

September 2006

Hope

“And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.”
1 Corinthians 13:13

Hope is the confident expectation that good awaits you in the future. It is not a wish or desire that good things will happen to you in the future, but the confidence that they will! The mental attitude of hope is one of the most important dynamics that a believer can have going on inside of him, and is to be cultivated along with faith and love.

“And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.”
1 Corinthians 13:13 It's not saying that faith and hope aren't important, they're vitally important; they're in the three most important dynamics of the Christian life. It's just saying that *agape* is more important than faith and hope. The mental attitudes of faith and hope (*elpis*) proceed out of the spiritual mental attitude of *agape*.

The complexity of the human soul is just amazing. Well not really, if one understands that it was created in the image of God. But amazing because there is so much to it. It needs wisdom; it needs courage; it needs faith; it needs the empowering of God; it needs to have positive thought concepts and it needs hope. **The soul needs hope!**

The soul needs to have a reason to keep on going in life! Not only through the bad times, but the good times as well, because we are all so prone to boredom, monotony, not being challenged, etc.. And we definitely need hope when we are going through very trying times in our own lives. **We need to know that there's a tomorrow and it will be better because God will be there in the morrow with us!**

Hope not only gives us forward momentum, but it transforms our present, experiential mental attitude dynamic into something wonderful. It takes us out of the doldrums and propels us into the high seas adventure of God's will for our lives. It takes us out of the pit of despair and puts us on pleasant paths through beautiful meadows. It takes us out of the barren deserts of boredom and monotony and places us in the forests of adventure and challenge. It takes us from pessimism to optimism. From feeling and acting like a failure to feeling like and being a winner. It takes us from “I can't do anything” to “I can do all things through Christ”. It takes away our worry and gives us courage to face the future. It takes away our, “What's the sense in trying” and gives us the “I can do it” attitude!

Hope, *elpis*, not only gives us a reason to live, but a desire to live! Not survive, but to live life to its fullest! Hope completely transforms every facet of the believer's soul: his mind, his emotions, his thinking, his decisions and his actions. **Hope transforms the believer and life around him!**

Hope gives us a reason to believe; a reason to move forward in life by faith. This is what hope does, but what is hope? **Hope is the mental attitude of confidence that good awaits us in the future all the days of our lives and beyond!**

When you listen to the negativity of other people, even ourselves and other Christians, what they're really saying is that they have no hope! The expression of negativity is that it's all hopeless! That's why so many Americans get excited at election time. They start to have the hope that, if their candidate is elected, things will get better. How tragic it is for Christians to derive hope over a political process.

But true hope is not based upon external situations or conditions. It is not based upon what political party is in office, or your present circumstances. It is the mental attitude, the **confident mental attitude**, that good things, good times, blessings, fun, enjoyment, challenges, adventure, fulfillment, pleasure, productivity, all the good things in life are going to be yours in the future!

It is not based upon your present circumstances, nor is it based upon any other future circumstances, and it is not based upon what your friends, family or co-workers may think about you and your life or what they may tell you. (Have you ever thought that maybe they don't have hope and they don't want you to have it?)

The mental attitude of hope is not based upon the government, the economy, the Internet, our families, our friends, our associates; it is not based upon our present job or employer; it is not based upon our present health, circumstances, or finances; it is not based upon our abilities or lack of them. **Hope is based upon God and his plan for our lives! And besides that, nothing else matters!**

Some will disagree with this. They may not argue the point, but down deep inside that don't believe it. They may say, echoing Job's sentiments, "That's all well and good, but I don't have any hope at all, only this misery." They think the problem is that they don't have hope because they're so miserable! The problem is **that's how they're looking at their situation**. Their firm belief is that they don't have hope because they are miserable, when it's just the exact opposite that's true! **The reason why they're so miserable is because they don't have the mental attitude of hope!**

If they would change their mind set and get the mental attitude of hope going through their stream of consciousness, they will find their misery gone! It's not that hope goes when adversity or misery comes to us. It's that misery comes when hope goes. Get the hope back and the misery will go!

"You mean to tell me that, if I have hope, the mental attitude dynamic of hope, that I will be well, healthy and financially well off, that my problems will go away when hope comes?" No! But the misery in your soul will go away when hope is present. You see hope is a positive mental attitude dynamic, dynamic because **there is power in the mental attitude of hope**. Misery resides in despair. Hope? Misery? Which do we want?

