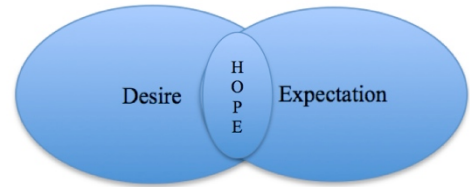


HOPE

A study by Dave DeWitt and R J Regan

*But now abide faith, **hope**, love, these three and the greatest of these is love* (1 Corinthians 13:13).

[All emphasis in all quotes in this material are ours]



Since it is not possible for us humans to live without desires and expectations about the future, it is not wise to attempt to do so. When those ever present desires and inevitable expectations overlap, we have hope. And...

We Cannot Live Without Hope.

That's why we wrote this material. Since we can't live without hope, we should try to understand it.

Questions:

1. What is the difference between hope and desire? What's the difference between hoping for something to happen and wanting something to happen?
2. What is the difference between hope and faith? Can I have hope without faith or faith without hope?
3. What's the difference between hope and love? Can I love without hope or hope without love?
4. Can I do a selfless act without thinking about myself?
5. Will we have hope when we get to heaven?
6. Will we have faith when we get to heaven?
7. Will we have love when we get to heaven?
8. Is hope basically an action, a decision or a desire?
9. Is faith basically an action, a decision, or a desire?
10. Is love basically an action, a decision, or a desire?

We often use the word "hope" as a synonym for desire. For example a wife might say, "I hope my husband remembered to fill up the car with gas." This is a use of "hope" which points to the past before thinking about the future. But the English dictionaries and the Greek and Hebrew lexicons only use hope in a future sense. Or you might say, "Do you believe that car will last another year?" and I answer, "I hope so." Meaning faith is greater than hope. I am intending to downgrade your question of faith with the word hope, equating hope with desire. But such a downgrade is not suggested by the dictionaries or lexicons.

Defining Hope

The word *hope* occurs 140 times in the Bible

Hope is desired expectation.

Hope is: a feeling of expectation and desire for a certain thing to happen.

Desire is: a strong feeling of wanting to have something or wishing for something to happen.

Expectation is: a strong belief that something will happen or be the case in the future

[These definitions are from the Mac Pro dictionary. All the emphases in all quotations in this paper are ours.]

A.W.Tozer wrote: “Hope is the music of the whole Bible... **Hope means a desirable expectation**, a pleasurable anticipation (The Tozer Pulpit p.40).”

The most common Hebrew word for hope is תִּקְוָה **TIQVAH**.

Strongs; 8615b. תִּקְוָה tiqvah) [876b]; from 6960a; a *hope*:—expectation(3), hope(28), longing(1).

The New Testament Greek word is ἐλπίς, **ELPIS**, the verb form is ἐλπίζω, **ELPIDZO**.

Strongs; 1680. ἐλπίς, (elpis) *el-pece'*; from a primary ἐλπῶ (elpo, to anticipate, usually with pleasure); expectation (abstractly or concretely) or confidence.

So the biblical Hebrew and Greek words have the same sense as the English word, a **desire** (to anticipate, usually with pleasure) and **expectation** (to look forward with confidence).

Hope and desire both are a feeling of wanting something, or wanting something to happen. But desire alone is not hope. Hope requires an expectation that what we desire will happen in the future. And although desire is subjective, expectation is objective. Desire is a subjective feeling about what we perceive will bring joy or happiness. Expectation is connected to how we understand reality, whether we like it or not. So hope is a desired expectation. Consider:

*Psa. 31:24 Be strong and let your heart take courage, All you who **hope** [have your “**desired expectation**”] in the LORD.*

*1Th. 2:19 For who is our **hope** [our “**desired expectation**”] or joy or crown of exultation? Is it not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming?*

*1Th. 4:13 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no **hope** [no “**desired expectation**”].*

*Titus 2:13 looking for the blessed **hope** [“**desired expectation**”] and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus,*

*Titus 3:7 so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the **hope** [the “**desired expectation**”] of eternal life.*

*Heb. 6:11 And we **desire** that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of **hope** [“**desired expectation**”] until the end,*

If we graphed desire and expectation with circles they would not necessarily overlap. I desire to always stay healthy but I expect to sometimes get sick. So I have no hope of always being healthy. But when desire and expectation overlap we have hope. If I eat

right and wash my hands often I expect to stay healthy most of the time. Since I always desire to be healthy, I hope I will stay healthy most of the time.

Let's take a more spiritual example. I desire to stop sinning but my expectation is that I will continue to go on sinning (like Paul in Romans 7:14-25). So I have no hope of perfection, this side of heaven. But perhaps I can stop sinning in certain areas. I cannot become perfect but I can improve. So my desire to stop sinning and my expectation in certain areas overlap. Therefore, in those areas, I have some hope of improvement.

