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Hope – continued

Even the believer in Christ, who has blown every opportunity that God has given him to appropriate his grace, who has willingly and persistently refused to live by faith in the Word of God and who has rebelled against God's will for his or her life, even if they are taken out of this life under the sin unto death, even that believer has **hope!** What is their hope? Their resurrection from the dead and an eternity with God! **They have a hope!** So, even in the most miserable of conditions, the believer has hope.

But for those believers in Christ, who are obedient to God, who are seeking to do God's will, who are living by faith in his Word, who are positive to and seeking God's grace blessings, these believers not only have the hope of eternal life, but they have the hope of acquiring and enjoying the many blessings that God has in store for them along the way on their journey to their heavenly home.

But one needs to understand the composition of hope. **What exactly is hope?** We have seen that it is a positive, confident mental attitude that good things await us in the future due to God acting in grace on our behalf. We know that it is produced by faith in the promises of God, but there's something else about hope that makes hope hope and that is its relationship to the present. **Hope never deals with the present; it always deals with the future!** The believer needs to understand that side of the dynamic of hope so he have confidence, not fear, toward the future.

Hope always deals with the unseen. It always pertains to that which lies in the **future**. It never applies to that which is seen, that which is in the present. Paul states it like this, *“For we are saved by hope: but **hope that is seen is not hope:** for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?”* Romans 8:24 Paul also places the dynamic of faith in there to show its relationship to hope. *“But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.”* Romans 8:25 Waiting is just another concept of faith.

Hope is the positive mental attitude that deals with, or looks at, that which is in our future. There is that aspect of our lives that looks at the **past**, there is that aspect of our existence that looks at the **present**, or immediate present; and then there is that aspect of our existence that deals with the **future**.

It is of vital importance of how the believer views his **past** experiences, how he views his **present** experiences, and how he views his **future** on earth! Is his mental attitude toward these things positive or is it negative? If it's positive toward the future because of God's future blessings on him, that's hope!

In looking at one's **past experiences** many believers still have remorse, regret, guilt, a sense of failure, bitterness, anger, sadness, self pity and other negative emotions. They have a negative view of their past experiences on earth, which cripple them for the things they are presently going through, and the things they will be going through in the future!

What they need to do, instead, is to look at these things in the past from a **positive** standpoint, not a negative one. **In every bad experience we go through, or have created for ourselves, there is always something positive that came out of it later on.** Maybe it served to develop character in us, or we learned a valuable lesson in life.

In looking at what believers are **presently going through** many are presently worrying about the future, they're fearful, or still bitter about the past, or full of self pity, or riddled with guilt and a failure index. They have a negative view of their life as it exists in the present. **But they can change this** by getting under the sound teaching of the Word of God, live their lives in the filling of the Holy Spirit and take the doctrines of the Word they have learned and apply them to themselves, **and start viewing their lives and their life experiences from a positive standpoint!**

Now we come down to **looking at the future** and this is where **hope** comes in. Hope is the confident, positive mental outlook toward one's future, where you are confident that good things await you there. You can look at your future negatively, where you are afraid of it, or worrying about things, or are despairing; or you can look at it positively in hope! The choice really is ours, whether positive or negative.

In viewing one's past there are many things that the believer can do to rid themselves of their negativity and replace it with a positive mental attitude. You can **forgive anyone** who has wronged you in the past! Let it go! Through forgiveness you will cleanse yourself from bitterness, wrath and anger. You can **forgive yourself**; many believers have never forgiven themselves for what they have done, even though God has forgiven them. By forgiving ourselves we cleanse ourselves from guilt, shame and the failure index.

Many have **sadness** about the past. We can cleanse our souls of grief sometimes by just having a good cry. But we can also throw in there the cherished memories of a loved one; remember the good times and remember also we will see them once again in heaven!

