



When you feel hopeless

Providing no hope causes one to feel
Desperate without hope; despairing:
Impossible to accomplish, solve, resolve,
Not able to learn or act, perform, or work as desired;
Inadequate for the purpose:

Be patient in tribulation

Romans 12:12 – 13

Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; [13]
Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.
Christian hospitality differs from social entertaining. Entertaining focuses on the host: The home must be spotless; the food must be well prepared and abundant; the host must appear relaxed and good-natured. Hospitality, by contrast, focuses on the guests' needs, such as a place to stay, nourishing food, a listening ear, or just acceptance.

Hospitality can happen in a messy home. It can happen around a dinner table where the main dish is canned soup. It can even happen while the host and the guest are doing chores together. Don't hesitate to offer hospitality just because you are too tired, too busy, or not wealthy enough to entertain.

The God of hope fill you with joy.

Romans 15:13 - 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.

The Roman church was a diverse community. It was made up of Jews and Gentiles, slaves and free people, rich and poor, strong and weak. So it was difficult for them to accept one another. Accepting means taking people into our homes as well as into our hearts, sharing meals and activities, and avoiding racial and economic discrimination. We must go out of our way to avoid favoritism. Consciously spend time greeting those you don't normally talk to, minimize differences, and seek common ground for fellowship. In this way you are accepting others as Christ has accepted you, and God is given glory.

**God's thoughts toward you are to give you peace
And an expected end.**

Jeremiah 29:11 - For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.

We're all encouraged by a leader who stirs us to move ahead, someone who believes we can do the task he has given and who will be with us all the way. God is that kind of leader. He knows the future, and his plans for us are good and full of hope. As long as God, who knows the future, provides our agenda and goes with us as we fulfill his mission, we can have boundless hope. This does not mean that we will be spared pain, suffering, or hardship, but that God will see us through to a glorious conclusion.

By faith, we have access to God's grace.

Romans 5:2-5

By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. [3] And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; [4] And patience, experience; and experience, hope: [5] And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

Paul states that, as believers, we now have entered into a place of undeserved privilege. Not only has God declared us not guilty; he has drawn us close to himself. Instead of being enemies, we have become his friends—in fact, his own children (John 15:15; Galatians 4:5).

For first-century Christians, suffering was the rule rather than the exception. Paul tells us that in the future we will *become*, but until then we must *overcome*. This means we will experience difficulties that help us grow.

We rejoice in suffering, not because we like pain or deny its tragedy, but because we know God is using life's difficulties and Satan's attacks to build our character. The problems that we run into will develop our perseverance—which in turn will strengthen our character, deepen our trust in God, and give us greater confidence about the future.

You probably find your patience tested in some way every day. Thank God for those opportunities to grow, and deal with them in his strength (see also James 1:2-4; 1 Peter 1:6, 7).

All three members of the Trinity are involved in salvation. The Father loved us so much that he sent his Son to bridge the gap between us (John 3:16). The Father and the Son send the Holy Spirit to fill our life with love and to enable us to live by his power (Acts 1:8). With all this loving care, how can we do less than serve him completely!

The Lord will never fail, nor forsake you.

Deuteronomy 31:6 - Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he [it is] that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

The laws were to be read to the whole assembly so that everyone, including the children, could hear them. Every seven years the entire nation would gather together and listen as a priest read the law to them. There were no books, Bibles, or newsstands to spread God's word, so the people had to rely on word of mouth and an accurate memory.

Memorization was an important part of worship because if everyone knew the law, ignorance would be no excuse for breaking it. To fulfill God's purpose and will in our lives, we need the content and substance of his Word in our hearts and minds. For the Hebrews, this process began in childhood. Teaching our children and new believers should be one of our top priorities. Our finest teachers, best resources, and most careful thought should be directed toward showing young believers how to follow God in all life's situations.

Those who wait on the Lord will renew their strength.

Isaiah 40:31 - But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew [their] strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; [and] they shall walk, and not faint.

Even the strongest people get tired at times, but God's power and strength never diminish. He is never too tired or too busy to help and listen. His strength is our source of strength. When you feel all of life crushing you and you cannot go another step, remember that you can call upon God to renew your strength.

God will strengthen and help you.

Isaiah 41:10 - Fear thou not; for I [am] with thee: be not dismayed; for I [am] thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.

God chose Israel through Abraham because he wanted to, not because the people deserved it (Deuteronomy 7:6-8; 9:4-6). Although God chose the Israelites to represent him to the world, they failed to do this; so God punished them and sent them into captivity.

Now all believers are God's chosen people, and all share the responsibility of representing him to the world. One day God will bring all his faithful people together.

We need not fear because

- (1) God is with us ("I am with you"),
- (2) God has established a relationship with us ("I am your God"), and
- (3) God gives us assurance of his strength, help, and victory over sin and death. Are you aware of all the ways God has helped you?

Our hope is in the Lord.

Psalms 39:7 - And now, Lord, what wait I for? My hope [is] in the Lord.

The brevity of life is a theme throughout the books of Psalms, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes. Jesus also spoke about it (Luke 12:20). Ironically, people spend so much time securing their lives on earth but take little or no thought about where they will spend eternity.

David realized that amassing riches and busily accomplishing worldly tasks would make no difference in eternity. Few people understand that their only hope is in the Lord. (For other verses on the brevity of life, see Ecclesiastes 2:18 and James 4:14.)

