

# "MAY THE GOD OF HOPE . . ."

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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 you can begin to focus on the God who loves you. This is an important time for some praise, honest 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 you will be reading were written to new believers who needed to understand their new faith and to experience the joy and hope Jesus came to bring them. As you read, let the Holy Spirit direct you to ideas and thoughts which 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 time in His presence. Listen for the truth He wants to plant deep in your heart and mind so you can take the next step in trusting God. Then He can fill you with hope – fill you to overflowing!

There will be introductions to each lesson posted each Friday morning starting January 14, 2022.

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

# "MAY THE GOD OF HOPE . . ."

## Lesson 1 – SATISFIED WITH HOPE

**Hope does not disappoint us because God has poured out His love into our hearts by the Holy spirit, whom He has given us.**

Romans 5: 5

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 Romans 1 to 8.** Take note of the topic of HOPE as you read.

If possible, read these chapters in at least 2 translations. Take your time. It will be worth it!

### **PONDERING CAREFULLY**

1. Briefly summarize chapters 1 – 4. What does Paul want his readers to understand, to believe?
2. In Romans 4: 18 - 25 – Abraham is described as 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?
3. 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)
4. Romans 8: 1 -17 – Do the truths in verses 9 – 17 give you comfort, strength and hope? Why or why not?
5. Romans 8: 18 - 28 – "Eager expectation" – for what?  
In what way does all of creation groan as well as experience hope?  
How is the relationship of hope, suffering, prayer and the Spirit developed in this passage?

### **RESPONDING PERSONALLY – What is next for you?**

Jesus says to you: "Where are you in this journey of coming to faith in Me? Would you say you are still considering My claims or have you received My gift of forgiveness so My promise of eternal life is real to you each day? Take time to read Romans 8: 28 – 39. Let Me reassure you of My love for you. I want to be your source of real HOPE!"

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

# "MAY THE GOD OF HOPE . . ."

## Lesson 2 - 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

The letter to the Romans has been called "Paul's *magnum opus* – the most important book in the Bible". In the first 11 chapters, he gave to them (and to us) a document that declares the full range of core beliefs of the Christian faith. He wanted to make sure the Gospel message would be clearly understood by anyone who wanted to read or study it. In the final 4 chapters, He goes on to explain what the practical application for life looks like as a believer discovers not only God's immeasurable love, but what it means to yield to the Holy Spirit and His power within us.

### **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 ROMANS – Chapters 12 – 16.** 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 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?
2. Romans 15: 4 - 6  
According to verse 4, what are the 2 components that lead to experiencing hope? Can you express the prayer found in verse 5 in some of your own words, using synonyms or similar phrases, and making it personal?
3. Romans 15: 7 – 12 Why would unity be such a big challenge for the church in Rome? What are the implications today?
4. Romans 15: 13  
Just before Paul completed this letter in a more personal way, he expressed one final blessing. What does the title, "God of hope", imply? What does this title bring to your mind? How does it help you to grasp who God is?

### **RESPONDING PERSONALLY – What is next for you?**

Jesus says to you – "You can't do it by yourself. It is the reason the Holy Spirit has been given to you. He will fill you with joy and peace as you trust in Him. Really? It won't happen all at once, but as your faith grows, you will be filled to "overflowing with HOPE." How would you describe your level of joy and peace today? Do you think seeing the "God of Hope" as totally trustworthy might raise it?

**The eyes of the LORD are on those who fear Him, on those whose HOPE is in His unfailing love.** Psalm 33: 18

# "MAY THE GOD OF HOPE . . ."

## Lesson 3 - 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 they were a part of his hope and joy! He wrote to this church because he loved them. However, he was also concerned whether 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 43: 1 – 5.

What does the Psalmist suggest you do to find hope and joy again? Are you willing to express your doubts and concerns to Jesus so He can restore your soul and mind? This would be a good time to listen to Him.

**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. Make note of the theme of hope.

### **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 Jesus died and rose again and those who do not?

Do these words encourage you? How?

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 can or will 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?"

**"Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise Him, my Savior and my God."** Psalm 43: 5

# "MAY THE GOD OF HOPE . . ."

## Lesson 4 - 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 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 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 and without God

What is the connection between God and hope?