We can develop a positive mental attitude by **acquiring a doctrinal overview of our lives** and our life experiences in our pasts, as it is our past, pleasant or unpleasant, that has developed character in our souls and got us to this place today. Think about **Joseph**, who was sold into slavery by his brothers, His brothers meant it for evil, but God meant it for good. And it was with those experiences, combined with Bible Doctrine, faith and a positive mental attitude that made Joseph the number two man in Egypt under Pharaoh.

If a believer isn't living his or her life to the fullest in the present, it's because he still has negativity about what he has experienced in the past! Eliminate the negative mental attitude and what will be left is character. And then he will living the life God gave to him to the fullest. So by handling the past and its experiences, both positive and negative, **can all be dealt with by one's mental attitude toward the past.** If one has a negative viewpoint on his past, then he can't see the positive things that were going on! But if he views his past from a positive perspective, then he won't even take note of the negative things.

We could say that **our negative outlook blinds us to all the positive things that were going on in our pasts**. And we can also say, on the other hand, that **a positive outlook will blind us to all the negative things that were going on!**

In viewing one's present one needs to develop the healthy mental attitude of accepting who and what they are. They need to realize that now, as a believer in Jesus Christ, they are now a child of God, that **they are saved, loved and totally accepted by God the Father**. They also need to accept themselves, that is, accept their own unique personality.

Many believers do not accept or love themselves, either due to the negative impact of those they grew up with in the home or associated with in society, or due to things they had done in their lives. **We must learn to accept ourselves because God has accepted us**; accepted and loved our own unique personality.

Another thing we need to see is that **all our sins and failures have been covered by the blood of Christ**. So we let all of our past sins and failures go under that concept. One needs to also know that God is with us in the present! God is with us and in us in the present. The knowledge of the presence of God is a great comfort and confidence builder in the present through the filling, power and peace of the Holy Spirit. Involved in that is the spiritual dynamic of claiming the promises of God by faith.

There are ten things that will enable the believer to live confidently and peacefully in the present. One, stop worrying about anything. Two, stop being afraid. Three, take no thought for tomorrow. Four, Forgetting what lies behind in the past; it's water under the bridge, spilt milk. Five, be forgiving. Six, stop being bitter. Seven, trust the Lord. Eight, be filled with the Holy Spirit. Nine, put on the armor of God. Ten, live one day at a time.

So many believers are afraid of the future, or bound up in the past, that they are unable to live in the present. **So what is needed is a positive view of what is going on, instead of a negative one.** One, God will cause it all to work out for our good. Two, he called us and will bring his plan to pass in our lives. Three, he is supplying all our needs. Four, this is the will of God for me in Christ Jesus. Five, he has put me here in history at this very present moment. Six, his will, power, plan, protection and provisions are sustaining me right now in my life. Seven, nothing can separate me from the love of God and his plan for my life.

How we view our past, present and future is really how we view our existence! Our past, present and future is nothing more than our existence in relation to time.

In viewing our future one needs to apply the positive/negative mental attitude dynamic. Which is to say that one has the choice of viewing the future from either a positive or a negative standpoint. The positive standpoint, which proceeds out of faith, will give the believer faith, hope, confidence and optimism toward the future. While the negative perspective will give the believer fear, anxiety, worry, defeatism, discouragement, etc., toward the future. We have the choice of which one we want to have!

There are two great concepts involved here. One, God is in control of our future. Two, we have the choice of how we view our future. The battle for the spiritual life is won or lost in our minds and we have the choice. We can believe that nothing but bad awaits us in the future. Or we can believe what the Bible teaches that nothing but good awaits us in the future because God will make it all work out for our good!

These three concepts of the past, the present and the future are circulating around in our minds continually, switching over from one to the other, from the past, to the present, to the future, back to the past once again, over and over again. What one will find is that everyone has a positive/negative ratio index; where each individual's outlook on things has a certain amount of negativity versus positivity. Our positive/negative ratio index will determine what our outlook is on the past, the present and the future at any given time.

