

Faith, [Hope](#) & Love_Part30

Psalm 131:3: “O Israel, hope in the Lord from this time forth and forevermore.”

1 Timothy 4:10: “For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers.”

We are studying **hope** and its connection to waiting on the Lord and the fear of the Lord. This study has pinpointed our desperate need for *endurance* as God prepares us to be the men and women who can fulfill the promises He has made to us. Accordingly, He is taking many of us through the fire to remove the impurities in our lives; and He is feverishly cutting away, with His knife, all our attachments to this world. With all this flurry of activity, it is a good thing that we learned He has set our feet in a large place. This fact assures us that we are never really at risk. With all the flames and the cutting, things sure may feel at risk, but that is just how they feel. The truth is that our God is carefully doing His job of setting us apart and teaching us to live like aliens and strangers. In His lovingkindness, He is faithfully delivering our soul from death. And the truth is, we are super safe; well, our *flesh* is not too safe, but we are more than safe. He wants this truth to encourage and strengthen us to keep pressing into both the fire and the knife.

Endurance is a lot like waiting. This word captures the idea that we are willing to continue down the path the Lord has set before us and not quit. *Endurance* is the determination to keep going regardless of what is happening or how long it takes. **Hebrews 12:1-2** says, “let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which

so easily entangles us, and let us run with *endurance* the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith.” We must stay the course and not jump off of it, even for a moment in time, to seek relief. After all, we have all learned that those deviations seem like a good idea at the time, but they always bring destruction and things never play out as we hoped—never! As a body, we are in need of *endurance*. I know we don’t like pain, and culturally we are not accustomed to it; but your pain will only be for a little while if you let it have its perfect work (**1 Peter 1:6**). For, “After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you” (**1 Peter 5:10**). That is a promise in which you can **hope**.

Endurance is a mindset that comes through training, it does not come by way of gifting. In fact, it is something that is built up quite like a muscle. I want you to consider what James says in **James 1:2-4**, “Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the **testing** of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.” It sounds so wonderful: perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. But you must first be tested so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ (**1 Peter 1:7-8**). Yes, your faith needs to be **tested** if you are to build *endurance*; it’s like running, you simply must put in the miles. So don’t loath the fire or turn from the knife. Instead, consider them critical to your spiritual maturity. And always keep in mind that your trials and tribulations bring about *endurance*, which results in

proven character, and proven character results in a hope that does not disappoint (**Romans 5:3-5**). Thus, we need the fire and we need the knife, for it is how we become convinced that God always does everything He says He will do, it is just a matter of time. The fire and the knife are key to our living in **hope**.

I want you to also consider how critical *endurance* will be to surviving the final days. In **Luke 21:16-19** Jesus said, "But you will be betrayed even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death, and you will be hated by all because of My name. Yet not a hair of your head will perish. By your endurance you will gain your lives." This last sentence is actually an *imperative* or a command. It would be better translated: "In your endurance possess your souls." It is rendered in the *aurist middle imperative*. Dig down deep into your souls and possess your souls through *endurance*. It is time we grow up, be **responsible**, and understand the need for the fire and the need for the knife and, as I keep saying, embrace it. Besides, Jesus is preparing us for more. He is preparing us to be the redemption of Boulder and for so much more. Thus, every single one of us must build *endurance*. It is critical to our ability to wait on the Lord and live in hope. And if we live in hope, He will breathe in to our souls the very courage that we need to be strong and endure (**Psalm 31:24**). Let's pick up again in **Psalm 33:18-22**.

Psalm 33:18-22

Behold, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear Him, on those who hope for His lovingkindness, to deliver their soul from death and to keep them alive in famine. Our soul waits for the Lord; **He is our help and our shield**. For our heart rejoices in Him, because we trust in His holy name. Let Your lovingkindness, O Lord, be

upon us, according as we have hoped in You.

The Lord is our help and our shield. I want you to understand that this is a statement of fact. Both of these words are “nouns;” the implication of which is simply wonderful. Being nouns, they describe aspects of the Lord’s character and nature; thus, they are not contingent or dependent upon our getting it all right. Rather, this speaks of a relationship. If you have a relationship with the living God, if the Spirit of God truly lives in you (which is proven out by manifestations of faith, hope, and love), then He is your help and He is your shield. In this you can **hope** because these are attributes of His personhood.

Psalm 115:9-11

Israel, trust in the Lord; He is their help and their shield. O house of Aaron, trust in the Lord; He is their help and their shield. You who fear the Lord, trust in the Lord; He is their help and their shield.

Psalm 28:7

The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in Him, and I am helped; therefore my heart exults, and with my song I shall thank Him.

He is our help. This is the essence of grace. If you have ever wondered what the grace of God really is, this is it: the Lord supernaturally enables us to love Him and

to walk with Him. Everything we have comes from Him. As it says in **Philippians 2:13**, “For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him.” Which is why Paul says in **1 Corinthians 15:10-11**, “But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me.” And further in **2 Corinthians 3:4-6**, “Such confidence we have through Christ toward God. Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant.” He is our help!