In what ways do you identify with this part of the letter? What is your story?

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, 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?

### **RESPONDING PERSONALLY – What is next for you?**

Take time to slowly write out Paul's prayer in Ephesians 1: 17 – 18, making it personal – just for you. What would it mean if you continued to ask God daily to "give you His Spirit to help you make wise choices and openness in your Spirit to . . ." What are your longings?

**"I will wait, hope, and expect in Your name, for it is good.**

Psalm 52: 9 (Amplified)

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## Lesson 5 - SECURE IN HOPE

**"God has chosen to make known . . .the glorious riches of this mystery,  
which is Christ in you, the hope of glory."** Colossians 1: 27

The church in Colossae was struggling. Between Jewish legalism and a dangerous heresy called "Gnosticism", believers were being tempted to feel like the Gospel was not adequate or complete. Paul wrote his letter in order to assure them of the supremacy of Jesus Christ. He alone is the eternal Son of God, the Creator and the sustainer and reconciler of all things. He wanted to remind them (and us) that in Christ, and Christ alone, is salvation. He is the One who deserves to be sovereign over every aspect of their lives.

### **PREPARING YOURSELF –**

As you begin your study time, read Psalm 62: 1- 2 and 5 -8.

Where do you go when you want to "find rest" for your heart and soul? This would be a good time to "wait silently", to "be still", and to know He is God. Will you take some time right now to let His presence enter in your mind and your inner being?

### **LISTENING INTENTLY - Read Paul's letter to the COLOSSIANS -** 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**

#### **Colossians 1 – Read Chapter 1 again –**

1. Summarize this chapter briefly. How does Paul feel about the believers in Colossae?
2. Verse 5 - What is the basis of their faith and love? Try to rephrase or expand on this idea.
3. Verse 23 - The hope held out in the Gospel - Don't move from it! How could this happen? What would you say the "hope held out in the Gospel" means?
4. Verse 27 – 29 – In these verses Paul explains his life purpose and deep desire. What is it? "Christ in you." "Christ in me." It is a mystery, isn't it? It has the power to transform our thinking, our attitudes, our desires, and our actions. How do you move from an intellectual assent to this reality to experiencing it in your own life day by day? What are your questions?

### **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."

**My soul, wait only upon God and silently submit to Him for my hope and expectation are from Him.**

Psalm 62: 5 (Amplified)

# "MAY THE GOD OF HOPE . . ."

## Lesson 6 - EMPOWERED BY HOPE

**"This is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance – we have put our HOPE in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, and especially of those who believe."**

I Timothy 4: 9 - 10

It was on Paul's second missionary journey to a town called Lystra when Paul met a young believer named Timothy. Because he was respected and willing, Paul invited him to begin traveling with him while he preached the good news about Jesus throughout the whole region. The time came, however, when Paul urged Timothy to stay in Ephesus in order to lead and instruct the believers there. Sometime later, Timothy received two "pastoral letters" from his mentor and friend not only warning him about the dangers of heretical teachers but giving him a "manual" for church leadership and behavior. While it is a letter filled with some very specific warnings and advice, it is also a personal charge to Timothy to persevere with HOPE.

### **PREPARING YOURSELF**

As you begin your study time, quiet your mind and your heart. Focus on Psalm 71: 14 - 18.

Is this your testimony? Where is it different? Where do you identify with the Psalmist? Talk with the Lord about your desires and concerns for the next generation? Listen for the quiet voice of God's Spirit. What is He saying to you?

### **LISTENING INTENTLY – READ I Timothy**

As Paul writes this letter to his "true son in the faith", it is personal and heartfelt.

Try to identify with both Paul as he wrote it and with Timothy as read it.

### **PONDERING CAREFULLY**

1. I Timothy 1:1 – Why do you think Paul reminded Timothy of God our Savior and Christ Jesus, our hope? What significance does the greeting in verse 2 have?

2. I Timothy 4: 6 - 11 - "Our hope is in the living God"  
It's tempting to put our hope, our confidence, our expectations in many temporal things. What would some examples be of this? Why do you think Paul is concerned about the importance of this?