Let's say my desire for something is high but my expectation is low. For example I fly airplanes. One of my favorite airplanes is the old Douglas DC-3. It's the first airplane I flew in as a kid. I've always wanted one. But, of course that's financially impossible. So my desire is very high but my expectation is zero. Therefore my hope is zero. I would never say, "I hope to have a DC-3".



But I do own an antique 1939 Piper Cub Coupe. I desire to fly it on the weekends and I have a reasonable expectation (depending on the weather, my schedule, family activities etc.) of that happening. So I might say, "I hope to fly my Cub next weekend." Since my desire is 100%, my hope is only a function of my expectation.

Also, hope is desired expectations **without certainty**. Both faith and hope are fulfilled at the point of realization.

Romans 8:24-25 *For in **hope** we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees? But if we **hope for what we do not see**, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.*

When we have what we believe in, or hope for, then faith and hope are no longer relevant. We suspect that at least one reason love is greater than faith and hope (1 Corinthians 13:13) is because love endures, faith and hope come to an end when we get what we desire.

Hope Is Desire **TIMES** Expectation

Hope is a feeling where desire and expectation overlap. When either of them falls to zero, so does hope. Mathematically then, it is more like multiplication than addition. If we defined hope as the addition of desire and expectation, then when one of them fell to zero, hope would be defined by the other one. For example,

If

Hope = Desire + Expectation

And my desire is zero, then my hope would equal my expectation. If my desire for death is zero and my expectation is 100%, then it would be legitimate to say, "I hope for death". But that is not true. Or if I desired a DC-3 airplane but have zero expectation for it, I could still say, "I hope for a DC-3 airplane". But that would be absurd. So hope cannot be an addition of desire and expectation.

Rather,

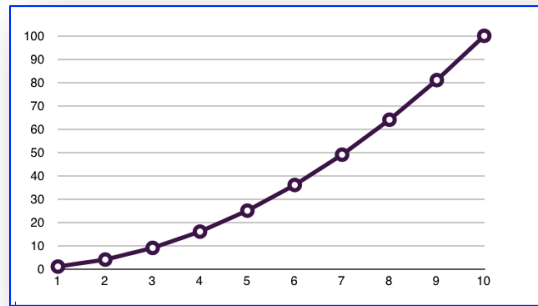
Hope = Desire X Expectation

In this case if either one of them falls to zero, so does hope. If my desire for death is zero, then so is my hope for death, zero. If my expectation for a DC-3 is zero, then so is my hope for one, zero.

Now let's put some numbers on this formula, just for the fun of it. Let's say I could rate my desire on a scale of 1 to 10 and then the same for my expectation. If my desire is 1 and my expectation is 1 then my hope is 1 (1 X 1=1). Let's call it 1%. If my desire is 2 and my expectation is 2 then my hope is 4% (2 X 2 = 4). But notice as I go up in numbers my hope increases exponentially not linearly.

Desire X Expectation = Hope

1	X	1	=	1
2	X	2	=	4
3	X	3	=	9
4	X	4	=	16
5	X	5	=	25
6	X	6	=	36
7	X	7	=	49
8	X	8	=	64
9	X	9	=	81
10	X	10	=	100



For example when I am half way into my desire and expectation, I am only one quarter of the way (5X5 = 25%) to perfect or complete (100%) hope. Of course this doesn't prove anything, it's just an example. But we feel like it represents the idea of hope real well, because as our desire and expectation increases, our hope increases, exponentially.

Proverbs 13:12 tells us that **Hope deferred makes the heart sick, But desire fulfilled is a tree of life.**

When desire and expectation come together our hope is *fulfilled* as a *tree of life*. But quenched desires and discouraged expectations will have the exact opposite effect on hope. When desire and expectation are deferred, then so is hope, and that *makes the heart sick*. The curve we just used to picture hope then moves down exponentially.

Suppose you hope to lose weight, and get in shape. But you tried on a bigger pair of pants and it felt so good you just bought the bigger pants. Now your desire for losing weight is diminished. Then suppose you tried some other bigger clothes and realized you could be comfortable and still eat more. Now your desire for losing weight is significantly diminished, so your hope for losing weight takes a nosedive, exponentially.

Suppose you hope to learn the Bible. But then some preacher says you can't learn the Bible unless you know Greek and Hebrew and ancient Jewish customs. Now your expectation for learning the Bible is diminished, therefore so is your hope.

However, as your desire and expectation increase so does your hope, exponentially. Consider the evangelicals who take the Bible literally, versus liberals who don't. Those with greater desire for the spread of the gospel and a greater expectation of heaven will have a more vivid hope. Or notice the hope among premillennial believers who take biblical prophecy literally and therefore have an expectation of the rapture, the rise of an antichrist, a 7-year tribulation, a re-gathering of Israel, all before the second coming of Christ. Compare their hope to the near apathy toward prophecy among those who have only a vague general belief in the second coming. Less expectation reduces hope exponentially.