For example, if an individual is generally negative about his experiences in the past, he will basically be negative about what's going on in his life today and into the future! The reason for this is that he only exists in the present, no longer in the past and not in the future; **he only exists now!** And what his present mental attitude is, positive or negative, is what he is, an individual with a positive or negative mental attitude.

So the key is to change his present mental attitude from a negative one to a positive one! Even though he can't do anything about his past, (other than how he views it), **he can do something about his future by changing how he presently thinks!** So viewing one's past, present and future is a concept that actually takes place in the present. And one of the great things about the mind is that it can be **changed.**

Positive people overlook the negative things; while negative people overlook the positive things! **Positive people** overlook negative things because they are looking for the positive in everything. But **negative people** overlook the positive things in life because they are looking for the negative.

In the matter of viewing the **past** we discussed a couple of things concerning how we can change our mental attitude from a negative one to a positive one by going over the negative experiences that we went through in life and start looking at them from a positive standpoint, that is, by **looking for the good that came out of them.**

Now we can change how we view the future from a negative one to the positive, confident mental attitude of **hope** by changing our present mental attitudes through faith, Bible Doctrine and the filling of the Holy Spirit. **Metabolized doctrine changes the way we think and the way we look at life** – our life in its past, present and future. The key is realizing that **we can't change the past, but we can change the present and the future by changing our present mental attitudes!**

We can change how we look at our lives now from a negative one to a positive one by overlooking the negative things that we are going through and have gone through, and by **looking at all these things from a positive standpoint!**

The positive things are there, we just have to look for them. Instead of complaining about **what you don't have** take stock of **what you do have** and be thankful for it! (Which is also the cure for covetousness and ingratitude).

Faith in the Word and its application to our life experiences, (which is what so many believers fail to do), is the key to changing how we think about our past, what we are presently going through and what we will experience in the future.

It takes wisdom, *sophia*, to make sense of what we had to go through in our pasts and what we are presently going through. It takes wisdom, (the doctrine that we have metabolized by faith and applied to experience), to understand what God is doing in our souls and with our souls, and to trust him in all this.

It takes doctrinal understanding and objective hope combined with our faith, (the faith God gave us), to give us subjective hope, so we too can have a positive, confident mental attitude toward the future. **Instead of despairing about life and thinking that we are failures, we can actually be looking forward to a successful future by changing our present mental attitudes!**

If we are negative, bitter and rebellious today, **what do you suppose we'll be like tomorrow?** But if we live each day filled with the Holy Spirit, believing God's Word, claiming his promises by faith, living the faith rest life, living in the new nature and praying, **what do you suppose our tomorrows will be like?** The choice is ours as to what mental attitude we will adopt! Positive faith or negativity.

As stated before, objective hope and our final hope of Christ's return, the resurrection and our new bodies, **when combined with our faith** in these things, is the thing that will give us the inner dynamic of **subjective hope**. Regardless of what we have gone through in life, and are presently going through, **we can change our inner dynamic to hope by placing our faith in the promises of God.**

This is especially important to us when living in the Last Days; the days that the antichrist will be ruling over the world, and the days immediately preceding that time. The days we are presently living in! It is no mystery any longer as to what the 666 system will be! We are operating in it right now! Everything, that is, except the forced mark of the Beast.

Nor is it a mystery as to what the mark of the Beast will be, for it will be **a computer chip attached to the skin of the right hand or the forehead** of the individual. Computers, RFID chips, smart cards, tracking devices, the Internet, loss of privacy, loss of freedom and more are already here and continue to expand everyday! And we can expect to see "peace and prosperity" to grow during this time.

The major change will come when the false prophet, (who is the representative of the antichrist), either publicly or behind the scenes, will force everyone to have a computer chip attached to their bodies. This will be the mark of the Beast connected to the computer in Brussels, Belgium; the mark or chip designed to track everyone on earth.