3. 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? Do you think there is practical advice for today in this passage or was it written for that time and culture?

4. I Timothy 6: 17 - 19 - Another contrast - hope in wealth or hope in God. Any thoughts? Do you think there is practical advice for today in this passage or was it written for that time and culture?

### **RESPONDING PERSONALLY – What is next for you?**

As you reflect on the concerns which are expressed in this letter, what sticks in your mind? What longings does Paul express for Timothy and the people under his leadership? How could you encourage your pastor or those who are in leadership in your church, your small group, your Bible study? Talk with the only ONE who offers real HOPE to you.

**As for me, I will always have hope. I will praise you more and more.** Psalm 71: 14

# "MAY THE GOD OF HOPE . . ."

## Lesson 7 – REASSURED THROUGH HOPE

. . . while we look forward with hope to that wonderful day  
when the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ will be revealed.

Titus 2: 13 (NLT)

For several years Titus had been a companion and co-worker with Paul. He had watched, listened, and learned from his mentor and friend so when the believers on the island of Crete needed a leader, it was clear Titus should be the one to take on the challenge. When Paul wrote this short letter to him, there were several things on his mind but the greatest one was the importance of consistency between doctrine and behavior. Because the churches were diverse and the cultural influences were strong and divisive, Paul knew that Titus needed to urge everyone to "devote themselves to doing what is good". The truth and hope which is found in Jesus would be the supreme motivation for a life devoted to Godly living.

### PREPARING YOURSELF –

As you begin your study time, quiet your mind and your heart. Focus on Psalm 130: 1 - 8.

In what does this Psalmist find hope? Take some time for thank the LORD for the written Word of God. What does it mean to you? Could you memorize verses 5 - 6 so you would remember to "put your hope in His promises" every day?

### READ - Titus – Take time to read it a 2 or 3 translations or paraphrases.

As you read the very practical counsel in this letter, take note of the various groups of people and the specific advice.

### PONDERING CAREFULLY

1. Titus 1: 1 – 3

How does Paul describe the work or preaching entrusted to him? Explain it in your own words.

2. Titus 2: 11 – 14

What are the characteristics or desires of someone who has been redeemed by God's grace?

How does having the anticipation of Jesus' coming affect one's choices and actions?

3. Titus 3: 1 – 8 –

As Paul reviews the Gospel message in this paragraph, how does he connect belief and behavior?

4. Eternity – It's hard to wrap our limited mind around this concept and its reality. Soak into your mind and heart and soul the reality of Jesus' promise to come again and to give the gift of eternal life to all who will believe.

What are the consequences of unbelief?

John 3: 16 - 18, 36

John 14: 1 - 4

Romans 3: 22 – 24 and 6: 23

I John 3: 1 – 3

Revelation 21: 1 - 4

### RESPONDING PERSONALLY - What is next for you?

Jesus says to you: "Dear Child of Mine. Someday you will be with me forever. Keep that promise in mind, day by day, as you watch and wait. Until then, say 'no' to godless living and sinful pleasures. Count on Me, by My Spirit, to enable you to 'devote yourself to doing good'." Are there any changes God is bringing to your heart and mind?

**I wait for the LORD. I expectantly wait, and in His Word do I put my hope.** Psalm 130: 5 (Amp.)



# "MAY THE GOD OF HOPE . . ."

## Lesson 8 - 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 147: 1 - 11. Think about it – The LORD delights (takes pleasure) in YOU when you stand in awe of Him and when you put your hope in His mercy and unfailing love. Let this truth invade your heart!

**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?

**The LORD delights in those who fear Him, who put their hope in His unfailing love.** Psalm 147: 1

# "MAY THE GOD OF HOPE . . ."

## Lesson 9 - 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 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 you either do not deserve or 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**

Read Isaiah 40: 28 – 31. Take some time to read it several times and to ponder the description of God. What is He waiting and totally able to do for you today? What are the desires of your heart? Let His reassure you now.

**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 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 confident HOPE I am with you each step of the way – until I come again."

**Those who wait for the LORD – who expect, look for and hope in Him -**

**shall change and renew their strength and power.**

Isaiah 40: 31 (Amplified Version)