If you think about it, grace is the essence of the *Design Point*: Christ in us and Christ through us. The Spirit speaks to this point in Isaiah when He says, “Lord, You will establish peace for us, since You have also performed for us all our works. O Lord our God, other masters besides You have ruled us; but through You alone we confess Your name” (**Isaiah 26:12-13**). He is our help; all that is truly good comes from Him. But as you look around the room at others, or as you look in the mirror, you might think that He is not helping enough. Let’s think about it. We know from **2 Peter 1:3** that He has given us everything we need for life and godliness through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. Therefore, we have been fully provisioned with desire and power for all that is required in this life; but still it seems something is missing, it has to be. I believe that “something” is found in the context of relationship and it is how we reciprocate and make our relationship with God mutual. It is *choice*.

Desire, power, and *choice* comprises, if you will, a trinity of grace experienced via a mutual relationship. God gives us everything—even our desire—but we need

to simply make the *choice* to appropriate what He has given us. Thus, there is no room for the victim mentality when it comes to your spiritual maturity. To complete the circle of relationship, you must take **responsibility** and make the *choice* to embrace all that He has supernaturally given to you and apply it to your life. The rest of the passage in **2 Peter 1:3-11** speaks to the practicality of this choice. The Lord has given us His precious and magnificent promises that by them we become partakers of the divine nature (Christ in us and Christ through us) having escaped the corruption that is from the kingdom of this world. For example, He promised that if we fear the Lord and hope in His lovingkindness, He will deliver our soul from death and keep us alive in famine. This is a precious and magnificent promise which results in His cutting away our *flesh* and burning off the corruption in our soul in order that we might practically realize more of Christ in our lives. But you must be willing to *apply* what you have been given. This is the *choice* that completes the circle of relationship.

2 Peter 1:5-11

Now for this very reason also, **applying** all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins. Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to

make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you **practice** these things, you will never stumble; for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.

He is our help; that is a statement of fact. However, that help is practically realized in the context of a mutual relationship. He gives and we choose to apply what we have been given. If we do, we will come to a full experience with His wonderful and magnificent promises and be partakers of the divine nature (Christ in us and Christ through us). In addition to being our help, He is also our shield.

Psalm 3:1-3

O Lord, how my adversaries have increased! Many are rising up against me. Many are saying of my soul, "There is no deliverance for him in God." Selah. But You, O Lord, are a shield about me, my glory, and the One who lifts my head.

He is our shield. A shield is an instrument of defense and protection, but it can also be used as a weapon of offense. The Lord is our defense, our protection, and our weapon of offense. Experientially, this might be hard to swallow since many of us, me included, have experienced so much attack from the enemy, as well as from people who have been used by the enemy. For a time, that is all I knew. I would have been hard pressed in those days to declare, as a statement of fact, that God is my shield. But we must remember that Jesus is the Lord, our God Almighty; therefore, nothing happens in our life, whether good or ill, unless the Lord

commands it (***Lamentations 3:37-38; Job 2:10; Isaiah 45:7; Jeremiah 32:42***). Thus, the reality is that we are completely safe from harm all the time. He is our shield and our complete protection; no one (neither demon nor man) can bring anything against us because the Lord is a shield about us.

When we have encountered what we would experience as an “attack,” we must understand that from the perspective of our Lord, it is merely a training session. Think of yourself as an athlete and your coach is trying to build into you certain skills, hone other skills, and build strength where you might be weak, or perhaps reveal a previously unknown weakness. Thus, He appoints various opponents, spiritual and physical, to come and train you. And even though you might get hurt during training, it is all under a controlled environment and your training partners can only go as hard and do as much damage as He allows them to do. Everything is purposeful and in the dutiful hand of your coach. But make no mistake, He will allow you to get hurt, that is part of training; but since He has set your feet in a large place you are never really at risk and you are actually quite safe (well, your *flesh* is not safe, but you are).

He is a shield all about you, and He will absolutely protect you from everything and anything that He does not purposely allow. Consider ***2 Corinthians 1:1-11***. Paul explains to the Corinthians how he suffered greatly at the hands of horrible people; yet, God faithfully comforted him in his affliction and even brought others into his suffering (by getting them to pray) so they could share in his suffering. Then he said:

2 Corinthians 1:8-11

For we do not want you to be unaware, brethren, of our affliction which came to us in Asia, that we were burdened excessively, beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of life; indeed, we had the sentence of death within ourselves **so that we would not trust in ourselves, but in God** who raises the dead; who delivered us from so great a peril of death, and will deliver us, He on whom we have set our **hope**. And He will yet deliver us, you also joining in helping us through your prayers, so that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the favor bestowed on us through the prayers of many.

