

There's Hope for You!

A study about HOPE as found in the New Testament

Hope is one of those words that has an enormous range of meanings doesn't it? It can mean anything from wishful thinking to an expectation that has a great degree of certainty. For example, one might say, "I hope that my friend in India will be able to come and visit me some day". There is no question of the sincere desire that you might have, but the likelihood that it will happen is extremely small. If you said, on the other hand, "I'm hoping to go to my granddaughter's graduation next month. I have the plane tickets and the hotel reservations", the probability that the trip will happen is extremely high, nearly 100 percent. However, in our human experience, there are very few things that are totally certain and sure. There is always a question mark of one size or another.

When the idea of hope, which is an essential virtue of the Christian life, is expressed in the Bible, however, it has a dimension of certainty because it is based on the character and word of God. When one finds hope in Christ, His promises will always become a reality. It was the hope that Abraham had in His God that gave him the strength to believe, against all human odds, that God would keep His promises – Romans 4: 18 – 22. It was the hope that David had in God that made Him confident in times of weakness and failure. It was his hope in the risen Christ that energized and empowered Paul to look beyond his present trials and troubles to the future inheritance that would be his someday. It is the "living hope" that is found only in Jesus that can do the same things for us today. Without a doubt, it is hope with an exclamation point.

As you think about these Biblical examples, you might be wondering whether it was their faith or their hope that made the difference. What actually is the relationship between hope and faith? In John Piper's sermon, "What is Hope?" he explains it this way: "Whenever faith in God looks to the future, it can be called hope. And whenever hope rests on the Word of God, it can be called faith." You may also be asking which one of these comes first – faith or hope? Under certain circumstances it is your faith, your trust in God and His promises, that increases your hopefulness. At other times it your hope, the confident expectation that God will always keep His Word, that builds and strengthens your faith. As Paul explains at the end of his great chapter on love, there are three things that are eternal – faith, hope and love.

As we study the word HOPE in the New Testament, our prayer is that you will allow "the God of hope to fill you with all joy and peace as you trust (have faith) in Him, so that you will overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" – Romans 15: 13.

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These lessons were designed for you to use in the way that best fits your own schedule and preferences. Whether you schedule a regular and predictable hour each week as your study time or you prefer to have shorter and more spontaneous times to do the lesson is entirely up to you. The important goal is that week by week you find time to focus and concentrate on God's Word and your relationship with The One Who loves you and longs for you to spend time with Him through the study of the Bible. If at all possible, find a quiet and uninterrupted time and place to meet with JESUS.

STUDY SUGGESTIONS for this series:

PREPARING YOURSELF - As you begin your study time, it is always wise to quiet your heart and mind – to be still. Put aside the details and distractions of your life, so that you can begin to focus on the God who loves you. This is an important time for some praise, perhaps words of confession, and opening your heart and mind to God's Spirit.

LISTENING INTENTLY - Read the Scripture passage carefully. Use different translations if possible. The New Testament letters that you will be reading were written to new believers who needed to understand their new faith and to experience the joy and hope that Jesus came to bring them. As you read, let the Holy Spirit direct you to ideas and thoughts that are important for you to think about at this point in your faith journey. You might want to take some notes or jot down various verses.

PONDERING CAREFULLY – Each of the passages in this section will give you information about the idea of "hope". Because it is a many faceted word, the questions will help you to think about what hope means, how you experience it, and its importance to the believer. You may want to use all of the questions or only some of them. They are simply a tool to assist you in your consideration of the passages.

RESPONDING PERSONALLY - Take time to listen to the still small voice of Jesus, the One who knows you completely, loves you unconditionally, and Who rejoices when you choose to spend in His presence. Listen for the truth that He wants to plant deep in your heart and mind so you can take the next step in trusting God so that He can fill you with hope – fill you to overflowing!

There will be introductions to each lesson posted each Friday morning starting June 21, 2019.

You can subscribe to have them sent directly to your e-mail address – lower right-hand sidebar

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Lesson 1 - **FILLED WITH HOPE**

**May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him,
so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.** Romans 15:13

Paul knew that the people in Rome needed to understand more about their new faith in Jesus. He had never met them in person, but he carefully instructed them through writing to them – and to us. After carefully explaining to them what Jesus accomplished through His death and resurrection, he went on to make clear what they could expect as they put their trust in Him and began to live by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. There was no question that Paul wanted them to know fully the amazing HOPE that God gives to those who believe in Him.

PREPARING YOURSELF –

As you begin your study time, read Psalm 25: 4 – 7 slowly and carefully.

