

QUALITY
OF
LIFE
BIBLE
STUDY



Hope®

COMPILED BY
S.MCRAE

GOTTA HAVE HOPE

Quality of Life Series

LEADER: QUOTE # 1

“The Grand essentials of happiness are: something to do, something to love, and something to hope for.” - Allen K. Chalmers

LEADER: What is hope?

Websters says:

A confident expectation that a desire will be fulfilled; Wishful trust; Something which one longs to see realized; a person in whom confidence is placed or who could provide what is wanted; the virtue by which a Christian looks with confidence for God’s grace in this world and glory in the next.

LEADER: What do you hope for?

Can life be lived without hope?

READER: “Laboratory Experiment” - Today in the Word

Source ~ <http://www.bible.org/illus/h/h-54.htm#TopOfPage>

A number of years ago researchers performed an experiment to see the effect hope has on those undergoing hardship. Two sets of laboratory rats were placed in separate tubs of water. The researchers left one set in the water and found that within an hour they had all drowned. The other rats were periodically lifted out of the water and then returned. When that happened, the second set of rats swam for over 24 hours. Why? Not because they were given a rest, but because they suddenly had hope!

Those animals somehow hoped that if they could stay afloat just a little longer, someone would reach down and rescue them. If hope holds such power for unthinking rodents, how much greater should its effect be on our lives.

READER: (Excerpt) “Unfinished Business” by Halford E. Luccock

One night at dinner a man, who had spent many summers in Maine, fascinated his companions by telling of his experiences in a little town named Flagstaff. The town was to be flooded, as part of a large lake for which a dam was being built. In the months before it was to be flooded, all improvements and repairs in the whole town were stopped. What was the use of painting a house if it were to be covered with water in six months? Why repair anything when the whole village was to be wiped out? So, week by week, the whole town became more and more bedraggled, more gone to seed, more woebegone. Then he added by way of explanation: “Where there is no faith in the future, there is no power in the present.”

READER: QUOTE #1

Source ~ <http://www.christianglobe.com/illustrations/theDetails.asp?whichOne=h&whichFile=hope>

“There are no hopeless situations; there are only people who have grown hopeless about them.” - Clare Boothe Luce.

READER: “Little League”

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A man approached a little league baseball game one afternoon. He asked a boy in the dugout what the score was. The boy responded, “Eighteen to nothing—we’re behind.” “Boy,” said the spectator, “I’ll bet you’re discouraged.” “Why should I be discouraged?” replied the little boy. “We haven’t even gotten up to bat yet!”

READER: “The Dying Boy” From: Bits and Pieces

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The school system in a large city had a program to help children keep up with their school work during stays in the city’s hospitals. One day a teacher who was assigned to the program received a routine call asking her to visit a particular child. She took the child’s name and room number and talked briefly with the child’s regular class teacher. “We’re studying nouns and adverbs in his class now,” the regular teacher said, “and I’d be grateful if you could help him understand them so he doesn’t fall too far behind.”

The hospital program teacher went to see the boy that afternoon. No one had mentioned to her that the boy had been badly burned and was in great pain. Upset at the sight of the boy, she stammered as she told him, "I've been sent by your school to help you with nouns and adverbs." When she left she felt she hadn't accomplished much. But the next day, a nurse asked her, "What did you do to that boy?" The teacher felt she must have done something wrong and began to apologize. "No, no," said the nurse. "You don't know what I mean. We've been worried about that little boy, but ever since yesterday, his whole attitude has changed. He's fighting back, responding to treatment. It's as though he's decided to live."

Two weeks later the boy explained that he had completely given up hope until the teacher arrived. Everything changed when he came to a simple realization. He expressed it this way: "They wouldn't send a teacher to work on nouns and adverbs with a dying boy, would they?"

READER: QUOTE #2

Source ~ http://www.wisdomquotes.com/cat_hope.html

"The pessimist sees difficulty in every opportunity. The optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty." - Winston Churchill

LEADER: "When You've Been Thrown"

Source ~ http://www.sermonillustrator.org/illustrator/sermon2d/when_you've_been_thrown.htm

It is well said: "Strength and courage aren't always measured in medals and victories. They are measured in the struggles we overcome. The strongest people aren't always the people who win, but the people who don't give up when they lose."

A story is told that Andrew Jackson's boyhood friends just couldn't understand how he became a famous general and then the President of the United States. They knew of others who had greater talent but who never succeeded. One of Jackson's friends commented, "Why, Jim Brown, who lived right down the pike from Jackson, was not only smarter but he could throw Andy three times out of four in a wrestling match. But look where Andy is now."