And here is the kicker. When hope is low, so will our investment in our spiritual life be low. Because,

Our Hope Governs Our Investments

We do not necessarily invest in our desires. And we do not necessarily invest in our expectations. But we do invest in the areas where those two overlap. [Investment is: "an act of devoting time effort or energy to a particular undertaking with the expectation of a worthwhile result" (MacBook dictionary). I would say it is devoting something of value, expecting a worthwhile result.]

Since we invest in our hope, our investments reveal our hope. If our investments are in the stock market, then that's where our hope is. If our investments are in our education, our retirement, our children or grandchildren, then that's where our hope is. If our investments are in our relationship with God, then that's where our hope is. We will grow in the direction of our hope. Spiritual growth like all growth is a function of our hope.

Understanding Hope is vital because hope governs all our investments.

We will not invest in our spiritual life if we do not have our hope there. What makes understanding hope vital, is that it determines where we will place our time and energy. Why did Noah invest 120 years of his life building an ark? Why did Abraham leave Mesopotamia and go live in Canaan? Why did Moses write the Pentateuch? Why did David invest so much of his life writing the Psalms? Why were the prophets willing to suffer for their message? Why did Jesus come, live, suffer and die? Why did the apostles invest their lives in missionary journeys? Because they had hope (desired expectation). And their hope governed their investments.

One other thing before we move on. My hopeful investment is not necessarily something I enjoy or get a benefit from now. I hope my pick-up-truck will get me home this evening. Because of that I put some fuel in it. I am investing in my hope. I would not make the investment in the fuel if I did not have the hope my truck it would get me home. But I don't get any pleasure from the act of putting fuel in my truck. Sometimes I don't enjoy praying or studying the Bible either. At those times I am investing in my hope, for a future benefit.

Hope and Faith

Now let's compare hope to faith. Of course either of them can be bad (unbiblical/irrational). One can hope to steal from his neighbor and believe he will get away with it. One can hope the tooth fairy will visit them and believe he will put money under their pillow. But faith and hope can also be good and true.

Both faith and hope have a subjective element and an objective element. Faith is a decision to trust verifiable evidence. Hope is a desired expectation.

	Subjective element	Objective element
Faith	trusts	the evidence
Hope	desires	the expectation

The intensity, or quantity of faith or hope is the subjective element (on the left). The credibility or quality of faith or hope is the objective element (on the right). You can have such intense faith and hope that you become a suicide bomber or you can wait up all night believing the tooth fairy will visit you. But only the objective elements of faith and hope lend to their credibility.

We can therefore conclude:

- The validity of faith depends on the reliability of the evidence.
- The validity of hope depends on the reliability of the expected outcome.
- The intensity of faith depends on how much we trust.
- The intensity of hope depends on how much we desire.
- Faith comes from past or present evidence and hope projects that evidence into the future.
- Faith may be about the past, present and/or the future. Hope is only about the future.
- Faith (in a desired outcome) and hope will intensify and diminish together.

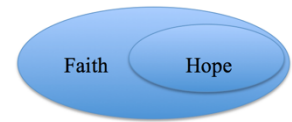
Faith will not necessarily generate hope because we also believe in past things (like historical events), present things (like my ceiling won't collapse), and things we do not desire, (like death and taxes), but when there is hope, there is always faith (because we expect something to happen).

I might believe it will rain tomorrow. But if I don't want it to rain tomorrow then I would not hope for it. But when my faith is in something I desire, then faith and hope are always connected. If I want it to rain tomorrow, and I believe it will rain tomorrow, then I hope it will rain tomorrow. You can't have hope without faith. The reason faith and hope are

tied together (when the faith is desired) is because the evidence for my faith (like maybe a weather report) becomes the expectation of my hope (that it will rain).

Hope Is A Particular Kind Of Faith

Hope is faith. It's an aspect of faith.
It's desired future faith.



Hope = desired expectation.

Expectation = "a strong belief that something will happen or be the case in the future."

In other words,

Expectation = faith about the future. [Remember belief and faith are the same thing.]

Therefore,

Hope = desired future faith.

And,

Faith = trust in the evidence.

Therefore,

Hope = trusting evidence
for a desired future outcome.

In other words,

Hope = trust in desired evidence about the future.
Faith = trust in desired evidence about the future
+ trust in desired evidence about the past
+ trust in desired evidence about the present
+ trust in undesired evidence.