Take time to re-write this prayer in your own words, changing the thoughts of the Psalmist so that the ideas reflect your own life and heart. Listen quietly for God's response to your praise and your concerns. How does He want to reassure you at this time?

LISTENING INTENTLY –

Read as much of **Romans 1 to 8 and 12 - 16** as you can and take note of the topic of HOPE. If possible, read these chapters in at least 2 translations. Take your time. It will be worth it!

PONDERING CAREFULLY

1. Romans 4: 18 - 25 – Abraham - A Model of Hope (Genesis 12: 1 – 4 and 21: 1 – 2)
What is the difference between faith and hope? How do they complement each other?
2. Romans 5: 1 - 11 – “With confidence and joy we look forward to sharing God’s glory. . .”
What do you think “rejoicing in the hope of the glory of God” means? (vs. 2)
How does hope become a product of suffering? Can you illustrate? (vs. 4 - 5)
3. Romans 8: 18 - 28 – “Eager expectation” – for what?
In what way does all of creation also experience hope?
How is the relationship of hope, weakness & prayer developed in this passage?
4. Romans 12: 9 - 12
There are some interesting instructions in this little passage. Why would “joyful in hope” be a part of this list?
Do these 2 characteristics always go together? Why or why not?
How do you relate these ideas to Romans 12: 1 - 2?
5. Romans 15: 4 - 6 and 13
Just before Paul completes this letter in a more personal way, he writes 2 short prayers in this chapter.
What are the qualities of life that he is asking God to give them? What do you notice about these 2 prayers?

RESPONDING PERSONALLY – What is next for you?

Jesus says to you – “You can’t do it by yourself. That is why the Holy Spirit has been given to you. He will fill you with joy and peace as you trust in Him. It won’t happen all at once, but as your faith grows, you will be filled to overflowing with HOPE.” It’s going to happen one day at a time, I promise you.”

“All day long I put my HOPE in YOU.” Psalm 25:5

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Lesson 2 - **STRENGTHENED BY HOPE**

**May our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father,
who loved us and by His grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope
encourage our hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word.**

II Thessalonians 2:16 - 17

The believers in Thessalonica were a great encouragement to Paul. In fact, he told them that they were a part of his hope and joy! He wrote to this church because he loved them, but he was also concerned that they were clear about the Gospel message, about Christ's return, and what all of this should mean in their daily lives. In his second letter, he wanted to clear up some misunderstandings about the second coming of Christ and its implications. It makes me wonder what Paul would write to us if he had the opportunity. What do we need to know?.

PREPARING YOURSELF –

As you begin your study time, read Psalm 33: 16 – 22 several times.

What does the Psalmist tell you is the best place to find real hope? Have you experienced God's *unfailing love* in your life? Bring your doubts and your desires to Jesus and then listen for His response to you through His Word and the quiet voice of His Holy Spirit.

LISTENING INTENTLY – Read I and II THESSALONIANS – These are short letters, easily read in a brief amount of time. Try reading them in at least 2 different translations.

PONDERING CAREFULLY

1. I Thessalonians 1: 2 -3 - Endurance inspired by hope
What defined or characterized the church in Thessalonica?
How is work, labor, and endurance affected by faith, love & hope in the Lord Jesus Christ?
2. I Thessalonians 2: 17 – 19 – The gift of hope through others
Paul expresses to the people why they are such a joy to him. What do you think he is saying?
3. I Thessalonians 4: 13 - 18 - About those who have no hope -
What is the BIG difference between those who believe that Jesus died and rose again and those who do not?
How do these words encourage you?
4. I Thessalonians 5: 1 - 11 - The hope of salvation
Faith, hope & love were grouped together in Chapter 1 and now Paul emphasizes them again.
What is his concern in this part of his letter?
5. II Thessalonians 2: 13 - 16 - The gift of wonderful hope
A prayer for the believers in Thessalonica. Where does encouragement and good hope really come from and how does it alter your purpose for living?

RESPONDING PERSONALLY – What is next for you?

Jesus says to you – "I know there are some things that are weighing on your mind and making you feel anxious. Are you willing to admit this and let Me comfort you and give you My strength, so that once again your hope-less-ness can be transformed to HOPE-FULL-NESS. Are you willing to trust ME?"?

"Let your unfailing love surround us, LORD, for our HOPE is in You alone." Psalm 33: 22

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Lesson 3 - **BLESSED BY HOPE**

**I pray also that the eyes of your hearts may be enlightened
in order that you may know the hope to which He has called you . . .**

Ephesians 1: 18

The church in Ephesus was a center for the spread of the Gospel in that first century and headquarters for Paul. But now (A.D. 60) he was in prison in Rome and he is writing to them to encourage them. One of the important themes in this letter is that salvation is by faith alone. He is also anxious to remind them of the ways in which the things that they believe should determine their behavior and choices. Once again he includes the theme of HOPE as a part of our experience in Christ. There are many facets to this word and you will discover some of them in this letter.