It will be the antichrist, (the Secretary General of the UN, the false prophet will be the Pope), either publicly or behind the scenes, who **forces** Israel to sign the final peace treaty that will result in the phrase “*peace and safety*”, or “no more war and secure borders”. (The false prophet will force people to take the computer chip on their bodies).

A good overview of this is that Israel will fall in line with the other nations of the world by signing this treaty, then “peace and prosperity” will become the norm around the world, there will be total government control over every *person* on earth, but with no complaints because “life is good”, and there will be expanded Internet usage to the place that the Internet is absolutely indispensable to one's job or business.

All this will be going on for 3 ½ years, then the antichrist will make it mandatory for every *person* to have a computer chip, (probably an RFID chip), attached to their body if they want to do business of any kind, or if they want to access the Internet, or if they want to buy or sell, or do business on the Internet. No chip? Then you're out of “the city” left to survive in the elements.

So what's our hope going to be during this time? We've learned the doctrines on hope; we've applied them to our lives; we've been experiencing the dynamic of hope in our souls as we ascended into prosperity and experienced it in prosperity, now what are we going to do when all that prosperity comes to an end? When the antichrist institutes his forced marking system and our prosperity starts to go, does our hope go with it?

Are we going to be without hope? Absolutely not! We have the greatest hope awaiting us in a very short period of time; a period of time that we can now number the days! We have the hope of the Lord's return and being with him in eternity forever! “*Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;*” Titus 2:13 “*That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*” Titus 3:7

People prefer prosperity to poverty, although prosperity has its own problems and testings. The key to both ends of the spectrum is one's mental attitude! **Hope is the mental attitude that gives life to prosperity and poverty!** You say, well what hope will we have then? **What hope?** How about the return of Christ any day! As the Lord told us, “*And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.*” Luke 21:28

As we've said before, the Christian has every reason to be confident toward his or her future, to be optimistic, to have hope, due to the good things God has planned for them. **We cannot allow the possibility of difficult times in the future rob us of hope at this moment of our lives!** The principle that we have seen is that difficult times are always followed by good times. Winter is always followed by spring; the night is followed by the day; cloudy days by sunshine; sunshine by fog, (I like fog); and our temporal life on this earth is followed by eternal life with God. So, if we do have a couple of difficult years following prosperity – so what! Eternity is waiting for us. If the antichrist makes Christian's lives difficult for a short while – so what! Christ is returning to earth and he will destroy the antichrist.

The believer always has something positive going on in his life, even in difficult times, and he always has something positive to look forward to in the future. And the reason for this, once again, is because God the Father will cause all things to turn out for our good! **Because of this we have hope!**

Because hope is the mental attitude of confidence that good things are going to happen to us in the future, and this because God is going to be doing these things for you, then **hope becomes confidence toward God.**

When we've talked about having a positive mental attitude toward the past and the things that we've had to go through, and having a positive mental attitude toward what we're going through now, what we're really talking about is the mental attitude of *agape* love.

Agape enables us to look at all these things with a positive mental attitude. We have no resentment toward the hurts in our pasts; no bitterness toward the people who hurt us, because ***agape* enables us to let it all go**, to forgive. And *agape* will enable us to meet the future with positive confidence.

When Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery they ripped him from the household and love of his parents and was thrust into a land and life totally foreign to him, and into a situation that was threatening. Yet in all this Joseph maintained a positive mental attitude and he had hope. He realized that **even though they meant this for evil, God meant it for good!** And this is the effect that hope has on the believer's soul; it sees the good! *“But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.”* Genesis 50:20

Whether we believe that objective hope awaits us in the future will not change the fact that it is awaiting us in the future! But what faith will do is guarantee that we will realize them! You see, our faith, or lack of faith, has nothing to do with what God is going to do for us. He's got all these blessings earmarked for us already. But what our faith will do is guarantee that, as we move forward in faith and in the Word, then one day all these blessings will be realized in our lives!

