

CHAPTER 17

HOPE IS A PARTNER TO YOUR FAITH (e²)

"Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful" (Hebrews 10:23).

FAITH AND HOPE WORK TOGETHER

"And now abide faith, hope, love; these three, but the greatest of these is love!" (1 Corinthians 13:13). In an earlier chapter we talked a great deal about how love works with faith to produce victory in your life. Now, let's look at how faith, and hope work together to cause our desires to become a reality in our lives.

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

In the above scripture what "things" is the writer of Hebrews talking about? The things you hope for! What things are we to hope for? We are to hope for those things which Jesus Christ has made available to us when he redeemed us from the curse of the law (Galatians 3:13&14). We are to hope for those things that God has promised us in his word.

FAITH GIVES SUBSTANCE TO THINGS HOPED FOR

I like the way the New English Bible translates this same verse, "AND WHAT IS FAITH? Faith gives substance to our hopes, and makes us certain of realities we do not see" (Hebrews 11:1).

"Faith gives substance to our hopes"--I like that. We live in a physical world. Therefore until our hope is given substance, it is of no value to us. Substance is the matter from which our physical world is constructed.

WITHOUT HOPE, FAITH HAS NOTHING TO GIVE SUBSTANCE TO

Biblical hope is often misunderstood; it is not an optimistic outlook or wishful thinking without any foundation like the world's hope. The word translated *hope* in Hebrews 11:1 is ***elpis*** (el-peece): hope - confident expectation based on solid certainty (Strong's #1680). Biblical *hope* is based on God's promises. Hope is not inferior to faith; it's a partner with faith. Faith is the present possession of grace. Hope is confidence in grace's future accomplishment.

Faith is always now; hope is always future. Hope is the goal-setter for our faith!

OUR HOPE IS A PARTNER TO OUR FAITH--IT SETS THE GOAL

If we have no hope, then our faith will have nothing to give substance to! Paul describes Abraham's battle (in the face of contrary evidence) to believe God's promise that he would have a son. "Who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, 'So shall your descendants be.' And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body already dead (since he was about a hundred years old) and the deadness of Sarah's womb. He did not waiver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was able to perform" (Romans 4:18-21).

Abraham was ninety-nine years old, and his wife Sarah was eighty-nine years old when God told Abraham that he would have a son by his wife Sarah. It was then also that God changed his name from *Abram* (meaning exalted father) to *Abraham* (meaning a father of many nations).

The scripture says that there was no hope, but Abraham **in hope**, believed. What did he believe? Where did Abraham get his hope? He believed the word that God had spoken to him, and he received supernatural hope. When we hear Abraham's name in English we hear "Abraham," but when Abraham

heard his name in Hebrew he heard "father of many nations." God arranged it so that every time that Abraham spoke or heard his name he heard "father of many nations."

When there was no natural hope, Abraham got supernatural hope from the word that God had spoken to him. The confession of his hope (the promise of God that he would be "the father of many nations") produced faith in his heart. Subsequently, that faith in his heart, spoken from his mouth gave substance to his **hope**.

HOW I FOUND HOPE IN THE WORD OF GOD

As I describe in the next chapter, by December of 2003, my consulting firm had been losing money for over thirteen months. The company had lost more than one hundred percent of its net worth. I had to borrow money on two occasions to keep the consulting firm in business. (The only way the company could borrow money was for my wife and I to pledge our personal wealth as collateral.) Our backlog of work was extremely low; we could only keep about half to two thirds of our staff productively employed. Our overhead costs were eating us up. Each month we were falling farther and farther behind. There was no natural hope that we could turn the business around.

My managers were discouraged; some of them were saying that I should give up and close the business down. They were ready to give up. Unknown to me Joseph, the man I had been grooming to take over and purchase the company, was searching for a position with other companies. Even my wife (after particularly discouraging news) suggested that I close the business.

But I continued to meditate (think upon and confess) the Word of God day and night, and like Abraham, I got supernatural hope from God's Word. When all natural hope was gone, I found hope in God's Word. I continued to confess that hope (the hope I found in God's Word) without wavering (Hebrews 10:23). Gradually that hope became my faith, and my faith gave substance to my hope, and by October of 2004, the business had turned around and it posted the best financial year that it had ever experienced. It was so good, in fact, that I was able to sell the business for the price which I established.