So hope is part of faith. I am a person of faith. I believe and disbelieve all kinds of things and those beliefs define all of my actions/works. Unlike plants and animals we intend to do things. Those intentions come from our faith and result in works. If any part of my faith is wrong or perverted, then so will my actions be wrong and perverted. So it's very important to believe the right things. For example:

- If I don't believe it is reasonably safe to fly in an airplane,
- If I don't believe the holocaust happened,
- If I don't believe it is safe to leave my house,
- If I don't believe the Bible is true,
- If I don't believe in the existence of God,
- If I don't believe in moral absolutes,

Then there is something wrong with my faith. If I keep that up, and continue to disbelieve reasonable, verifiable, evidence, I will end up in a mental asylum.

But my hope is part of that faith. So if I don't have hope, there is something wrong with my faith, and my actions/works will be perverted. **Hope is the jelly in the donut of faith.** Or as Tozer said "Hope is the music of the whole Bible (quoted above)." By removing hope I am left with a defective, empty faith. Faith with a hole in it.

Hebrews 11:1 & 6

The most often quoted verse, connecting faith and hope, is Hebrews 11:1. It reads,
Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

Faith is the ὑπόστασις (*hupostasis*), the *assurance, evidence, or essence*, of hope. This same Greek word is used to describe the nature of Jesus with respect to God the father in Hebrews 1:3. The author tells us that Jesus Christ *is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature* [ὑποστάσεως, *hupostaseos*]. So just as God the Father is the *assurance, evidence, or essence* of God The Son, so also faith is the *assurance, evidence, or essence* of hope.

Faith is the foundation, *the assurance*, of hope. Having a jelly donut is the assurance that I have jelly. The faith that my truck will get me home tonight is the assurance of my hope that it will. If you have no faith then you have no hope.

Now let's look at Hebrews 11:6.

And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

Since hope is a part of our complete belief system, if we have no faith then we have no hope. If you destroy faith, you destroy hope. If you send your child to the university and the university destroys your child's faith, then they have also destroyed his hope. If it is impossible for me to believe my truck will get me home tonight, then it is also impossible for me to hope for it. Since it is impossible to please God without faith, it is also impossible to please God without hope.

We can, however, destroy hope and still have faith. But it's a defective, incomplete, warped faith, a faith void of future desires. For example we can ignore the evidence that we can receive future rewards from God. It would be like some Jews who believe there is a God, but do not believe in life after death. It **is** possible to have faith and not please God. In order to please God we must have faith that He is a rewarder. And that's what hope is – to desire and expect a reward, in this case from God. I can have faith without that hope, but according to Hebrews 11:6, that faith will not please God.

Faith, Hope, and Works

Faith is a realization, a trust, which generates all our present actions. Our faith, all our decisions to trust various pieces of evidence, is the engine that drives everything we do all day long. James said there is no inconsistency between our faith and our works. There is no such thing as a person who believes (trusts) one thing and does something else.

But someone may well say, "You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works." You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder (James 2:18-19).

For example, every sin represents a defect in our faith. We sin because we believe we can get away with it, and we believe it is in our best interest to do so. Sin, like all our works, comes from our faith. Sin is a function of faulty faith.

What about the demons who *believe that God is one ... and shudder* (James 2:19)? Just like everyone else, the faith of demons is reflected in their works. The demons believe that God exists, that's why they *shudder*. Their action/works are consistent with their faith. Demons have faith, but it is a faulty faith because it is a faith without hope. They believe that God exists. But they do not believe that *God is a rewarder of those who seek Him*. So they don't seek Him. Those who believe God is also *a rewarder of those who seek Him* will have works that reflect that belief.

Jesus said essentially the same thing when He compared us to a tree and it's fruit.

So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit... Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit (Matthew 7:17-18; 12:33).

Our faith is the source of all our actions. Hope is that part of faith which generates actions focused on our future desires. That action is investment. As we mentioned earlier, our investments reveal our hope and our hope governs our investments. So all our faith has works, and the works of our faith about the future (the works of hope) are our investments.

If someone is not seeking God, it's because they don't think He is a rewarder. In other words they don't seek God because they see no value in it. If someone does not seek to get closer to God, or grow into maturity, it is for the same reason – they see no value for doing so.

Why is that? Why do people not see value in seeking God as a rewarder? There are several possibilities.

- They might think seeking personal rewards is bad. They think we should just love altruistically.
- They might think heaven is the same for all. They think we will give all our crowns (rewards) back to Christ.
- They might think God does not care, or cannot help. They focus on all the suffering in the world.
- They might see God as a kill joy, a "buzz kill," one who is against personal pleasure.

Whatever the particular reason might be, people who do not seek God do not think He is a rewarder.

But love is different.

Hope and Love

But now faith, hope, love, abide these three, and the greatest of these is love
(1 Corinthians 13:13).