Now this confidence toward life and God will totally transform the believer's faith and mental attitude. You now know that God will feed you, clothe you, protect you, provide for you, bless you and prosper you; and that God is in absolute control of every situation that we are in and will make it work out for our good.

This confidence toward God will also affect our prayer life. If we have confidence toward life, our future and God, then we will have confidence **before** God when we come to him with our prayer requests. God wants us to approach him for grace and mercy with boldness. *“Let us therefore come boldly, *parresia*, unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”* Hebrews 4:16 Boldness was the mental attitude of the Greek citizen when he exercised his political rights as a citizen of Greece. And as citizens of God's kingdom he wants us to approach him with confidence.

We have **hope**, objectively speaking, because of God's eternal purpose to bless us. We have subjective hope, that inner mental attitude dynamic of positive confidence that in the future good things will happen to us, **when we take the promises and doctrines of God and combine our faith with them!** It is by this metabolization of doctrine through faith, combined with our prayers, that we will be able to live in the present and face the future with confidence!

There is so much negativity going on around us in society, on TV, our jobs, the country, even in our own homes, that at times it's hard to keep a positive mental attitude. Sometimes we just get into a negative mood and it's hard to get out of it. Prayer and the claiming of the promises by faith is the vehicle that will pull us out of our own bouts of negativity and get us back into the state of hope.

If we are contemplating the negativity of a nation and its people, we need to go back and consider the life of Jeremiah the prophet. Jeremiah was confronted daily with a people who were not only negative to the Word of God and the faith rest life God had for them, they were just negative in general, like so many today.

They had been totally corrupted by the Babylonian religious and economic system. The religious system channeled all worship back to Satan. And the economic system was based upon lust, covetousness, greed, arrogance and bragging. Sound familiar?

We have seen in our study on developing a positive mental attitude that one has to isolate or insulate oneself from all concepts of negativity and negative people. And at the same time absorb oneself in the Word of God and the spiritual life. It is a discipline that one **must** develop if he or she is going to have **hope** in the soul and a PMA.

But Jeremiah was not able to do this, to a large degree, because he was commissioned by God to take the Word out to these negative people. And when he did he was met with the most vitriolic of mental attitudes and speech. The Israelites were absolutely hateful toward anything pertaining to God.

But there were believers living in Israel in those days who did walk according to the ways of God, who were obedient to him and lived in his Word. They were believers who were hoping that their positive volition for the Word would somehow, either turn the nation around back to God, or stay the hand of God's judgment. But that was not the case to be.

These were believers who had the hope, "*Hast thou utterly rejected Judah? hath thy soul lothed Zion? why hast thou smitten us, and there is no healing for us? we looked for peace, and there is no good; and for the time of healing, and behold trouble!*" Jeremiah 14:19 They hoped that, 'Perhaps the nation will be spared!' Or, 'If I can get my life right before the Lord and be an influence on other people, maybe God will spare the nation?'

But after years of seeing the nation go further downhill into entrenched negativity the bargaining starts. 'Well then, maybe God will spare my town, or city, or geographical area'. But, as your town or city goes downhill, negative to the Word, it becomes, 'Maybe God will spare my family?'

But as time goes by the reality sets in that even members of your own family are negative to the Word of God right along with the rest of society. When believers go negative to Bible Doctrine and start going after the things of the Babylonian system, either its religion, philosophy, economic arm, or politics, then God's judgment comes on that nation and its people. So now what happens?

