing is what we do with that belief. Are we content with hope just sitting in our hearts and minds, or does that hope explode into actions that define how it has changed us?

We need to develop whatever the talents are that the Lord has given to us, so we can put them into action.



We are truly blessed. Everyone does not get to have a podcast to talk about the gospel. We have had the privilege for over two decades. This is one of the greatest parts of our lives. There are over 50 volunteers working behind the scenes who labor to help make this happen. Whatever our talents and abilities may be, our hope is nurtured when we nurture those talents and abilities in the service of God.



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Our fourth key truth about hope:

4. Our refined and focused hope fuels our actions.

Christian hope **REQUIRES** action. It is not only built upon the character and promises of God, but also upon the sacrifice of Jesus and our call to follow him as well. We therefore need to be actively engaged in that which provokes our highest godly hopes.



Hope dies
unless it is acted upon.

Going back to the third point from Luke 21 helps us understand the actions required of us. Jesus does not often talk about standing before him in accountability after we die, but when he does, it is impactful and all about action.

Let's look at part of the conclusion of the *Parable of the Talents*. The Master (Jesus) goes away and leaves three of his servants (the followers of Jesus) with money to invest (grow the gospel message). There are three different results. **First, the two-talent servant stands before his returned Lord:**



What is the measure of a talent in the Bible?

A talent weight was an ancient unit for measuring value in Greece, Rome and the Middle East.

In the Old Testament, a talent was a unit of measurement for weighing precious metals, usually gold and silver.

In the New Testament, a talent was a value of money or coin.

Source: <https://answeregy.com/how/how-much-is-one-talent-in-the-bible.php>

Matthew 25:22-25: (NASB) ²²Also the one who had received the two talents came up and said, Master, you entrusted two talents to me. See, I have gained two more talents. ²³His master said to him, Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.

Next, the one-talent servant stands before his returned Lord:

²⁴And the one also who had received the one talent came up and said, Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you scattered no seed. ²⁵And I was afraid, and went away and hid your talent in the ground. See, you have what is yours.

What is the difference between these two servants? The one-talent servant was *weighted down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life*. He did not see hope in his assignment; he saw obstructions. He was afraid. In his master's absence, he daily avoided his mission and replaced it with an internal monologue of misery. He had no spiritual hope and suffered from **spiritual torpor**.

The two-talent servant doubled the talents, having hope and enthusiasm in the work. The one-talent servant probably dreaded his master's return because he would have to report to him.



Our hope can only be strong when it is internalized. Therein we find its meaning:

Ephesians 1:18-19: (NASB) ¹⁸*I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the **hope <1680>** of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might.*

We can act on what we know!

...the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints - this is beyond our ability to comprehend.

*I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened - our heart is the centerpiece of our emotions. Rephrased: **Let the eyes of your emotions be enlightened to know the hope of God.** Usually, the eyes of your heart are focused on failure and the difficulties of life. We are to let the eyes of our heart lift higher to see the hope of our calling - that incredible promised inheritance. It takes action to focus the eyes of our heart.*

Romans 5:1-5: (NASB) ¹*Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ²through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in **hope <1680>** of the glory of God. ³And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; ⁴and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, **hope <1680>**; ⁵and **hope <1680>** does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the holy spirit (that) was given to us.*

Hope does not disappoint - if our hope disappoints us, it is not a godly hope.

Notice the hope that *does not disappoint* is at the end of a process: first there is tribulation, perseverance, character and then hope.

If we are disappointed in our hope, if we were hoping God would take care of us in a specific way, for example, we have diluted the promise of God with our own personal desire. We cannot allow ourselves to take the potency of God's promises away. Let Him work His providences His way.



Let us pray like Jesus did:

Luke 22:42: (NASB) *saying, Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from me; yet not my will, but Yours be done.*

The role of *Hope* in Romans 5:1-5

Hope develops in our lives as a process in verses 1-2:

- Being justified by faith brings us peace with God through Jesus.
- Peace with God brings access to God's grace.
- God's grace brings us the opportunity for action, to exult the hope of God's glory.