- Faith is trusting verifiable evidence.
- Hope is expecting the realization of a desire.
- Love is giving (or doing the best good) expecting nothing in return.
- Faith is a decision.
- Hope is a desire.
- Love is an action.

Whereas hope is almost the same as faith, it is almost the opposite of love.

There are several different definitions of love, even in the Bible. And since we are here studying hope we will only use the most powerful New Testament word, ἀγάπη (agape) as defined by Paul in 1 Corinthians 13. He wrote:

*If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have **love**, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have **love**, I am nothing. And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have **love**, it **profits** me nothing. **Love** is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; **it does not seek its own**, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, **hopes** all things, endures all things (1 Corinthians 13:1-7).*

The significant aspect here, which makes love different from hope, is that *Love...does not seek its own*. Hope does. Love is non-profit. Hope is for profit. But Paul said love is what makes our actions profitable.

It is also interesting that Christ and the apostles **commanded** believers **to love** one another. What is fascinating about that is we only obey a command when we perceive it is in our best interest to do so, and we can only love one another by giving, expecting nothing in return.

John 13:34 *A new commandment I give to you, that you **love one another**, even as I have loved you, that you also **love one another**.*

Romans 13:8 *Owe nothing to anyone except to **love one another**; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law.*

1 John 3:23 *This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and **love one another**, just as He commanded us.*

1 John 4:7 *Beloved, let us **love one another**, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.*

1 John 4:11 *Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to **love one another**.*

Notice:

1. *Love...does not seek its own.* So the application of love is giving, doing something for the best good of others, expecting nothing in return – giving without the thought of reciprocity.
2. Love in First Corinthians 13 is in the context of personal *profit* – ὠφελοῦμαι (opheloumai) personal *gain*, or *benefit* (Strong's). Therefore the selfless giving of love is in the context of personal *gain*, or *benefit*.
3. Love for other believers is a *commandment* from God. Commands are always obeyed with self-interest in mind. The command to *love one another, even as I have loved you* is a directive to give to one another without self-interest. Therefore, both selfless acts and self-interest are somehow true and not contradictory.
4. We are to *love one another, for love is from God, ... if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.* We are to give without thoughts of reciprocity, because that's what God does.
5. Love is a selfless act (in the sense that there is no return for the act) done in the present. Hope is self-interest, in the future.
6. Love means I'm out something. I have a net loss. Hope means I get something. I have a net gain.
7. Loving acts are usually hopeful. There is no such thing as altruism. We cannot live without hope.

If I give \$20 to a bum on the street, then I'm out the \$20. So, in the present, I have a net loss. It is a loving act. But I also may want God to reward me in some way for that loving act, in the future. Or I may simply desire for God to be pleased with that, or I could want my children to learn the lesson of generosity, or I might give the \$20 just because I'm afraid I would feel guilty later if I didn't. In any of those cases, I also have hope, I do it because I desire a future benefit.

But if I think I am giving without self-desire, something bad is going to happen. If I don't see some future desire fulfilled, I will be negatively affected by the gift, because I cannot live without hope.

Love does not look for what is in one's own best self-interest. But hope does.

We suggest these are not contradictory, they are complementary. We should never think that we must give up hope for love. Let's say you have a very difficult marriage. Your spouse is not a giving, loving person. 1 Corinthians 13 says you are to love them by being *patient, kind*, etc. Your love for your ungrateful spouse *does not seek its own*. In other words your loving acts do not seek a reciprocal loving act. But that does not mean you should deny your own self-interest in the future. If you do that, your loving acts will dry up like the apples on a dead apple tree. You may love your ungrateful spouse for the sake of your children, or to develop your endurance (James 1:2-4), or to be pleasing to God. At the same time you pursue desired expectations by working out, developing a hobby, furthering your education, fellowshiping with other believers or whatever makes you *perfect and complete, lacking in nothing*.

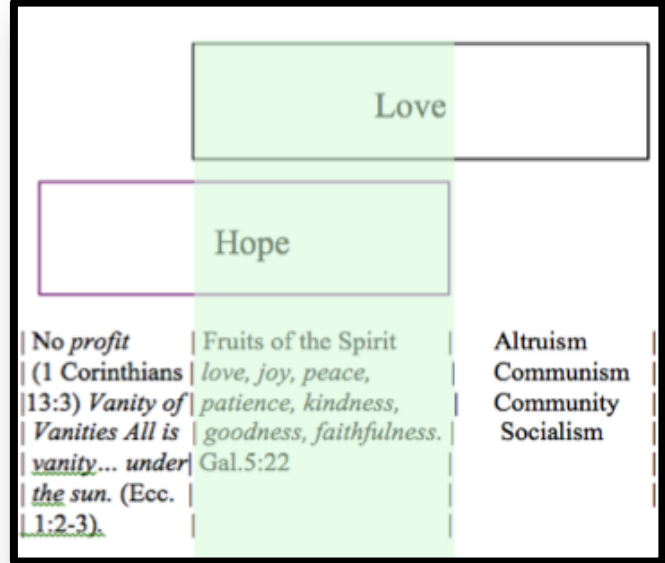
We must never think that if we have hope, if we desire getting something in the future, that it must inhibit our love. I should not refuse to give to the poor because I want to save money – thinking if I give to the poor I will have less to save. My hope should not quench my love.