PREPARING YOURSELF –

As you begin your study time, read Psalm 52: 8 – 9.

Take some time to recount the ways that God has showed you His unfailing love. Give Him thanks.

Let Him put His everlasting arms around you and assure you that His name is trustworthy.

LISTENING INTENTLY - Read Paul's letter to the EPHESIANS - It is very important to read the whole letter.

As you read, watch for the word and concept of HOPE and the emphasis on "in Christ".

PONDERING CAREFULLY

1. Ephesians 1: 3 - 14 - The first to hope in Christ -

Paul is enthusiastically writing about the joy of being "in Christ". What facet of the word "hope" do you find here?

2. Ephesians 1: 15 -23 - I pray also . . .

Paul prays for these believers and wants them to "know" several things. What are these things and how important is the phrase that includes *hope*?

3. Ephesians 2: 11 - 18 - Without hope

In what ways do you identify with this part of the letter?

4. Ephesians 4: 1 - 6 - Called to one hope -

In the context of the early church - Jews and Gentiles - coming together for the first time as believers in Christ, this must have been a very important goal and concept to grasp.

What implications do you see in it for yourself at this point in history?

Bonus Question - Colossians 1 – Read Chapter 1

Verse 5 - Faith and love that spring from hope - think about it - say it another way.

Verse 23 - The hope held out in the Gospel - Don't move from it! How could this happen?

Verse 27 - Christ in you, the hope of glory - What do you think this means?

RESPONDING PERSONALLY - What is next for you?

Jesus says to you – "You are in the safest place that you can be when you are "in Christ" and "He is in you".

Remember when I taught my disciples about "abiding in Me"? When you remain secure in My love for you, that's when you experience joy and peace, deep HOPE and fruitfulness. This world cannot take it away from you because I live in you. Keep thinking about this."

And so, LORD, where do I put my HOPE? My only HOPE is in you. Psalm 39:7

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Lesson 4 - SECURE IN HOPE

. . .while we wait for the blessed hope -- the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Titus 2: 13

Both Timothy and Titus had traveled with Paul on some of his missionary journeys. But the time came when each of them needed to go out on their own and work in various churches. Paul knew that they, and we, would need guidelines and instructions on how to lead the church, how to work with people and to live lives which would honor our Savior, Jesus Christ. The hope which we have in the living God and His Son, Jesus, is repeated in I Timothy and the hope of eternal life is emphasized in Titus. How important are these 2 doctrines to you ?

PREPARING YOURSELF –

As you begin your study time, quiet your mind and your heart. Focus on Psalm 62: 5 – 7.
Can you make this song into your own prayer? He has promised rest to those who come to Him.

LISTENING INTENTLY - I Timothy and Titus –

These are short letters so you can read both of them.
Try to identify with these 2 young leaders as they take on new responsibilities in the church.

PONDERING CAREFULLY

1. I Timothy 1:1 and 4: 9 - 10 - Our hope
Of all the descriptive words that Paul could have used about Jesus, he used *hope*. Why?
2. I Timothy 5: 3 - 6 - Hope in God
An interesting contrast - a widow who hopes in God and one who lives for pleasure. Any thoughts?
3. I Timothy 6: 17 - 19 - Another contrast - hope in wealth or hope in God. Any thoughts?
4. In each of the 3 chapters in the letter to Titus, Paul mentions how the "hope of eternal life" and the "hope of Jesus coming again" leads to godliness. Perhaps we, too, should spend some time letting the reality of eternity with Jesus soak into our minds and hearts and souls.
John 3: 16, 36

John 14: 1 - 4

I John 3: 1 – 3

Revelation 21: 1 - 4

RESPONDING PERSONALLY – What is next for you?

Jesus says to you – Ultimately the greatest question that man must ask himself is "what is my destiny?" When you have put your faith in Jesus Christ as your Savior, the answer to that question is settled, isn't it? You will spend eternity in the presence of The One who loved you and gave Himself for you. Knowing that and living with that HOPE can make every day full of promise and joy and peace.

The LORD is good to those whose HOPE is in Him, to the one who seeks Him.

It is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD. Lamentations 3: 22 - 23

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Lesson 5 - **ENCOURAGED THROUGH HOPE**

Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for He who promised is faithful.