The whole matter is won or lost in the mental attitude, not our present circumstances. And the mental attitude of hope gives us the victory. **Hope knows that good things await us in the future**, therefore it isn't bothered by the things that we are presently going through. It's really looking forward to the wonderful things that God has in store for us in the future in his plan for our lives.

The mental attitude of hope is the thing that enables us to overcome our present circumstances, for it transforms the believer's mental attitude. But not only that it will **motivate us to press forward in the plan of God, to go on to the next faith objective**. Thus pulling us out of our present predicament and giving us the **forward momentum** that we need so much.

Hope will not only enable us to acquire God's objectives for our lives, but enable us to overcome all the obstacles along the way. **It is the undefeated, "undefeatable" mental attitude that God has and that he wants all of us to have!** This mental attitude of **hope comes to us from none other than God himself**. It is **his** mental attitude! He is the God of hope and **he himself has the mental attitude of absolute confidence toward the future**. Hope comes to us from God as its source.

In fact it is quite an awesome, amazing thing that **we can experience the same mental attitude toward the future that God does**. In a sense we are entering into the sphere of the divine. What his mind set is can become ours. We don't experience a mental attitude that is **similar** to his; we actually experience in our souls what God's outlook toward the future is – **hope – absolute positive confidence!** In effect, we are entering into the heavenlies, into the presence of God, but in our own souls here on earth.

It's like the concept of love. *Agape* isn't a separate love given to us by God; **it is his mental attitude!** When we are experiencing the spiritual, mental attitude of *agape* love, we are experiencing, at that time, **God's attitude toward life and people**. And when we are experiencing **hope**, we are experiencing **God's attitude toward life and the future!**

God is totally confident toward the future. He knows that nothing but good will be in the future, because **he is going to create nothing but good for the future**. The **demons**, however, are filled with dread and terror. They know that the future holds for them the **Lake of Fire**. **Hope** is the confident mental attitude that good things await you in the future. **Despair** is the confident mental attitude that bad things await you in the future.

Now God is the God of hope. It is his mental state. He is the source of hope. He wants us to have hope. He gives us hope. And he is the basis for hope. That is, **his plan for our lives and his actions on our behalf, are the basis for us having hope**. Our hope is based upon God's grace blessing package for each one of us.

Now how do we get it? How do we translate this hope mental attitude from God into our lives? The first thing we need to see is that there are two kinds of hope. One, an **external, objective hope** that is independent of our internal dynamic. Two, the other kind of hope that is internal and subjective, which we refer to as **subjective hope**.

Objective hope exists outside of us and is apart from us. **It is there because of all the wonderful things that God has planned for us in his eternal purpose.** **Objective hope always exists for us regardless of how we may feel at any given moment!** And it is this **objective hope that becomes the basis for subjective hope**, our positive mental attitude of confidence toward the future. **We experience subjective hope in our souls when we put our faith in what constitutes objective hope!**

Objective hope starts with the essence of God, the will or desire of God, the plan of God and God's eternal purpose for us. Which all center around God's desire and intent to bless us now and forevermore. God has even saved us for that purpose; he saved us to bless us! In fact, he **chose** us for the purpose of blessing us. All this speaks of God's desire and a concrete determination to bless us.

This is not talking about a fuzzy, wishful desire of good for us in life, but a concrete determination, (his eternal purpose), to bless us in every way and in every area with certain specific things in mind. Many blessings in many areas covering every area of our lives here on earth all the way throughout eternity.

These blessings are tailor made for the individual; specifically designed by God for that believer in Christ, which God will allot to him or her over the course of their life on earth. These blessings have been purposed by God and he has formulated a plan whereby they become reality to us on earth. **And they are appropriated by us when we walk by faith in his Word and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit.** (The Holy Spirit not only leads us into service for God, but blessings from God!)

God has also provided a way whereby he can punch these blessings through to us while we live in the devil's world. **And God also has a plan and the power to protect us from the devil as we enjoy them!** God has the power to do this. *“And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.”* 2 Corinthians 9:8

Now, in addition to God's desire to bless us, his eternal purpose to bless us, his plan to bless us, and his many thousands of promises to us, **God also knew beforehand that we would make bad decisions in life and that bad things would happen because we live in the devil's world full of old sin nature people**, (including ourselves), **so because of all this; he decided that he would take any and all bad in our lives and make it work out together for our good!** *“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”* Romans 8:28

God has decided, decreed and ordained that he would bless us, and that's exactly what he will do concerning our lives. The good that we have is a blessing. The bad that we experience, (even if we bring it in on ourselves), he turns into blessing. How can we lose? We can't! God even had his own Son sacrificed for our sins so he could bless us. This should certainly clarify what his intentions are toward us. With God on our side it is guaranteed that our life will be a life of blessing as we walk with him.