Here is a visual of how we look at it. First consider the left side of the graph.

Hope Without Love

Hope without love is unprofitable. It is desiring something with no thoughts of selfless giving. It's when I have my own best interests in mind but not those of anyone else. This was the experiment of Solomon, which he reported on in the book of Ecclesiastes. He concluded it was all *vanity* and *striving after wind*.

There is an expression given by some businessmen and professionals after succeeding by “climbing the ladder” in their business or profession. The saying is, “I spent my life climbing the ladder of success and getting to the top, only to realize it was leaning against the wrong building.” That sort of realization is what happens when we pursue our hopes without love.



Jesus said this about the fig tree that represented the current condition of Israel under the Pharisees and the chief priests.

*A man had a **fig tree** which had been planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and did not find any. And he said to the vineyard-keeper, 'Behold, for three years I have come looking for fruit on this **fig tree** without finding any. Cut it down! Why does it even use up the ground' (Luke 13:7)?*

A fig tree that only serves itself and does not produce figs is worthless. So it is with a person who takes in things and grows and develops but does not give. That person is worthless.

It is interesting that in 1 Corinthians 13 Paul says I can act sacrificially, I can give *all my possessions to feed the poor, and my body to be burned*, and yet not have love. Love is non-reciprocal giving (*it does not seek its own*). It also has the best good of some other individual(s) in mind. So I am able to do seemingly good acts, which actually only seek my own self-interest, in which case Paul says it profits me nothing. It's pursuing hope without love.

For example a philanthropist might build a hospital in order to have it named after himself. In this case he is not trying to help the poor, he just want's his name immortalized in his city. If that's the case (and I am not saying it usually is) it's an

attempt to pursue a desired expectation (even a seemingly good desired expectation) without loving (doing the best good for others expecting nothing in return).

One of the problems is that a person can live on the left side, working only for their own desires, and have a false religion that gives him a false hope. A person can be successful in a business or profession and be only self-centered. These people usually give to various causes, but it is all done for self-serving reasons. They are often part of a religious institution that embraces them because of their contributions, which in turn gives them acceptability in their civic community. So they contribute, but they are always expecting something in return.

Hope With Love

Next consider the center of the graph. When love and hope overlap, that is both are in play, then there is true virtue. God made us to hope and love, so when both are practiced we have the fruits of the Spirit.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law (Galatians 5:22-23).

Here is an illustration from nature. Of course plants and animals do not have faith hope and love, but they are programmed to imitate those acts. All living things are made in such a way that they must first develop themselves (like our hope) and then they produce (like our love). For example an apple tree takes in water and nutrients from the soil and light and warmth from the sun, then it grows and eventually produces apples. But it must take in nutrients for years, developing its future, before it produces any apples. And it must continue to take in those nutrients if it continues to produce. If it stops serving itself, it is no longer capable of giving. A tree that does not take in, dies, and one that does not give is like a weed or bramble bush. But if that tree is producing apples and stops taking in water and nutrients and sunlight, the fruit will be smaller and smaller until it shrivels up and dies.

*1Cor. 14:1 Pursue **love**, yet **desire** earnestly spiritual gifts*

Mixed motives are not bad. Mixed motives are bad if good ones are mixed with bad ones, not loving ones with hopeful ones. If I give with selfish motives (to take something from someone else), or if I give while breaking one of God's commands, that's an evil mixed motive. But mixing love with hope is only bad if we hope for something bad.

Love Without Hope

Now let's look over on the right side of the chart, love without hope. First, a question. What's most important in a family?

1. To develop myself personally
2. To develop my spouse

3. To develop my children
4. To develop my marriage relationship
5. To develop family relationships

A mother loves her children. So she gets up and fixes them breakfast and gets them ready for school. It is hard to see what she gets out of that. She has to get up early work hard and usually gets a lot of grief from the kids she is trying to serve, because they don't want to get up and go to school. Then she does her own work for the day and gets dinner ready for them in the evening, only to repeat the procedure tomorrow. The mother's work is a loving act – giving expecting nothing in return.

But she is not doing it without hope (hopefully). She hopes her children will grow up to be healthy educated adults. She hopes they will not cause her grief by getting into bad habits or getting bad grades. She hopes they will be part of her family fellowship in the future. She also has disconnected hopes. She hopes that she will have some time for exercise, time to buy a new pair of shoes, time to chat with some friends. If she ever gives up these hopes, she will become angry, ornery, despondent, depressed, suicidal, or develop some other unwanted, dysfunctional condition. Not even mothers can live without hope.

