

Lifelines

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Topic: Adaptability

The Season on Hope **© 2025 by Dr. Ed Jordan**

The Christmas Season is upon us. It comes upon us so quickly, and departs too soon. Generally the first week of Advent celebrates the theme of Hope. As we think of the arrival of Jesus as the source of hope for us and our lives, one pauses to consider why Hope is a part of the Christmas themes each year. What is hope, and what does it empower us to do?

A large part of hope is being able to envision a better scenario on the horizon, and to fight through the difficulties of today to arrive in a better state just beyond our current perception. Hope is a gift which captures our desires, and pulls us forward through many yet unseen obstacles that lie between where we are, and where we hope to soon be. Hope captures our dreams and empowers us to go through difficulties. Hope is not only a vision, but also a motivator and energizer. Biblically, hope is anchored in the goodness and trustworthiness of God, and His love for us. Hope envisions the good life that God has planned for us up ahead, perhaps around the next bend, or over the next hilltop. For Christians, hope is anchored in the goodness of God, who loves us and desires that we experience life as it was designed to be.

We hope for light, not for darkness; we hope for healing not for pain; we hope for blessings, not curses. We hope for beauty, joy, and goodness in our relationships and dreams; we do not hope for hatred, ugliness, and pain. So hope is only as good as the goodness of the person who will be the fulfiller and gratifier of our hopes, desires and dreams. This is why Christian hope is the best hope in the world. God has promised us eternal life in Jesus Christ. God the Father is the source of perfect love, and Jesus is the embodiment of that perfect love. God is the one who promises a life of goodness and blessing.

"Now these three remain: faith, hope, and love—but the greatest of these is love." (1Corinthians 13:13 - CSB). By faith we take action and move forward, because of the goodness available in hope. When God and His plans for our life are a part of our hope, then faith empowers us to plow ahead to grasp what hope has promised. We know that our hope is not in vain, because God is good, good, good. God is the ultimate manifestation of goodness, so we by faith persevere through unbelievable circumstances and obstacles. The third word in this verse is love, depicting the love which flows from God, and indeed which is the core nature of God.

In Psalm 42 we see the Psalmist plodding on, dry and thirsty, moving forward to experience the goodness of God in the land of the living. In 42:1 he describes his thirst for a refreshing, new encounter with God. In 42:5, he reassures himself to hang in there in hope, for joy is on the way. He states in Psalm 42:5 (CSB): "Why, my soul, are you so dejected? Why are you in such turmoil? Put your hope in God, for I will still praise Him, my Savior and my God." Those who put their hope in God will never be abandoned by Him.

There is an interesting statement by Gregory of Nyssa (circa 335-395) regarding hope. He said: "Hope always draws the soul from the beauty that is seen, to what is beyond; always kindles the desire for the hidden, through what is perceived." Hope, like a magnet, pulls us forward, moving us towards the future. Consider the beauty and fragrant aroma of a gardenia as a demonstration of God's creative handiwork. If today contains such fragrance, delicateness, and beauty, what beauty awaits us beyond the thicket, beyond the uphill journey over the mountain?

Christmas brought us hope in the birth of Jesus. Jesus was beautiful, innocent, and hope-filled. He healed the helpless, giving them hope of a brighter day ahead. The Germans have a saying: "While there is life, there is hope." Since Jesus gives to us eternal life, and promises that those who believe in Him will never perish, we live in hope from today throughout eternity.

At Christmas, God sent us Jesus, the embodiment of hope. Do you know Him? He has wondrous things waiting for you just over the next hill. Journey on, hopeful pilgrim! God's goodness, faithfulness, and promises never fail. Hope thou in God; I will yet see His hand in the land of the living.

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