Hope needs action!

The practical living aspect continues the process in verses 3-5:

- Because of the spiritual promises, we now know tribulation brings perseverance.
- Perseverance brings proven character.
- Proven character brings HOPE.

This is hope in action, as driven by God's love and spirit.

We have the power to have God's hope in full potency or to dilute it down and make it lose its strength. We can choose. We have to be humble enough to let it be God's way only.

Switching attention to the rest of the world, the magnitude of their hope seems unnoticed by most, but the Scriptures are plain:

1 Timothy 4:10: (NASB) *For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our **hope <1679>** on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers.*

1 John 2:2: (NASB) *And he himself (Jesus) is the propitiation (satisfaction) for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.*

This is the "why" of our hope. It is not a selfish hope; it is a selfless hope. That is who God is! God is love. That *agape* love is always giving to others. He has everyone's best interest in mind. And because of this, He is the *Savior of all men*.

Jesus certainly did the work of sacrifice, but God is the architect and ultimate Savior. Jesus is *the propitiation* (he satisfied the legal requirements) to pay for our sins and the sins of the whole world. How much more hope could we want for everybody? This is how we let our light shine. This should lift us up even while the world falls apart around us.



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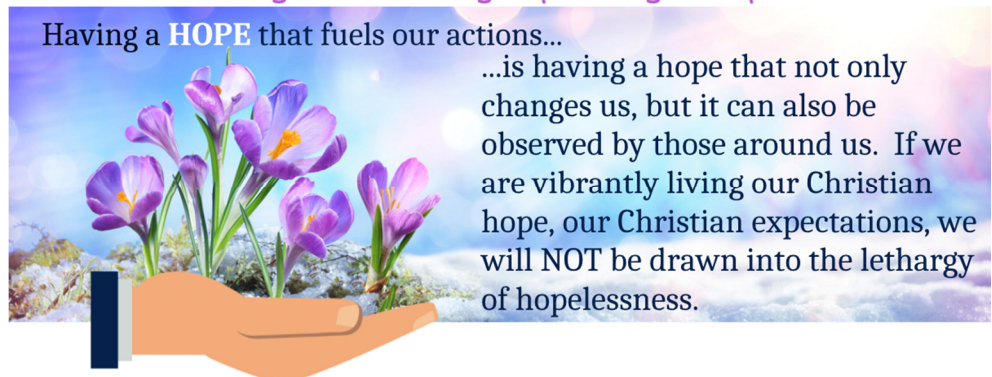
Finally, let's look at what hope does for us:

1 Thessalonians 5:6-8: (NASB) *6So then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober. 7For those who sleep do their sleeping at night, and those who get drunk get drunk at night. 8But since we are of the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the **hope <1680>** of salvation.*



Along with faith and love, hope protects us. Specifically, it guards our minds so we may see clearly through the fog of the world's turmoil. It tells us to put on the *helmet, the hope of salvation*. Our hope brings us to salvation and protects our minds if we choose to keep our *helmet* on.

Finding and holding hope's highest promise:



Hope stays alive and well when it is put into practice every day!

Our question for today was simple: How do we keep hope alive? We looked at several points of what goes into hope. Hope is a two-way street. God gives us great reason to have hope in Him, but we have to put great effort into making that hope active.

Hope is not useful unless it engages us. It is engaged when we study, practice and put our scriptural *expectations* at the forefront of our minds rather than our fleshly *reactions* to this crumbling world order.

We need to learn how to LIVE the hope as well as BE the hope for those around us. Jesus told us we should be the light of the world, and where there is light, there is hope. Where we have God's Scriptures and God's plan, the light of that plan can shine.

Will we be that hope, not only for ourselves but for all those around us?

Hope is alive. Choose to make it grow.

All quoted scriptures are from the 1995 version of NASB unless otherwise indicated.

**So, how do we keep hope alive?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!**



Join us next week for our podcast on March 28, 2022

Ep. 1222: How is Satan Trying to Devour Me?