Paul and his team had had great success in their missionary ventures, but God needed them to learn how not to trust in their own strength, effort, or capability, but to trust always in Him. To do this, this Lord brought great opposition to Paul and his team because, if you know anything about Paul, he was quite strong and capable on his own. The Lord did not want Paul to ever lean on his own abilities, but wanted the *Design Point* to be made completely manifest in Paul's life. Hence, the Lord set up for them a serious training session. It seemed that they were on the brink of death, and that was their practical experience. However, God was in control the whole time, which is why Paul could declare, as a statement of fact, "He will yet deliver us." Paul fixed his hope on the Lord, he allowed himself to be pierced and attached to the Lord, he bound himself and twisted his soul around the Lord; thus, he knew—with all confidence of **hope**—that the Lord would deliver him.

The Lord is our shield; and that is a statement of fact! As I said before, nothing and no one can come against you. The Lord may set up for you various training

exercises, but it is all perfectly prescribed to accomplish its designed purpose; that is if you are willing to cooperate with the training and make the *choice* to apply what he has already given you. Accordingly, the “attacks” are necessary to learn *endurance* and thrive in hope.

Psalm 33:18-22

Behold, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear Him, on those who hope for His lovingkindness, to deliver their soul from death and to keep them alive in famine. Our soul waits for the Lord; He is our help and our shield. **For our heart rejoices in Him, because we trust in His holy name.** Let Your lovingkindness, O Lord, be upon us, according as we have hoped in You.

For the longest time, I did not understand that all my affliction was to train me and prepare me to be the man who could live out the promises God had made me. I also did not understand that my training began long before I ever knew those promises. But God chose me before time. He knew exactly how He wanted to use me in His Kingdom. So he began to prep me from the earliest of ages. But without that knowledge or understanding, I grew up mad, angry, and bitter at the hardships He took me through. But now that I know this perspective, my heart rejoices in Him as I have made the choice to trust in His holy name; or said another way, to be a man who fears the lord. When I consider that I am a mere man whom God is raising me up to be more than a man, I rejoice in Him and burst forth with praise.

Psalm 144:3-4

O Lord, what is man, that You take knowledge of him? Or the son of man, that You think of him? Man is like a mere breath; his days are like a passing shadow.

Job 7:17-18

What is man that You magnify him, and that You are concerned about him, that You examine him every morning and try him every moment?

Job 15:14

What is man, that he should be pure, or he who is born of a woman, that he should be righteous?

Psalm 8:4-6

What is man that You take thought of him, and the son of man that You care for him? Yet You have made him a little lower than God, and You crown him with glory and majesty! You make him to rule over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet.

Clearly, the calling of God on our lives and what He must do to train us to live out that calling is incredibly hard to fathom. Why do you think of us? Why do you test us and give us such attention? Why do you magnify us? Why would you give us your righteousness? Why do you care for us? The answer is simple. He has been

preparing us to rule and share His glory. That is what it has all been about. He crowns us with His glory for we will share in His complete inheritance which the Father gives Him; and in this you can **hope**. As the Father gives Him authority, so He will give us authority. According to **Revelation 2:27**, we will even rule nations and will exercise great authority over them. This gives us perspective as to why we have been trained from the day we were born and are even now being trained. Adopt His perspective; like me your heart will rejoice because you trust in His holy name. And if you are having a hard time remembering why you can trust His name, go back and study part 3-18 of this Kingdom series. Everything about His name reveals why we can put our **hope** in the Lord and only in Him.

“Let Your lovingkindness, O Lord, be upon us, according as we have hoped in You.” In closing, let’s quickly touch on the last phrase of **Psalm 33:18-22**. First, I want to say that the Hebrew word here translated as “hoped” can also be translated as “waited.” Placing our hope in the Lord practically looks like waiting on Him trusting His name confident He will always do what He says, it is just a matter of time. It looks like that decision—that *choice*—to apply our faith and choose not to take matters into our own hands, all the while refusing to seek comfort in anything which the Lord has not authorized.

“Let Your lovingkindness, O Lord, be upon us, according as we have hoped in You.” Step back for a moment and grasp what the Psalmist is actually saying: we trust your name so we want You to deliver our soul from death and to keep us alive in famine. This is an invitation for God to bring about the fire and to get out the knife and start cutting knowing that it will result in more of His divine nature in ours, more experience of His promises, and more joy as our heart rejoices in Him

because we trust in His holy name. The Psalmist is embracing the training believing that God will always do what He says, it is just a matter of time. This is how we should embrace the various times and seasons in which God takes us through difficulties. We should trust that it is all good, pleasing, and perfect knowing that if we let it work its purposes and we make the *choice* to wait on the Lord and *endure*, we will experience His wonderful and magnificent promises and live out the *Design Point*: Christ in us and Christ through us. In this we can place our **HOPE**.

Psalm 33:18-22

Behold, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear Him, on those who hope for His lovingkindness, to deliver their soul from death and to keep them alive in famine. Our soul waits for the Lord; He is our help and our shield. For our heart rejoices in Him, because we trust in His holy name. Let Your lovingkindness, O Lord, be upon us, according as we have hoped in You.

Let's Pray