When we try to love without hope, that is we attempt to think that we can give without any thought of our own self-interest, our giving shrivels up like a dehydrated apple.

Political communism, economic socialism, and church community assume that we should love without hope. Everyone should work for the benefit of the common good. There should be no thought of hope for the advancement of personal desires and expectations. This has been tried repeatedly all over the world and the result is the same. It creates a group of apathetic people that develop an entitlement mentality.

If you answered the above question with anything but #1 you may be creating such a mentality in your family.

You have no doubt heard of the teacher who had a class of students who believed in the socialist idea of shared wealth. The students believed everyone in society should contribute without the thought of personal gain. In other words people should love without hope. So the teacher decided to put the student's idea to work in the classroom. He averaged all the grades on the tests and gave everyone the same grade. Soon the average went from B to C to D to F because everyone realized there was no personal benefit in studying. There was bickering and blaming among the students but the grade average did not rise. When self-interest was taken out of the equation the result was apathy and animosity. When we think we need to love without hope, there is only despair.

For example we know of people who take care of ailing, grumpy, selfish, trouble causing parents, giving to them expecting nothing in return, and resent it. The caregiver's resentment is often because they think their giving means they have to give up on their hope. But if they have hope: that they are pleasing God, or that they will receive a reward

from God, or that they are setting a good example for their children, or simply that they will feel better if they do it, then they are doing it with future self-interest in mind. They are loving without abandoning hope. But when we look at giving as abandoning hope, we become dysfunctional— like, apathetic, resentful, hateful, miserable, depressed, or suicidal. Love (non-reciprocal giving) adds to hope, it does not replace it. We cannot live without hope.

In his February 2012 State of the Union address president Obama said that America was built upon teamwork. Actually America was built upon creative people, entrepreneurs, inventors, and developers, individuals with a strong desire, willing to take risks, and go to extreme lengths to pursue a dream. Then they built a team of people willing to develop themselves to execute that dream. Excellence does not start with a team, it starts with individuals pursuing a dream. When you think of just putting everybody on a team, then you communicate that being part of a team is getting something rather than contributing. Then you have socialism, or communism, or a church “community,” which cultivates a dependent, entitlement oriented congregation.

I recently receive this email:

The food stamp program, part of the Department of Agriculture, is pleased to be distributing the greatest amount of food stamps ever.

Meanwhile, the Park Service, also part of the Department of Agriculture, asks us to "Please Do Not Feed the Animals" because the animals may grow dependent and not learn to take care of themselves.

Temporal Hope Should Be Connected to Eternal Hope

Most of the Old Testament is temporal hope. In the New Testament there are at least four examples of temporal hope:

(1) Hope for spiritual gifts

1Cor. 14:1 Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts

(2) Hope for encouragement.

Phil. 2:19 But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, so that I also may be encouraged when I learn of your condition.

(3) Hope for joy through fellowship

Philem. 2 At the same time also prepare me a lodging, for I hope that through your prayers I will be given to you.

2 John 12 Though I have many things to write to you, I do not want to do so with paper and ink; but I hope to come to you and speak face to face, so that your joy may be made full.

3 John 14 but I hope to see you shortly, and we will speak face to face.

Roman 15:24 ... when I have first enjoyed your company for a while.

(4) Hope for help, support, or wages for labor.

*Rom. 15:24 whenever I go to Spain — for I **hope** to see you in passing, and to be helped on my way there by you*

1Tim. 5:17-18 The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, “You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing” and “The laborer is worthy of his wages.”

2Tim. 2:6 The hard-working farmer ought to be the first to receive his share of the crops.

It seems that hope this side of eternity is good, if it is connected to hope throughout eternity. Otherwise it will be like Solomon’s conclusion in Ecclesiastes, it’s *vanity and striving after wind.*

Without Temporal Hope, You Cannot Make Eternal Sacrifices

A sacrifice is “an act of giving up something valued for the sake of something else regarded as more important or worthy (MacBook Dictionary).” Sacrifice is giving up something of value. It cannot be done unless the one doing the sacrificing has something of value.

Whatever is sacrificed has value now and for the immediate future. The animal to be sacrificed under the Law had to be without defect. That meant it was valuable to the owner, today and tomorrow. Abraham was asked to sacrifice Isaac because he had extreme value to Abraham, now and for the rest of Abraham’s life. The widow who gave her two pennies gave up something that had value. She could live off of it tomorrow. In every case, sacrifice involves things which people perceived to give them pleasure in the present, and in the future. Those sacrificed things gave them temporal hope. If you don’t have anything that gives you temporal hope, then you don’t have anything to sacrifice. So we need temporal hope to make an eternal sacrifice. Sacrifice and sacrificial giving requires temporal hope.