Another friend responded, "How did there happen to be a fourth time? Didn't they usually say three times and out?"

"Sure, they were supposed to, but not Andy. He would never admit he was beat -- he would never stay 'threwed.' Jim Brown would get tired, and on the fourth try Andrew Jackson would throw him and be the winner."

Andrew Jackson just wouldn't stay 'threwed'! And that determination served him well for many years.

Life will knock us off our feet again and again. You've been there and so have I. But some people just won't stay 'threwed.' They get up again, dust themselves off and go for it one more time. These are people of courage. They are also people of faith and hope.

Maybe you have been knocked off your feet. Will you stay 'threwed,' or will you rise and give it your best one more time?

READER: Plaque on the wall of Golfer Arnold Palmer's office

Source ~ <http://www.bible.org/illus/p-q/p-q-67.htm#TopOfPage>

"THINK YOU CAN"

If you think you are beaten, you are.
If you think you dare not, you don't.
If you'd like to win but think you can't,
It's almost certain you won't.
Life's battles don't always go
To the stronger or faster man,
But sooner or later, the man who wins
Is the man who thinks he can.

- Anon

READER: “WINNERS AND LOSERS”

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The winner glories in the good; the whiner majors in the mediocre. Winners' thinking processes differ from other people's. As part of their normal, moment-to-moment stream of consciousness, winners think constantly in terms of I can and I will. Losers concentrate their waking thoughts on...what they should have done ... would have done ... what they can't do. When the mind's self-talk is positive, performance is more likely to be successful.

“The huge majority of our negative doubts and fears are imaginary or beyond our control.” - - Denis Waitley

READER: Hebrews 11:1

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

READER: “ Life as a Journey”

Source ~ http://www.sermonillustrator.org/illustrator/sermon2b/life_as_a_journey.htm

Do not undermine your worth by comparing yourself with others.
It is because we are different that each of us is special.

Do not set your goals by what other people deem important.
Only you know what is best for you.

Do not take for granted the things closest to your heart.
Cling to them for without them, life is meaningless.

Do not let your life slip through your fingers
by living in the past nor for the future.

By living your life one day at a time,
you live all the days of your life.

Do not give up when you still have something to give.
Nothing is really over until the moment you stop trying.

It is a fragile thread that binds us to each other.
Do not be afraid to encounter risks.

It is by taking chances that we learn how to be brave.
Do not shut love out of your life by saying it is impossible to find.

The quickest way to receive love is to give love;
The fastest way to lose love is to hold it too tightly.

Do not dismiss your dreams.
To be without dreams is to be without hope;
To be without hope is to be without purpose.

Do not run through life so fast that you forget
not only where you have been, but also where you are going.

Life is not a race, but a journey
to be savored each step of the way

READER: “Alex Haley”

Source ~ http://www.sermonillustrator.org/illustrator/sermon2/alex_haley.htm

For eight years the struggling young writer wrote incredible numbers of short stories and articles for publication, and for eight long years they were rejected. Fortunately, he didn't give up, and for that he--and America--will always be grateful.

On one occasion... an editor wrote an encouraging note on a rejection slip. It simply said, “Nice try.” I think you'll agree that most of us would not rate that little comment very high on the encouragement list, but it literally brought tears to the young writer's eyes. He was given new hope... he simply would not give up.

Finally after many years of effort, he wrote what has deeply affected the entire world and helped him to become one of the most influential writers of the '70s. I'm speaking of Alex Haley and his book ROOTS...

The message is clear: If you have a dream and really believe you have some ability that can be expressed, pursue that dream. Don't give up.

READER: "I Refuse to be Discouraged" (Poem)

Source ~ http://www.sermonillustrator.org/illustrator/sermon2a/i_refuse_to_be_discouraged.htm

I refuse to be discouraged, To be sad, or to cry;
I refuse to be downhearted, and here's the reason why . . .

I have a God who's mighty, Who's sovereign and supreme;
I have a God who loves me, and I am on His team.

He is all wise and powerful, Jesus is His name;
Though everything is changeable, My God remains the same.

My God knows all that's happening; Beginning to the end,
His presence is my comfort, He is my dearest friend.

When sickness comes to weaken me, To bring my head down low,
I call upon my mighty God; Into His arms I go.

When circumstances threaten to rob me from my peace;
He draws me close unto His breast, Where all my strivings cease.

And when my heart melts within me, and weakness takes control;
He gathers me into His arms, He soothes my heart and soul.