HOPE WORKS LIKE A THERMOSTAT

I have worked in the construction industry most of my life and my company has specialized in the design of buildings. Let me give you an illustration from the building industry that I believe will help you to understand hope. (While no illustration from the physical world can perfectly describe the operation of a spiritual principle, I think the following example will help you understand the necessity of confessing your hope.) A heat, ventilation and air conditioning system produces and controls the interior climate in all modern buildings. We commonly refer to this system as the HVAC System. The HVAC equipment is the heart of the building's climate control system; it is designed to produce whatever temperature the thermostat requests of it. A thermostat is generally located in each area or room of the building in which we wish to control the temperature. The thermostat is a device that sends a command to the HVAC equipment identifying the temperature that it is to establish in the room. The thermostat is the goal-setter for the HVAC system. The HVAC system merely obeys the command given by the goal-setter (the thermostat). If the thermostat is set at 60°F (18°C) and you want to increase the temperature in the room to 70°F (22°C), you reset the thermostat to the higher temperature and it signals the HVAC system to send more hot air to the room. Now let's say that the room temperature is 80°F (27° C), and you reset the thermostat to 70°F (22°C). The thermostat will send a signal to the HVAC system causing the HVAC system to send cool air into the room until the room reaches the lower temperature.

YOUR SPIRIT PRODUCES THE HARVEST

Your spirit is like the HVAC equipment; it is designed by God to develop the faith that will give substance to your "hope goal." You go to the Word of God and find a promise that He will prosper you, and on the basis of that promise you establish a "hope goal" to increase your sales and your profits by twenty percent next year. Then by an act of your will, you begin to meditate on (think upon and confess) God's promise to prosper you; and your hope goal to increase your sales and profits by twenty percent next year. As you think upon and confess your hope goal, it will produce faith in

your heart. You are to hold fast to the confession of your hope (Hebrews 10:23), because it will take time to produce faith in your heart. As your faith is complete, it will give substance to your hope, even when your business is shaken by an attack of the devil.

Paul said it this way: "Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore..." (Ephesians 6:13 &14). The evil day is the day that the devil and his demons come to attack your business. Furthermore, Paul said "Therefore be imitators of God as dear children, And walk in Love..." (Ephesians 5:1 & 2), and in another place he says that "God who ... calls those things which do not exist as though they did;" (Romans 4:17); therefore you and I are to call things that do not exist as though they **do** exist.

You are to speak your hope like Abraham did. Even when it looks like there is no natural hope, you go to the Word of God to find supernatural hope. You confess that your sales are twenty percent higher than last year. And you continue to speak prosperity and increase right in the face of apparent lack. You plant the seed (your "hope goal" based on the Word of God) in your spirit (the garden that God has given you to produce faith) by speaking your hope.

God has designed you so that your voice, heard by the inner ear, sends the signal for what you desire in life directly to your spirit. You confess your hope continually until you see the confession of your hope come to pass. "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful" (Hebrews 10:23).

DON'T CONFUSE YOUR SPIRIT

Now let's go back to the illustration of the building HVAC System. Perhaps someone set the thermostat at 70°F (22°C) and a few minutes later he changed it to 80°F (27°C). But then a little while later he changed it again, this time to 60°F (18°C). The HVAC system will not work properly if you constantly change the thermostat. It will overheat and shut itself down.

Christians often send confusing signals to their spirit. They hear someone teach the principles taught in this book and they immediately begin to confess their hope. "My business is prosperous and successful, because my God meets all my needs according to His riches in glory"(Philippians 4:19). After several weeks, they look at the adverse business conditions and the slow cash flow and fear enters their mind. They pray, "Father, I don't have enough money to make the payroll, it looks like your word isn't working. I don't know what I am going to do." Then several days later they pull themselves together and begin to confess, albeit somewhat fearfully, "My God meets all my needs." They keep changing the thermostat! Once you have to set the "hope thermostat" to where you want it, leave it there regardless of the circumstances. The confession of your hope must be constant and consistent. Then your faith will work day and night to produce the goal that your hope sets for it. Faith gives substance to our hope.