Bonus Material and Study Questions

1 Corinthians 13:12-13: (NASB) ¹²For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known. ¹³But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love.

We cannot see all the details clearly now, and we are not meant to. Now we 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!

Why do you think Jesus taught us to pray this way?

Matthew 6:9-10: (KJV) ⁹After this manner therefore pray ye: our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. ¹⁰Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

It was to give us HOPE!

Hope brings expectation. Humanity has always sought something new, exciting and promising to seek after:

(The Apostle Paul in Athens) Acts 17:18-22: (NASB) ¹⁸And also some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers were conversing with him. Some were saying, What would this idle babbler wish to say? Others, He seems to be a proclaimer of strange deities,—because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection. ¹⁹And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new teaching is which you are proclaiming? ²⁰For you are bringing some strange things to our ears; so we want to know what these things mean. ²¹(Now all the Athenians and the strangers visiting there used to spend their time in nothing other than telling or hearing something new.) ²²So Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respects.

Paul wisely built upon their search for hope in something new to show them truth worthy of hope.

Our hope gives us the courage to walk away from what may have been a previously successful life:

Philippians 3:7-14: (NASB) ⁷But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸More 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...

What makes someone walk away from their previous life? A greater hope:

⁹and may be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith,



¹⁰that I may know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings, being conformed to his death...

This hope inspires the courage and fortitude necessary to attain it:

¹¹in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. ¹²Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. ¹³Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

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Study QUESTIONS

Ep.1221: How Do We Keep Hope Alive?

See:  CQ Rewind
SHOW NOTES

<https://christianquestions.com/character/1221-hope/>

1. What is the biblical definition of “hope”? What is the basis of genuine hope? How does it differ from a wish? Why is it dangerous for us to allow emotions to influence our hopes? (See John 8:31-32, Philippians 3:3, Hebrews, 11:1)
2. How does God’s promise to Abraham gift Christians with hope? How does God ensure “the heirs of the promise” believe the promise was unalterable? How is this promise an “anchor for our souls”? (See Genesis 22:17, Romans 8:22-25, Hebrews 6:13-19)
3. What did God promise the followers of Christ ages ago? How long ago? What does this tell us about God’s planning? Who is our hope for? What makes us sure all this will happen? (See Titus 1:1-2, Ephesians 1:4, Romans 8:22-25)
4. Why is it important to build our hope on Reality-Based Expectations? What makes these “reality-based” hopes? Which “reality” should they be based upon? What three things do we need to consider when setting our expectations? (See Mark 13:33, Luke 21:36, Ephesians 6:18, 2 Timothy 3:1-5)
5. What is “spiritual torpor”? What are its symptoms? Why must we avoid it at all cost? What is the opposite (the root word - *Strong’s Concordance #69*) of torpor? How will this counteract torpor? (See Luke 21:34-35, Mark 13:33, Ephesians 6:18)
6. How do we change our Reality-Based Reactions to Reality-Based Expectations to combat the three symptoms of spiritual torpor listed in Luke 21? (See Luke 21:34-35, Job 8:11-15, Romans 8:28, Ephesians 6:10-11, Galatians 6:2)
7. How do our Reality-Based Expectations guide our focus? How does Jesus refer to himself in John 9:5? How does that relate to what he expects of us in Matthew 5:14? (See Matthew 5:13-16, Luke 21:36, John 9:4-5, 1 Corinthians 15:16-19) How can remembering God’s precious promises help us to have clear focus? How do these scriptures inspire your hope: Psalms 46:1-3, 91:1-4, 1 John 3:1-3
8. What is required of us now for our hopes to be fulfilled and keep them from dying? What process does hope begin in our lives? What steps does this process go through? How can we continue the process with our actions? (See Matthew 25:22-25, Luke 22:42, Romans 5:1-5, Ephesians 1:18-19, 1 Peter 1:13-16)
9. What is the “why” of our hope? How are we caught up in the hope for mankind? What does it do for us as Christians? (See 1 Thessalonians 5:6-8, 1 Timothy 4:10, 1 John 2:2) How does hope impact your life?