Now this becomes the basis of **objective hope**. But what is **subjective hope**? It is the confidence that good awaits you in the future. **But how can we have this confidence if we do not know that good awaits us?** If we do not know, or if we do not believe, then we have doubts, fears and a gnawing, fearful uncertainty toward the future.

But if we know that good awaits us all the days of our lives because **God has decided** in eternity past to bless us, and that God has the power to bless us, then we have the basis for confidence because it all goes back to the plan of God and the power of God and not because we do something in our own works and strength.

Objective hope exists outside of us and apart from us. It exists because it is that which God has ordained for us. It exists not because of us, but because of God! Not because of what we do, but because of what God has done and will do for us in the future! **But it does exist for us; it is always there.**

Objective hope becomes the platform for faith and subjective hope. We may be discouraged and depressed over something that we see presently going on, or that we're going through, but if we can see that God is going to bless us, that he has a plan to bless us, which is our objective hope, **it gives us the basis for believing once again.**

Now **subjective hope** is the internal mental attitude of confidence where we know and believe that good awaits us in the future. But it only exists because of the objective hope that we have **from God ordaining and creating good for us in the future**. **So our subjective hope is based upon objective hope!**

But how do we get this subjective hope? Or, how can we have as an experiential reality the mental attitude that good things are awaiting us in the future? This goes back to the matter of faith and the Word of God. Subjective hope permeates the seat of consciousness of **the believer who walks in the sphere of faith in the 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

Faith in the Word creates the dynamic of subjective hope in our souls because of the objective hope that we have with God! David began exercising his faith once again that he would still continue to see God's goodness (his objective hope) in his life once again thus dispelling his despair.

Despair is the opposite of hope and despair and was avoided by David by the hope that he had in his soul. And his hope in his soul was due to the objective hope centering around the goodness of God and the plan that he had for David's life to bless him.

You see it's the goodness of the Lord for his elect that is our hope, objectively speaking, in this life. And **that hope outside of us** becomes the basis for **the hope inside us** when we put our faith in the objective hope of God's plan to bless us. So the key to having experiential hope in the soul, a confidence and optimism toward the future, is to be **believing in the goodness of the Lord toward you**. Believing that he will bless you and be doing all sorts of good things for you now and forevermore.

Objective hope exists because of God's desire, decree, purpose and plan for our lives. God chose us and saved us for the purpose of blessing us! Objective hope will always be there for us. **Subjective hope**, though, is dependent upon whether the believer is exercising faith in the promises of God and in objective hope.

Once again the key to having the mental attitude of hope toward the future is faith! Not some general optimism toward life, but the faith that God is going to bless you, that your life is going to be one blessing after another. For example, not all things that we go through are good, **but you believe that God is going to make them, cause them, to work out for our good.** Romans 8:28

This is the reason why God chose us, called us and saved us; he did so for the purpose of blessing us! “*Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.*” 1 Peter 3:9

The rest of the world goes around cursing each other. I guess it's no wonder that all they know how to do is curse because they are under a curse and have no hope. “*That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:*” Ephesians 2:12 But the elect of God aren't under a curse! We are under the blessing of God. We are being so blessed by God that every aspect of our lives is blessing and will be a blessing forever! **And we have hope!**

So people who are being blessed should bless them that curse them for blessing summarizes our existence on earth and in eternity. And it all goes back to the plan of God and his desire, intention and purposed will to bless us. This becomes the basis for our hope in the soul and our dealings with others.

Clarification of the four concepts of hope:

Temporal Hope – God's blessings for us in this life.

Final Hope – Resurrection, the new body and eternity with God.

Subjective Hope – The internal mental attitude dynamic.

Objective Hope – External reality based on God's plan for us.

Temporal hope is based upon all the wonderful things that God has stored for us in this life out of his goodness. God decided in his policy of grace to choose, call and save us for the purpose of blessing us. These blessings cover all categories around spiritual, physical, emotional, social and production blessings.

Final hope is what awaits us at the end of this life! Our resurrection from the dead, a new indestructible, incorruptible and eternal body. This final hope is the ultimate blessing and the ultimate goal. It is also the thing, as we move forward each day, that will give us forward momentum in the plan of God and the acquisition of God's blessings for us along the way. It is also a basis for rejoicing in life.

