

HOPE

As a Christian, I believe in the power of prayer and certainly the power of faith in our Lord, Jesus Christ. As some of you may know, I've experienced a lot of loss and a lot of challenges in my last 22 yrs of my life, almost to this day. That started with my mom collapsing in my dad's arms while on a steep grade on the 101 in California headed out for one last golf outing before making their way to Texas for the birth of their 1st grandchild, who was due 3 weeks later. For 2 weeks, 1500 miles away, I Hoped that she would pull through and regain activity in her sweet brain. But on 6/25/1999, she went to be with our Lord. Before I started really knowing how to pray or even really knowing our Lord, I leaned a lot on **Hope** for my trials and tribulations. Once my son was born and developed a rare epilepsy syndrome, I found myself always wondering "why is this happening to ME?". But lately, I've been wondering where does **Hope** fall into that? Is it the same as prayer? Does God hear our Hopes? I personally have 100% faith in God as our Creator and in Jesus Christ as my savior – always have. And I have no doubt that God gave His only Son for me and my family and all that believe in Him to have eternal life (John 3:16). I now pray to Him for my family & other people and circumstances that are the utmost importance to me on a day to day basis. And I have Faith that He is always listening and will answer prayers in His own way and time. But I find myself **Hoping** for a lot of other things that maybe aren't as important or detrimental and wonder if I should be Praying instead of Hoping.

In my research that I have done for this devotional, I was surprised to see that **Hope** is very much intertwined with Prayer and Faith. Hope is a small word but is one of the most powerful. Why?? Because in hope lies the power of the human soul to turn to God and live as if His promises are going to come true. Psalms has several verses in this regard that that hit me right in the gut:

- "Be strong and take heart, all you who **hope** in the LORD" (Psalm 31:24)
- "And now, O Lord, for what do I wait? My **hope** is in you" (Psalm 39:7)
- "Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your **hope** in God, for I will yet praise Him, my Savior and my God" (Psalms 42:5)
- "May your unfailing love be with us, Lord, even as we put our **hope** in you" (Psalm 33:22)
- "No one who **Hopes** in you will ever be put to shame" (Psalm 25:3)

We all hope for many, many little things. "I hope it doesn't rain tomorrow", I really hope I'm low on the bid I just submitted", "I hope I can get this report done in time". Some people think that hope is just an emotion, like "I'm feeling hopeful..." but true hope is a discipline and a determination to believe in God's reality and power, even when the world seems to be crashing down around you. That is the genius and the power of hope. "The world can do it's worst to me, but still I will hope. Still I will know that this is the day the Lord has made, and He will take care of me." We all hope that things will get better in the world and hope that God will be with us while going through hard times.

The key to surviving any challenge or crisis is **hope**. **Hope** that Jesus loves you. **Hope** that He is, right now, working out a solution for you. **Hope** that the future you place in His hands will be better than the present you hold in your own. "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you **hope** and future" (Jeremiah 29:11). "Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint" (Isaiah 40:31)