The great "I AM" is with me, My life is in His hand,
The "Son of the Lord" is my hope, It's in His strength I stand.

I refuse to be defeated, My eyes are on my God;
He has promised to be with me, as through this life I trod.

I'm looking past all my circumstances, To Heaven's throne above;
My prayers have reached the heart of God, I'm resting in His love.

I give God thanks in everything, My eyes are on His face;
The battle's His, the victory's mine; He'll help me win the race.

The great "I AM" is with me, My life is in His hand,
The "Son of the Lord" is my hope, It's in His strength I stand.

READER: "Your Heart's Music"

Source ~ http://www.sermonillustrator.org/illustrator/sermon2d/your_heart's_music.htm

It was 1994. Daily, the city of Sarajevo was under siege. Mortars and artillery fire instantly transformed once beautiful buildings into rubble. Sarajevo's citizens were frightened, weary and increasingly despondent. Then, one February day, a mortar shell exploded in the market killing 68 civilians. Many more were wounded and maimed from the blast.

A cellist with the Sarajevo symphony could no longer stand the killing. He took his cello to the market, sat down amidst the rubble and played a concert. When he finished, he simply took up his instrument and left.

Every day, for 67 days, he came to the market. Every day he played a concert. It was his gift of love to the city. He did it because he felt his community needed hope.

Hope is music in the heart. It is a gift given to each of us to see us through the night. Once you have lost hope, you have nothing left to lose. Utter hopelessness kills everything it touches. But hope gives us strength to continue, whether it be a marriage that is worth saving, a life that is worth living or a situation that is worth salvaging.

In the end, hope is a spiritual thing. When all is in chaos and ruin, hope is the knowledge that the music still goes on. In this vast and infinite universe, we are not alone.

During those times when all may seem to be crumbling down around you, can you hear the music in your heart -- the song of hope?

Listen carefully. It is there, playing for you.

READER: Isaiah 40:31

“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.”

READER: (Excerpt) “Our Brightest Hope” Our Daily Bread

Source ~ <http://www.gospelcom.net/rbc/odb/odb-12-31-96.shtml>

“The only thing we know about the future is that the providence of God will be up before dawn.” As we face what lies ahead, we can count on that. Hope in the God of all our tomorrows provides optimism for the future and gives strength for today. -- HWR

READER: Jeremiah 17:7

Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, and whose hope is the Lord. --

READER: (Excerpt) “Hope Beyond Hope” Our Daily Bread

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Lewis Smedes wrote, “Is there a hope when hope is taken away? Is there hope when the situation is hopeless? That question leads us to Christian hope, for in the Bible, hope is no longer a passion for the possible. It becomes a passion for the promise.”

When our expectation is rooted in God and in His Son Jesus Christ as our Savior from sin and death, the blessing that Alexander Pope says we are always looking for becomes a present reality. Because God is the God of hope (Rom. 15:13), He alone keeps hope flowing when its springs dry up in the human breast. --DJD

My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus' name. -- Mote

The secret of coping is hoping in God.

READER: Psalm 71:5

For You are my hope; O Lord GOD, You are my confidence from my youth.

READER: Psalm 147:1-11

*Praise the LORD. How good it is to sing praises to our God, how pleasant and fitting to praise him!
The LORD builds up Jerusalem; he gathers the exiles of Israel.
He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.
He determines the number of the stars and calls them each by name.
Great is our Lord and mighty in power; his understanding has no limit.
The LORD sustains the humble but casts the wicked to the ground.
Sing to the LORD with thanksgiving; make music to our God on the harp.
He covers the sky with clouds; he supplies the earth with rain and makes grass grow on the hills.
He provides food for the cattle and for the young ravens when they call.
His pleasure is not in the strength of the horse, nor his delight in the legs of a man;
the LORD delights in those who fear him, who put their hope in his unfailing love.*

READER: Jeremiah 29:11

“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 a future.”

READER: QUOTE # 3

Source ~ http://www.wisdomquotes.com/cat_hope.html

If you lose hope, somehow you lose the vitality that keeps life moving, you lose that courage to be, that quality that helps you go on in spite of it all. And so today I still have a dream. - Martin Luther King, Jr.