Hobbies, Temporal Hope Or Eternal Hope?

Let’s apply hope to hobbies and recreational activity. We suggest that hobbies are a valuable temporal hope, if: (1) they are not sinful and (2) they contribute in some way to eternal hope.

I have been in full-time ministry over 40 years. I have never been burned out with my job, I have never taken a sabbatical, I have worked about 70 hours a week, and until recently I did not take a vacation. The reason I could do that is because I fly an airplane. I started flying when I was 14 and have been flying ever since. It’s true that I like my work, but that didn’t always keep me going. Flying did. My flying is disconnected from my ministry (usually). But when I have been teaching for 5 long days in a row in Eastern Europe, and finish late at night, and need to get up at 4:00 AM to catch a flight, I am not getting any reward for my work. But I can think, next week I will be home and be able to fly my airplane. I can’t live without hope.

Now Jesus would not have had an airplane, or any other hobbies. He did not always enjoy what He was doing, but He always had and eternal Hope. He did it for *the hope of His calling* (Ephesians 1:18), and *for the joy set before Him* (Hebrews 12:2). He did not require any temporal hope. But Jesus did not live without hope.

If I were as perfect as my *heavenly father is perfect* (which is what I am supposed to be according to Matthew 5:48) then I would just have an eternal hope. But I'm not, I'm not from heaven, I'm from the earth. Heaven is hopefully my future home. But I've never been there. I'm not from there. I'm from here. What makes the Christian life intriguing is we are on a journey. But it's not an adventure where we go out do something and come back. It's more like a quest, where we leave and just keep going. We are forced to leave here, and we are never coming back. But because I am from here I hang on to some hope here. And that can be bad if it ends here. But it can be good if it connects me to eternal hope. I'm not saying my airplane always does that, I'm just saying it should.

When does a hobby or earthly pleasure cross the line to become something wrong or bad (assuming the activity itself is not sinful)? When does hunting or fishing or playing golf or following sports, or owning a cabin or recreational property become sinful? The answer is: when it no longer assists our eternal focus. When it no longer contributes to our calling. When it governs our life. When it takes our focus off of God and His word. But there is no mathematical formula to tell us when we cross that line. It is always a fuzzy line, because motives are hard to determine. So the challenge is to determine when some earthly hope is disconnected from an eternal perspective.

What About the command to “Deny Yourself”

When we talk about hope, someone often point's out that Jesus said,

Luke 9:23 *If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must **deny himself**, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.*

True, following Jesus involves self-denial. But let's read on.

Luke 9:24 *“For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will **save it**.*

Luke 9:25 *For what is a man **profited** if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself?*

Verse 23 tells us to deny ourselves.

Verse 24 tells us the reason to do that is to save ourselves.

Verse 25 tells us it's all about personal profit, explained as personal gain that exceeds worldly gain.

So we are to deny ourselves worldly things, which disconnect us from eternal profit. We are to deny ourselves now, as a means of hope to gain eternal profit.

Paul gave us this perspective

1Cor. 15:31-32 *I affirm, brethren, by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. If from human motives I fought with wild beasts at*

*Ephesus, what does it **profit** me? If the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.*

When Paul says he dies daily, he means that he has suffered daily for the sake of spreading the gospel. His *boasting* refers to his eternal rewards which are because of the *brethren* he reached *in Christ Jesus*. So his suffering was done for eternal *profit*.

Applications (Take home points)

1. **We cannot live without hope.** [Every living being has desires, but that is not sufficient. I cannot live without also having some future desires which I expect will happen.]
2. **Someone without hope, or someone who denies that they need hope, is dysfunctional.** [Without expected future desires we will be despondent, depressed, discouraged, suicidal, or possibly grumpy, ornery or mean spirited.]
3. **Hope governs our investments.** [Since we invest in our hope, our investments reveal our hope.]
4. **Hope and love do not contradict one another, they complement one another.** [Hope without love leads to futility, love without hope leads to depression.]
5. **Hope is what supplies life's motivation.** [It's the fizz in life's soda pop. Without it life is boring, uninteresting, or intolerable. It's hope that get's us out of bed in the morning.]
6. **Temporal hope is valuable when it is connected to eternal hope.** [Temporal hope is essential and valuable, unless it is tied only to this world and not to eternal hope.]
7. **Hope prioritizes our decision-making.** [When I hope for something (a car, a spouse, a house, an education, maturity, or eternal life) that prioritizes all of my daily decisions.]
8. **The further my hope is projected into the future, the more it clarifies my present thinking.** [The further I look down the road, the straighter I will drive.]