If there is a large enough pivot of believers positive to the Word and the true spiritual life dynamic in a nation, then God will **spare that nation** and continue to bless it. But if the pivot gets smaller, then God will not spare that nation, but will **spare a geographical area**. But, if the pivot of positive believers continues to shrink, then God will only **spare a town**, if there are sufficient numbers of positive believers living in it. But, if the pivot shrinks in that town, then God will only **spare family units**, if there are a number of positive believers in it. But, if it shrinks further, then God will not spare the family unit, **but only the positive believers in that family unit!**

So what do you tell positive believers to encourage them, to give them hope? You tell them about Daniel, Ezekiel and Jeremiah. You tell them that, yes it is true, that if the nation turns away from God for so long that it can get to the place where it will never come back and end up being destroyed under the fifth cycle of discipline. **But for the believer who has stayed with the Lord, God will continue to bless them!**

Jeremiah was faithful to the Lord and his Word; he prophesied and taught for over forty years; he suffered; he sacrificed; he was denied marrying his right woman who had gone over into the Babylonian cult; he hoped; he prayed and at the end of it all the nation was still destroyed under the fifth cycle of discipline.

And as he saw his nation in ashes, the people slaughtered, the temple destroyed and the survivors carted off to Babylon, (Daniel was one of them), he had this to say in his book of lamenting. *“**This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope. It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness. The LORD is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him. The LORD is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him. It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD.**”* Lamentations 3:21-26

What gave Jeremiah hope? **It was as he recalled all the doctrines that he had learned about God**, his grace, his justice, his mercy and his plan for their lives! **And as he believed the doctrines hope started to flood his soul** and he started to have a positive, confident outlook toward life once again. And the next step was just to wait patiently in faith for God's plan to unfold. And we want to notice that **hope is in Him**! Not in a government, not in people, not in ourselves, but in Him!

Hope comes to us as we believe what God says in his Word, *“I would have despaired unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.”* Psalm 27:13 (NASB)

So how do we get hope?

That is to say, how do we have the dynamic of hope operating inside our souls? We know that hope exists outside of us, apart from us and future to us because of God's plan to bless us, but how do we transform our negative mental attitudes to one's where we have a positive confidence toward the future?

Romans 15:13 reveals this to us, “*Now the God of **hope fill** you with all joy and peace **in believing**, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.*” ο δε θεος της ελπιδος πληρωσαι υμας πασης χαρας και ειρηνης εν τω πιστευειν εις το περισσευειν υμας εν τη ελπιδι εν δυναμει πνευματος αγιου

In this passage we see that **hope**: is the mental attitude of God himself, that he is the source of hope, that he wants us to have hope, that hope comes to us along with joy and peace, that it is realized in the filling of the Holy Spirit and that **it comes to us through our exercising faith in the Word of God!**

Paul begins with the optative mood, *plerosai*, of *pleroo*, to fill. Now the optative mood expresses a wish or desire. It is Paul's desire that **all** believers in Christ, *humas pases*, will be filled with hope, as well as with joy and peace. But that's all it is, a wish. Now as to whether believers will be is totally dependent upon whether they will fulfill the means by which it happens as stated further down in the verse.

The key to having hope is found in the phrase, *en to pisteuein*, “*in believing*”, or “*in the believing*”, with the definite article. Here we have the present active infinitive of pisteuo, to believe or to trust, used with the word *en*, plus *to* in the locative case. The preposition en denotes the place or sphere in which something is found, or an action takes place.

So what this all is saying is that Paul expresses a heartfelt wish for **all** believers in Christ that they may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit, as the instrumental agency by which this manifestation of power is accomplished. **But the optative mood tells us that the believer's own volition is involved here**. Paul can't do it for them. **There is something that must take place first before hope can fill the soul.**

He then goes on to explain the dynamics by which hope is unleashed in the soul and that is, “*in the believing*”. *En*, plus the locative of sphere, with the infinitive of result for faith, tells us that it is **in the sphere of faith, in the sphere of trusting God, in the sphere of believing the Word of God; it is in that sphere of faith that the believer in Christ is filled with hope, along with peace and joy!**

I've tried to cover every shade of nuance in this study on the mental attitude dynamic of hope, but what it all boils down to is this simple concept of exercising faith in the Word. **Simple, so we can retain it for life.**

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