READER: QUOTE #4

Source ~ http://www.cybernation.com/victory/quotations/subjects/quotes_hope.html

“Hope is a waking dream.” - Aristotle

READER: QUOTE #5

<http://www.quotationspage.com/subjects/dreams/11.html>

“Go confidently in the direction of your dreams. Live the life you have imagined.” - Henry David Thoreau (1817 - 1862)

READER: QUOTE #6

“To accomplish great things, we must dream as well as act.” - Anatole France (1844 - 1924)

LEADER: The Most

Source ~ <http://www.sermonillustrator.org/illustrator/sermon2b/most.htm>

The most enriching good habit - Complimenting others
 The most destructive bad habit - Worry
 The greatest joy - Giving
 The greatest loss - Loss of self-respect
 The most satisfying work - Helping others
 The ugliest personality trait - Selfishness
 The most endangered species - Dedicated leaders
 Our greatest natural resource - Our youth
 The ugliest look - A frown
 The greatest “shot in the arm” - Encouragement
 The greatest problem to overcome - Fear
 The most effective sleeping pill - Peace of mind
 The most crippling failure disease - Excuses
 The surest way to limit God - Unbelief
 The most powerful forces in life - Love
 The most dangerous piranha - A gossip
 The Greatest Life-Giver - The Creator
 The world’s most incredible computer - The brain
 The deadliest weapon - The tongue
 The two most power-filled words - “I Can”
 The greatest asset – Faith
 The most worthless emotion - Self-pity
 The most beautiful attire - A SMILE!
 The most prized possession - Self esteem
 The worst thing to be without - Hope
 The most powerful channel of communication - Prayer
 The most contagious spirit - Enthusiasm
 The most urgent need - SALVATION
 The GREATEST - GOD

READER: (Excerpt): From a beautiful Hymn

Source ~ <http://www.gospelcom.net/rbc/odb/odb-09-03-03.shtml>

Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father,
 There is no shadow of turning with Thee;
 Thou changest not, Thy compassions they fail not;
 As Thou hast been, Thou forever wilt be. —Chisholm

LEADER: The best reason for hope is God's faithfulness.

"We know not what the future holds, but we know who holds the future!"

COMMENTS IF TIME:

**ALLOW TIME BEFORE CLOSING FOR
PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISES:**

COPY AND DISTRIBUTE THE FOLLOWING PAGES FOR YOUR READERS

READERS

“Laboratory Experiment”

A number of years ago researchers performed an experiment to see the effect hope has on those undergoing hardship. Two sets of laboratory rats were placed in separate tubs of water. The researchers left one set in the water and found that within an hour they had all drowned. The other rats were periodically lifted out of the water and then returned. When that happened, the second set of rats swam for over 24 hours. Why? Not because they were given a rest, but because they suddenly had hope!

Those animals somehow hoped that if they could stay afloat just a little longer, someone would reach down and rescue them. If hope holds such power for unthinking rodents, how much greater should its effect be on our lives.

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“Unfinished Business” by Halford E. Luccock

One night at dinner a man, who had spent many summers in Maine, fascinated his companions by telling of his experiences in a little town named Flagstaff. The town was to be flooded, as part of a large lake for which a dam was being built. In the months before it was to be flooded, all improvements and repairs in the whole town were stopped. What was the use of painting a house if it were to be covered with water in six months? Why repair anything when the whole village was to be wiped out? So, week by week, the whole town became more and more bedraggled, more gone to seed, more woebegone. Then he added by way of explanation: “Where there is no faith in the future, there is no power in the present.”

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“There are no hopeless situations; there are only people who have grown hopeless about them.” - Clare Boothe Luce.

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“Little League”

A man approached a little league baseball game one afternoon. He asked a boy in the dugout what the score was. The boy responded, “Eighteen to nothing—we’re behind.” “Boy,” said the spectator, “I’ll bet you’re discouraged.” “Why should I be discouraged?” replied the little boy. “We haven’t even gotten up to bat yet!”

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“I Refuse to be Discouraged”

I refuse to be discouraged, To be sad, or to cry;
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I have a God who's mighty, Who's sovereign and supreme;
I have a God who loves me, and I am on His team.

He is all wise and powerful, Jesus is His name;
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My God knows all that's happening; Beginning to the end,
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When circumstances threaten to rob me from my peace;
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The great “I AM” is with me, My life is in His hand,
The “Son of the Lord” is my hope, It's in His strength I stand.

I refuse to be defeated, My eyes are on my God;
He has promised to be with me, as through this life I trod.

I'm looking past all my circumstances, To Heaven's throne above;
My prayers have reached the heart of God, I'm resting in His love.

I give God thanks in everything, My eyes are on His face;
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QUOTE # 3

If you lose hope, somehow you lose the vitality that keeps life moving, you lose that courage to be, that quality that helps you go on in spite of it all. And so today I still have a dream. - Martin Luther King, Jr.

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From a beautiful Hymn

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