What did David mean when he asked God to stop punishing him with "blows" from his hand? It may be a picture of the difficulties David was facing that caused him to feel as if he were being struck. Evidently David thought God was disciplining him, punishing him for his sins. David was expressing his feelings to God, yet David also submitted himself to his powerful and loving heavenly Father.

All things are possible to those who believe.

Mark 9:23 - Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things [are] possible to him that believeth.

Jesus' words do not mean that we can automatically obtain anything we want if we just think positively. Jesus meant that anything is *possible* if we believe, because nothing is too difficult for God. We cannot have everything we pray for as if by magic, but with faith, we can have everything we need to serve him.

The attitude of trust and confidence that the Bible calls *belief* or *faith* (Hebrews 11:1,6) is not something we can obtain without help. Faith is a gift from God (Ephesians 2:8, 9). No matter how much faith we have, we never reach the point of being self-sufficient. Faith is not stored away like money in the bank. Growing in faith is a constant process of daily renewing our trust in Jesus.

We are saved by unseen hope.

Romans 8:24 - 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?

In Romans, Paul presents the idea that salvation is past, present, and future.

It is past because we were saved the moment we believed in Jesus Christ as Savior (3:21-26; 5:1-11; 6:1-11, 22, 23); our new life (eternal life) begins at that moment. And it is present because we *are being* saved; this is the process of sanctification (see the note on 6:1-8:39).

But at the same time, we have not fully received all the benefits and blessings of salvation that will be ours when Christ's new Kingdom is completely established. That's our future salvation.

While we can be confident of our salvation, we still look ahead with hope and trust toward that complete change of body and personality that lies beyond this life, when we will be like Christ (1 John 3:2).

Charity is the greatest gift.

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

Paul wrote that love endures forever. In morally corrupt Corinth, love had become a mixed-up term with little meaning. Today, people are still confused about love. Love is the greatest of all human qualities and is an attribute of God himself (1 John 4:8).

Love involves unselfish service to others. *Faith* is the foundation and content of God's message; *hope* is the attitude and focus; *love* is action. When faith and hope are in line, you are free to love completely because you understand how God loves. Does your faith fully express itself in loving others?

Love—true, godly love—is not temporary or transient. Love is a commitment that is meant to last. Love is not based on everything going right or always being happy. Love is not an emotional feeling but rather a choice of the will.

Casual commitments do not produce a foundation for deep and meaningful relationships. Instead we should love others as God loves us—with an unending love that never ends.

Your expectation shall not be cut off

Proverbs 23:18 - For surely there is an end; and thine expectation shall not be cut off.

How easy it is to envy those who get ahead, unhampered by responsibility to God's laws. For a time they do seem to prosper without paying any attention to what God wants, but they have no future. To those who follow him, God promises a hope and a wonderful future, even if they don't achieve it in this life.

We wait for our hope with patience.

Romans 8:25 - But if we hope for that we see not, [then] do we with patience wait for [it].

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Unseen faith produces substance.

Hebrews 11:1 - Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Do you remember how you felt when you were very young and your birthday approached? You were excited and anxious. You knew you would certainly receive gifts and other special treats. But some things would be a surprise. Birthdays combine assurance and anticipation, and so does faith! Faith is the confidence based on past experience that God's new and fresh surprises will surely be ours.

The beginning point of faith is believing in God's character: He *is* who he says. The end point is believing in God's promises: He will *do* what he says. When we believe that God will fulfill his promises even though we don't see those promises materializing yet, we demonstrate true faith (see John 20:24-31).

God called the universe into existence out of nothing; he declared that it was to be, and it was. Our faith is in the God who created the entire universe by his word. God's word has awesome power. When he speaks, do you listen and respond? How can you better prepare yourself to respond to God's word?

Cain and Abel were Adam and Eve's first two sons. Abel offered a sacrifice that pleased God, while Cain's sacrifice was unacceptable. Abel's Profile is

found in Genesis 5, p. 15. Cain's Profile is in Genesis 6, p. 17. Abel's sacrifice (an animal substitute) was more acceptable to God, both because it was a blood sacrifice and, most important, because of Abel's attitude when he offered it.

Believing that God exists is only the beginning; even the demons believe that much (James 2:19, 20). God will not settle for mere acknowledgment of his existence. He wants your faith that leads to a personal, dynamic relationship.

Some Christians think people cannot understand God and should not try. Others believe that nothing true is irrational, including true faith. The truth is, God gave us minds that should be developed and used. To ignore intellectual growth is to live a stunted and naive life. God wants our trust and faith, even while we ponder and wonder about so many matters mysterious to us. Even so, we do not believe in a void nor leap into the dark. Faith is reasonable, though reason alone cannot explain the whole of it. So use your mind to think things through. But leave room for the unexplainable works of God.

Blessed is the man whose hope is in the Lord.

Jeremiah 17:7 - Blessed [is] the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is.

Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. I say to myself, "The LORD is my portion; therefore I will wait for him." The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him; it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD.

An invitation is given to open your heart's door to Jesus

Rev. 3:20

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

To ask Jesus to come into your heart, please pray this Prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. I ask you to forgive me of my sins and coming into my heart. I accept you as savior and will follow you as Lord. Amen.

References:

Holy Bible: King James Translation

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Additional comments and charts are taken from: *Life Application Study Bible*. Illinois: Tyndale House 2007. Print