

GET YOUR HOPES UP!

Definition of "Hope":

- favorable and confident expectation; it has to do with the unseen and the future; hope describes the happy anticipation of good (Vine's Expository Dictionary of N.T. Words)
- a steady and persistent optimism regarding the future

I. Two kinds of HOPE –

1. We can find one type of HOPE in the Bible – God's Word. This type of HOPE (which God encourages people to have) is based upon HIS GOODNESS, HIS LOVE FOR YOU AND HIS FAITHFULNESS. This type of hope provides emotional stability because it is based on the truth of who God is and what He has promised, not on circumstances. Biblical hope gives the believer a certainty that no matter what circumstances arise, God will help us because He is good, He is faithful and He loves us.
2. The hope the world talks about is based upon humans or worldly institutions, objects, or circumstances. It is essentially wishful thinking. This type of hope will always disappoint and never provides stability or long-term satisfaction. It has no basis for certainty.

"I hope my boss will give me a raise."

"I hope my team will win."

"I hope my teacher will give me an 'A'."

"I hope the economy, the markets, my industry will improve."

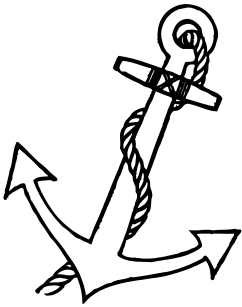
"I hope the North Korean president won't shoot a missile at the USA."

Without the HOPE spoken of in the Bible – People either have false hopes – placed in things or people that will eventually disappoint them OR they become HOPELESS.

HOPELESS: despairing; feeling no hope; past hope

II. The Bible gives us two “pictures” of what the God-kind of hope looks like and how it functions:

- 1) The hope God offers is like AN ANCHOR FOR THE SOUL!



This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast...Hebrews 6:19 NASB

The soul of a person refers to the mind, will and emotions. This scripture confirms that hope guards the mind. It “anchors” the mind, acting as a stabilizing factor in the midst of stormy circumstances that could otherwise pressure a person to give way to fear, anxiety, dread, despair or hopelessness.

- 2) The hope God offers is like a HELMET guarding the mind –



But 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 of salvation.

I Thessalonians 5:8

In this (or we or the

scripture we see that faith and love protect the heart of a person could call it our spirit or inner man) while hope protects the head mind of a person. If a believer does not put on the helmet of hope, he or she will be assaulted with attacks on the mind of negative and despairing thoughts. On the other hand, the believer who refuses to take off the helmet of hope is a picture of unquenchable optimism based on a rock-solid faith in God’s goodness and love.

III. Hope is a Basic Component of the Christian Life

- 1) Christians have valid reasons for possessing a hopeful attitude:

A) ***Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead...*** 1 Peter 1:3

- B) ***If indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the Gospel that you have heard...***Colossians 1:23 NASB
- C) ***...to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.*** Colossians 1:27 NASB
- D) ***Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear Him, upon them that hope in His mercy...***Psalm 33:18 KJV
- E) ***Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord.*** Psalm 31:24 KJV

There should exist no such person as a “hopeless” Christian. The Christian’s life should radiate with an unquenchable hope! Charles H. Spurgeon once said: “God has given no pledge which He will not redeem, and encouraged no hope which He will not fulfill.”

2) On the contrary, unbelievers have valid reasons to be without hope:

- A) ***Remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.*** Ephesians 2:12 NASB
- B) ***But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope.*** I Thess. 4:13 NKJV

Without God, there is no valid basis for hope in this life or for the life after death. Unbelievers who do possess a “positive mental attitude” or a “hopeful outlook” on life have based such an attitude on false hopes and are deceived.

IV. Without hope, negative circumstances will always cause a person to become depressed and eventually despair:

- A. ***And since neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small storm was assailing us, from then on all hope of our being saved was gradually abandoned.*** Acts 27:20

During Paul’s voyage to Rome, the ship he was on encountered a fierce storm. Because the storm seemed endless and the ship was in danger of breaking apart, the appearance of seemingly irreversible circumstances stole all hope of the voyagers. Paul alone held out hope for their safety based upon the word of the Lord delivered to him by an angel. It is vital to guard your hope or the appearance of circumstances will defeat you.

- B. ***Then He said to me, “Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel; behold they say, ‘Our bones are dried up, and our hope has perished. We are completely cut off.’”*** Ezekiel 37:11 NASB

The expression "Our bones are dried up" refers to the distressing circumstances that had fallen upon Israel because they walked away from God, and as a result, their hope had perished.

V. True Hope is Based on a Revelation of God's Goodness, Love and Mercy Clearly Enunciated throughout the Bible

1) The Scriptures clearly encourage the believer to have hope

A) ***For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. Romans 15:4***

2) The Scriptures clearly reveal God's goodness, love and mercy

A) ***But You, O Lord are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness and truth.* Psalm 86:25**

B) ***Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, my lips will praise You.* Psalm 63:3**

C) ***But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us...Ephesians 2:4***

Our hope is based on the understanding that God is "rich in mercy" and "abundant in lovingkindness". Even a baby Christian without a deep knowledge of the Word of God has hope (a positive expectancy about the future) because of a basic understanding of the goodness, kindness and tender mercy of God. The unbeliever takes heart and has a sudden glimmer of hope when convinced of the love and mercy of God and by this is drawn to surrender his life to God. Our hope is based upon the truth of the goodness of God. It is not some baseless "positive mental attitude." It is an optimism based upon truth. The world is full of hopeless people, and the spirit of hopelessness abounds. Many people see the future in the most negative of terms. This cannot be the attitude embraced by a Christian because it denies the goodness of God. Do not give in to the commonly held belief in "Murphy's Law" that declares that everything that can go wrong, will go wrong. Such an attitude should be confessed as sin! It is in complete opposition to the Word of God. The truth is that God is good and He will help us and our future is secure in Him.

VI. Three ways To Quench Your Own Hope

1) Focus on, think about and continually talk about negative circumstances

2) Hang around, listen to and agree with other negative people

- 3) Talk Like the World Does When Difficult Circumstances Appear:
“We’re finished!” “It’s inevitable – things are going down!” “It’s hopeless!”
“Everything that can go wrong, will go wrong!” “It’s Over!”

VII. Three Ways to Get Your Hopes Up

- 1) Focus on God’s character – His Goodness, Love, and Faithfulness (instead of circumstances) by meditating on His Word –

But you, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness. Psalm 86:15

I will cry to God Most High, to God who accomplishes all things for me. He will send from heaven and save me. He reproaches him who tramples on me. God will send forth His lovingkindness and His truth.
Psalm 57:2-3 NASB

I love You, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised, And I am saved from my enemies. Ps. 18:1-3

- 2) Remember past help and deliverances God has given you. Can you remember even one time that God pulled you out of a pit – emotional, spiritual, financial or physical? Encourage yourself that God can do it again as He did before!

Lord, I will remember what you did. Yes, I will remember your miracles of long ago. Psalm 77:11 NIRV

- 3) Preach to yourself! In Psalm 42:5 we find the psalmist talking to himself - ***Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise Him, my help and my God.***

REMEMBER: No circumstance is too impossible, no sin too unforgivable, no wound too deep, no bondage too great, that God cannot turn it around.

...and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out...Romans 5:5

The devil would whisper to you, “Don’t get your hopes up.”

But God’s Word shouts to us, “GET YOUR HOPES UP!”