Hebrews 10:23

There are many things we do not know for sure about the Book of Hebrews. Was it a letter or a sermon? Written by Paul or someone else? To Jewish believers or Gentiles or both at Rome? We do know, however, that this book clearly explains the supremacy and sufficiency of Jesus Christ and it clearly explains how Christianity is the true successor to Judaism. We also can easily identify that the author knew about the **hope** which we have because of our salvation in Christ. This hope is described in a variety of ways in Hebrews.

PREPARING YOURSELF –

When did you first begin to understand that having hope in the Lord changes everything in life? As you quiet your spirit and mind, read Psalm 71: 14 – 18. In what ways do you identify with David in his song of praise and petition to His God? What is the connection between praise and hope?

LISTENING INTENTLY - As much of the book of **HEBREWS** as you can. Try one of the newer translations.

PONDERING CAREFULLY

1. Hebrews 3: 1 - 13 - Holding on to our hope -
There is a word picture here, contrasting Moses' relationship and Jesus' relationship to God.
There is a very interesting statement about us in the last part of verse 6. What do you think this might be saying?
2. Hebrews 6: 9 - 12 - Make your hope complete -
This is a very difficult passage of Scripture, but you might want to give it some thought and relate other Scriptures which you may know to what is being said here. What is the author's challenge to his friends?
3. Hebrews 6: 13 - 20 - We have this hope as an anchor – God's oath and God's Word are 2 unchangeable things.
How does this affect our hope?
4. Hebrews 10: 19 - 25 Let us hold unswervingly to the hope.
Five times in this small section, the writer says, "let us . . ."
Take some time to think about these ideas and to put them in your own words, especially the one about hope.
5. Hebrews 11: 1 – Being sure of what we hope for - What is the connection between faith and hope?
Try to re-write this definition of faith and expand on its meaning.

RESPONDING PERSONALLY – What is next for you?

Jesus says to you – "Keep on thinking about Me and talking with Me. I know all about you and your circumstances. It is through them that you can learn to trust Me and to hold on to the HOPE that you have in Me. By the way, if you encourage others, you will find that your own heart becomes hopeful, too." Do you believe that?

As for me, I will always have HOPE. I will praise You more and more. Psalm 71: 14

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Lesson 6 - COMFORTED BY HOPE

Set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed.

I Peter 1: 13

The subject of hope is easily found in the first letter that Peter wrote to the churches that were scattered around Asia Minor (Turkey). They were suffering persecution and needed some answers and comfort. Peter wanted to challenge them as well as to explain something about suffering and trials. When life is really hard and you are suffering for reasons that you either do not deserve and did not expect, what are the ways that "hope" comes to you? When it is your dear friend that is going through severe testing and trials, how can you bring "hope" to them?

PREPARING YOURSELF

Did you realize that you can bring delight (happiness) to the LORD? Yes, you can.

Read Psalm 147: 11 and then as you quiet your mind, why not make a list of the many things that cause you to stand "in awe" before the Lord God. Gratefulness brings joy to the Savior.

LISTENING INTENTLY - I Peter - Yes, the whole letter! Notice the ways that Peter encourages them?

What was life like for these believers to whom Peter was writing?

PONDERING CAREFULLY

1. I Peter 1:3 - 7 - A living hope

Our new birth is into a "living hope" and "an inheritance". What are those 2 things?

2. I Peter 1: 13 – 16 - Set your hope...

In practical ways, how do you follow the guidelines of verse 13?

Where does the motivation for obedience and holiness come from?

3. I Peter 1: 17 - 25 - Your faith and hope are in God

We are all tempted to put our "faith and hope" in many temporal things. What would some of them be?

How is this old way of life described in this passage?

Think about where you have chosen to put your "faith and hope".

4. I Peter 3: 1 - 6 - This is the way ...

Do you think this description for a holy woman who puts her hope in God is still accurate?

5. I Peter 3: 13 - 17 - Defending the hope you have

It is so easy to become defensive rather than offensive when we are questioned about our hope in Christ.

How do you prepare yourself to "give a gentle answer"? Or do you?

Bonus Question - Read I John 3: 1 – 3 – Everyone who has this hope . . .

The GREAT FAMILY REUNION - Going home to be with the Father - Eternal life with Jesus

What effect does "this hope" have on you?

RESPONDING PERSONALLY – What is next for you?

Jesus says to you – "Dear child of mine. Keep your focus on the promises that I have made to you. They will keep you from reacting to your present circumstances in negative ways. They will comfort you and give you a confident HOPE that I am with you each step of the way – until I come again."

**Happy – blessed, fortunate and enviable – is anyone who has the God of Jacob for his help,
whose HOPE is in the Lord his God, Who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them,
Who keeps truth and is faithful forever.**

Psalm 146: 5 – 6 (Amplified Version)