Subjective hope is the internal mental attitude dynamic of a positive confidence toward one's future that it will be good, that it will be a life of blessing. **It is experienced by the believer exercising his or her faith in the promises of God.** It believes that God has saved them to bless them and that their life will entail one blessing after another. Even if bad things happen to them, even if they make bad decisions, they believe that God will make those things turn out for their good.

Objective hope is the external reality that exists everyday apart from what the believer is going through in his life. It is not based upon what a believer is thinking or feeling, nor is it based upon the believer's works, abilities, or striving. Neither is it based upon governments, the economy, one's family, friends, or the nation the believer lives in. It is **based solely upon what God had determined and decreed for that believer in eternity past**. It is based upon the plan of God for that believer that was formulated to bring about God's purpose. **Objective hope covers both this life and the next one.**

Our **final hope** is the biggest and best of the four hopes. It is the thing that all believers are most assuredly moving forward to each day of their lives, even though they may not be too confident about it. It is also the biggest theme of the Bible for it consummates everything that God has been doing for us since the beginning; namely, our resurrection, new body and spending eternity face to face with God!

David was reflecting this hope, both objective and subjective, when he was prophesying about the Lord Jesus, “*Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.*” Acts 2: 26, 27 (**Notice how hope produces happiness in the believer's soul!**)

The **Apostle Paul's** own personal hope was his resurrection from the dead. “*That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*” Titus 3:7 “*But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.*” Acts 23:7

It is this hope, our resurrection from the dead, that all believers in Christ are waiting for. “*For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.*” Galatians 5:4 Our righteousness, which is imputed to us through faith in Christ, guarantees salvation and our resurrection from the dead. This is the hope we all are waiting for.

Paul wrote, “*The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,*” Ephesians 1:18 Our election and our calling resulted in our salvation, but there was a purpose and a goal behind why God called and saved us, and that was so he could raise us from the dead and give us a resurrection body and bring us into glory to live with him forevermore. This is what constitutes the final hope of all believers. **But remember, regardless of whether we're down, discouraged, depressed, or in the pit of despair, we always have objective hope apart from what we're going through! If we think about objective hope our despair will go away and be replaced by internal hope!**

We must remember a very important point, **objective hope always exists for us regardless of what we are temporarily going through**. We must realize that our internal dynamic does not determine the external reality! We may be so discouraged that we have given up all hope. But how we feel at the moment has nothing to do with real hope, objective hope! God is blessing us, and is going to continue blessing us, regardless if we're depressed or not, regardless of if we have subjective hope or not!

And here's the key. If you want to get rid of despair and discouragement; if you want to replace that and have a positive, confidence that good things are going to happen to you in the future; if you want to have subjective hope, then all you need to do is **get your faith up and start believing the promises once again!** *“Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, (in the sphere of faith), that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.”* Romans 15:13

Faith in the promises of God, which gives us **internal hope**, does not change the external reality of God going to bless us! But what it does do is give us hope in the soul. One hope is on the **outside**, the other is on the **inside**. What we have to do to get hope going on in the soul is start believing the promises of God once again! And the best place to start with that is all the promises and doctrines that deal with our **final hope**!

Paul teaches us many things about this **final hope**. *“There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;”* Ephesians 4:4 *“For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel;”* Colossians 1:5 *“In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;”* Titus 1:2 *“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

Believers can get so caught up in the things of this life, trying to get ahead, worrying about the bills, concern for the family, etc., that we lose sight of the magnitude of all the things that God has done for them and will be doing for them in the future. They lose sight of the **final hope** that each day is taking us one step closer!

And in the process they are also losing out on **the fantastic, transforming dynamic of what internal hope does for the soul!** So in getting our hopes in a row, we must start with the most important hope of all, our **final hope**, which is our resurrection from the dead, our eternal body and our eternity with God the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ.

From objective hope we move on to what **subjective hope** does for the soul. The Apostle John wrote, *“And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.”* 1 John 3:3 *Hagnizo* deals with a cleansing, a purifying of the soul, a removing of the things associated with the world, the flesh and the devil from our souls. We're able to do this because we see what our future is, and we realize that we are not of this world, or of this flesh, or belong to the devil. Final hope puts our focus again on eternity future.

Subjective hope produces endurance in the believer, because he is able to see, believe and be confident toward the future it enables him to endure the trials in life he goes through.

“Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father;” 1 Thessalonians 1:3

Faith motivates the believer to action; **love** motivates the believer to work hard in the action; and **hope** gives us endurance in the action.

Subjective hope gives us a boldness to live life – and why not! Seeing that we're going to live wonderfully forever, and that God is going to cause all things to work out for our good, we should have boldness! *“Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech.” 2 Corinthians 3:12*

Subjective hope produces spiritual joy in the soul. *“Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;” Romans 12:12*

Paul uses final hope, this ultimate hope of our salvation, namely our resurrection from the dead, our new body and an eternity with God, in a figure of speech to illustrate how hope can protect the soul. *“But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.” 1 Thessalonians 5:8*

This is an interesting point that Paul brings out by using the analogy of hope as an helmet. Now the purpose of the helmet was to protect the head, more specifically the brain found in the head. And what takes place in the brain? It is the seat of consciousness, thought, the emotions, one's will and one's outlook on life. **To put it simply, with hope covering the head, and with hope bringing joy, this is telling us that joy will permeate every aspect of the believer's soul!**

We must always consider the two kinds of hope. There is **objective hope** that is external to us which takes in **all the wonderful things that God has planned for us in life and eternity**. And then there is **subjective hope**, which is a dynamic that takes place inside the believer's soul. We must remind ourselves that, even if we are not experiencing subjective hope at any given moment, **objective hope is always there!**

Now we have seen that subjective hope, that internal mental attitude dynamic of confidence toward life, that good things from the Lord await us in the future, is produced by faith in the Word of God, faith in the plan of God for our lives, faith in the promises of God. *“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.” Romans 15:4*

This also dovetails with that unpleasant phenomenon referred to as undeserved suffering. Like it or not, undeserved suffering, combined with faith in the Word, does produce hope in the believer's soul. And what does hope produce? Joy! *“And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope.” Romans 5:3,4* As we see God take us through a problem, and we go through it with faith and the filling of the Holy Spirit, we develop the confidence that he can take us through any problem, thus giving us hope!

Temporal hope looks at the confidence that the believer has that the Lord is going to continue blessing him in this life. It is produced in the believer's soul by believing the promises and doctrines of God's Word. “Who against hope believed in **hope**, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be” Romans 4:18 God has many blessings in store for us in this life that he planned for us in eternity past, our temporal and objective hope; by believing this it will motivate the believer to faith once again producing subjective hope in the soul.

Now what can the believer, who is down, discouraged and has given up, do to get back on track again and have hope in his life? He begins with the most resounding theme in the Bible of our future and final hope, our resurrection from the dead, receiving new bodies and living with God in eternity. **We will live forever!**

He starts by believing and thinking about his election, his salvation, that God has a perfect plan for his life for now and for eternity, about being raised from the dead and given a new body, about living with God forever in eternity. He starts thinking about God's great love for him demonstrated by Christ dying for his sins.

Having faith in the concept of ultimate and final hope concerning eternity, and in the concept of temporal hope for this life, where you know that God still has many wonderful things for you to do and things for you in this life; **having faith in these two concepts will give the believer subjective hope in their souls!**

Once **subjective hope** fills the believer's soul; once he or she now has back that positive confidence that good things are awaiting them in the future from the hand of God, then **that mental attitude of hope will give us the faith to act!** It will give us the faith to get going once again in the plan of God.

Both faith and hope feed each other; both proceed out of *agape* love. It is the *agape* mental attitude that inspires faith ideas. “*For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.*” Galatians 5:6 And also, “*(Agape) Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.*” 1 Corinthians 13:7 **Objective hope**, such as our final hope and temporal hope, when combined with our faith, produces **subjective hope** in the believer's soul.

The key to all this is the mental attitude of *agape* that is produced under the filling of the Holy Spirit. *Agape* is the mental attitude of the new nature and it brings about faith; the faith to move, the faith to act, the faith to endure, the faith to overcome, and the faith toward the future that God will have good things there for us.

The believer in Christ always has hope! He always has a hope to be moving forward to in life, regardless of what he feels at any given moment. This concept of hope is always external to him and lies in God's plan for his life and the promise that God is going to cause all things, even the bad, work out for his good. Remember Job had given up hope; he was caught in the morass of despair. That was his subjective experience at the time, but God had wonderful things in store for him after the trial was over.

To Be 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!** And until the believer understands that side of the dynamic of hope he will never get it down right.

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 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!**