

Joyful Anticipation

From: Overcoming the Overwhelming:
A 40-Day Journey toward Rediscovering Faith in God

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Intricately woven together with love and faith is hope. Godly hope bears little to no resemblance to the hope of which we speak in our day-to-day conversations. Worldly hope is quite a bit more like doubtful wishing.

When we say, “I hope so,” we aren’t necessarily saying that we believe that the good we desire will happen, just that it would be nice if it did, but we can’t be sure that it will.

Godly hope is a joyful and confident expectation of good.¹ Unlike the doubtful “hope” we normally witness, **true hope includes no doubt at all**. When we hope for something in the spiritual realm, we do so joyfully because we are completely confident we will receive it. Hope sees as already possessing by faith what our senses cannot yet perceive.

Romans 8:24-25

*For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? ²⁵But if we hope for what we do not see, we **eagerly wait** for it with perseverance.*

For those of us who speak English, there is an obstacle to fully understanding the meaning of hope because in English, the word “hope” does not carry with it the idea of waiting. In many languages, though, the verb “to hope” also means “to wait”. The words are interchangeable. Knowing this helps us better understand hope. If one is waiting for a train, the reasonable thought behind this is that the train will be there. Imagine saying in English, “I’m hoping for the train.” Most English speakers would

¹ This definition is derived from Strong’s and Thayer.

conclude that you were not sure it was coming rather than believing it would.

If you are waiting to receive a package you ordered, you expect (hope) that it will come. If it contains something you really want, you might even wait for it (hope for it) with joyful anticipation.

Waiting implies there might be some time before you actually see that for which you hope. That is where faith comes in. Faith is the proof that you have the thing for which you hope, and hope, just like faith, is wrapped up in God's love for us. **The more we know that we are loved by God, the more easily we will hope.**

Romans 5:5

Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

Hope also does not stand alone. We have faith in God. We also hope in God. If He has provided or promised something for us, we can joyfully anticipate that we will see it one day.

The clearest example we have of hope and faith is Abraham. He was given a promise by God that he would be the father of many nations. Even though everything "proved" the contrary, Abraham believed God and was fully convinced that what God promised, He would do.

Romans 4:16-22 NASB

*For this reason it is by faith, in order that it may be in accordance with grace, so that the promise will be guaranteed to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, ¹⁷(as it is written, "A father of many nations have I made you") in the presence of Him whom he believed, even God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist. ¹⁸**In hope against hope he believed**, so that he might become a father of many nations according to that which had been spoken, "So shall your descendants be." ¹⁹Without becoming weak in faith he contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was*

about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah's womb; ²⁰yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, ²¹and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform. ²²Therefore it was also credited to him as righteousness.

Everything Abraham could see with His physical eyes said the complete opposite of what God promised. He saw his own body “as good as dead”, and knew that long ago, Sarah passed the age of being able to bear a child. How much more impossible could his situation have been? Still, God promised him a child. So, contrary to all he could see, He believed (had faith) and joyfully anticipated (hoped) that the good that God had promised him would come to pass.

What about you? Are you facing an impossible situation that gives not one hint that things might ever improve? Are your finances such a mess that there is no logical way out? Are you struggling with a relationship that keeps going around and around in destructive circles? Is your health a completely tangled web of so many problems that no matter what you do, you still don't feel well? Do you “live” with depression or are you one day on top of the world, and the next day in the pit of despair? Are you suffering the loss of a marriage or loved one? Do you feel you missed God's calling in your life somewhere along the way and that now God can't use you? Have you been damaged by the misdeeds of others? No matter what you are facing, God sees you. He knows you. He cares. He has the answer, and He will not withhold it from you. You can trust Him.

Allow your heart to once again believe that God loves you and that His intentions toward you are good. Allow yourself to hope in Him and His promises again—to joyfully anticipate and wait for His promises to be realized. I'm not suggesting you just jump out of your chair and shout yourself into believing. I'm not saying, “Get over it!” or “Chin up!” in the face of grief.

On the contrary, simply open your heart to God who loves you, who only desires good for you, and who will do all that He has promised. Just allow your heart to hope in Him.

2 Corinthians 1:10 AMP

[For it is He] Who rescued and saved us from such a perilous death, and He will still rescue and save us; in and on Him we have set our hope (our joyful and confident expectation) that He will again deliver us [from danger and destruction and draw us to Himself].

Isaiah 40:29-31

*He gives power to the weak,
And to those who have no might
He increases strength.
Even the youths shall faint and be weary,
And the young men shall utterly fall,
But those who wait on (hope in) the Lord
Shall renew their strength;
They shall mount up with wings like eagles,
They shall run and not be weary,
They shall walk and not faint.*

Psalms 43:5

*Why are you cast down, O my soul?
And why are you disquieted within me?
Hope in God;
For I shall yet praise Him,
The help of my countenance and my God.*

