

HOPE

By Conrad Barrett

NEVER GIVE UP!

Hope – *To expect with desire; to look forward to; to anticipate; to think; to expect.*

Hopeful – *Full of hope; inspiring hope and promising success.*

Hopeless – *Having no hope; despairing.*

Never give up! No matter what kind of circumstances you face, there is hope and hope can be one of your greatest companions. If you reach out to it with all your heart it will be a constant friend. It will steady you as you walk through the deep valleys of life and when you encounter storms, which come to try every fiber of your being.

Hope is anticipation or an expectation of something one desires. It is a confidence that becomes a driving force within you. Without it a helpless feeling prevails and victories give way to defeat. Confusion, disappointment, and despair begin to fill the heart where there is little or no hope. Never let hope slip away. Instead, embrace it with all your strength and it will continue to help you in all the difficulties of life.

Paul, the great apostle, wrote that there are three abiding things. He named them as faith, hope, and charity (love). He positioned hope between faith and charity (love) I Corinthians 13:13. Its importance is greater than words can describe. The difference between defeat and failure is related directly to hope.

For centuries people have been tested in many ways. It's nothing new. From the time of Adam until now, there has been continuous struggle. We struggle with faith and doubt, with health and sickness, with riches and poverty, with youth and aging and with mortality and immortality. The list goes on. Testing is a tool. Both God and Satan use testing. We must determine who is doing what when it concerns us. When testing comes from Satan it is usually in the form of temptation, deception, fear and doubt. When God tests, He tries the reins of our hearts. He wants a determined heart and honors faith and sincerity. His testing is much different from that of Satan. God's purpose is to make us stronger, not weaker.

Among the greatest of God's people there is inspiring testimony recorded of how they prevailed over almost insurmountable circumstances and things when hope was kept alive. From dungeons to shipwreck and from fiery furnaces to lions' dens hope has kept the people of God strong and has helped them weather the storms, difficulties, and disappointments of life. Hope can sustain you in your darkest hour and can strengthen you in your most victorious moments. Let it become your constant companion and friend. Never abandon it; it will never abandon you. It will bless you and keep you strong and moving forward in the right direction.

Hope, though an anticipation or an expectation, can be misplaced. Never let it be misguided. The wisdom of the ages tells us that our hope must be placed in God. Certain things about hope have been communicated to us in the Bible. David said in Psalm 119:81, "I hope in thy word". God is our eternal source and His love abides forever. He wants to help us here and now as well as there and then. We don't have to wait until tomorrow to realize that God's word is true and help is near. The Bible tells us there is hope now and regardless of the magnitude of the problem; God is able to help us. Believe God's word. It is always a source of guidance and help.

Paul speaks of Abraham's promise of a son and tells us of Abraham's faith and hope. When Abraham had reached about one hundred years of age and Sarah, his wife, being passed childbearing years, he still had hope for a son. Here's how Paul puts it: "[Abraham] who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations...." Abraham realized two things here: One, the ages of Sarah and himself, and two, the promise of God. His hope was against all the odds, but the promise of God came through and Abraham's hope prevailed.

If we trust and put hope in the wrong source we can reach a point of devastation in a hurry. If we put our hope in God, though we suffer and struggle, we shall ultimately overcome our problems.

The child of God need not be defeated in mind or soul or body. The promise of victory is forever before us as we place our hope securely in God. God is our refuge and is a very present help in the time of trouble.

It is certainly human-like to feel a sense of loneliness and despair, at times, especially when bad news comes. People like good things, but are often troubled when bad things happen. Good people are not always spared from bad things and what we think to be bad things can become a challenge to us and can become an opportunity for a miracle from God. Never allow problems to be complicated by using good energy to attack the "why's" and "how's" that can lend more misery to the problem. Spend energy on the answer, not on the problem. God can provide the answer if we let Him.

Hope is a blessing from God and all of us have that gift. It can be strengthened by prayer and by reading God's word. The book of Mark records several miracles, which tell us of God's delivering power. Throughout the Bible we see God at

work in the lives of different people and always, He is working for what is right and to help His people. When faith and hope prevail good things come. When people turn away from God trouble is always present.

There is a positive answer to every question of life. Right answers are found in the Bible or in a good prayer time when everyone and everything but God is shut out and you and God are alone in a prayer dialogue. It is in prayer that hope is strengthened and a new energy for life emerges. Make time for prayer and you will realize a difference not only in problems but in yourself as well.

David in Psalm 37:5 captured the very heart of hope. Here he said, “Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him and He will bring it to pass.” David knew that in God there is always hope, but without Him there is no hope.

Jesus Christ is ready to help just for asking. He is that High Priest who can be touched with the feeling of human infirmities (Hebrews 4:15). He extends this offer to help to us all: “Let us come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” Hope continues to abide with us. Never lose it.

Remember, God is seldom early, but never late. Don’t panic and don’t let fear rule your heart, especially when you want something to happen immediately. Instead, let hope rise to its lofty and proper place. It can help you get through the valleys and over the mountains and other rough places of life.

Hope comes from the Lord and when it is kept alive and nurtured, the impossible can become possible. God is the eternal source of every child of God and hope is one of the blessings he freely shares with us.

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