



## Hope Is Powerful and Precious!

By Victoria Munro

“Now may God, the inspiration and fountain of hope, fill you to overflowing with uncontainable joy and perfect peace as you trust in him. And may the power of the Holy Spirit continually surround your life with his super-abundance until you radiate with hope!” ~ Romans 15:13 (TPT)

Paul concludes his familiar chapter on love, 1 Corinthians 13, with the words, “Faith, hope and love abide, but the greatest of these is love.” A lot has been written about love and faith, but relatively little on hope. It almost seems a bit elusive. I’ve been giving a lot of thought to hope recently—asking what exactly it is, how does it differ from faith, how we acquire and grow in hope, and in what ways does it benefit us? Though I certainly don’t presume to understand it, I’m discovering that hope is powerful and precious!

Hope differs from faith in that faith relates to the present, and hope concerns the future. In our busy lives, where we have so much to do and multiple voices constantly vying for our attention, it’s not easy to stop and take time to think about the future. Yet how we view the future strongly influences the way we see and think about ourselves and our lives now. Hope is described as a helmet<sup>1</sup> protecting our minds, allowing us to keep our focus on God and what He has ultimately promised us. It lets us view tough circumstances we perhaps don’t understand from God’s perspective. Instead of seeing a problem from our own myopic viewpoints, hope enables us to see the “big picture,” which can significantly relieve stress.

Knowing that God is good, and that everything He does is good, draws us to Him. It offers us comfort, encouragement and security. When things are going well, it’s easy to happily declare, “God is good all the time!” And sincerely mean it.

In the face of hardship and disappointment hope enables us to experience joy; it helps us to endure—to stay the course and to develop godly character<sup>2</sup>. Hope helps us distinguish what is of real and eternal value from what may barely even be a memory in the future. It keeps eternity in clear view.

We absolutely need hope to live healthy lives. Paul understood this as he prayed for the Christians in Rome, “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in your faith, that by the power of the Holy Spirit, your whole life and outlook may be radiant with hope.”<sup>3</sup>

A number of years ago researchers performed an experiment to see the effect hope has on those undergoing hardship. They placed a lab rat in a large tub of water with sides so high it

couldn't climb out. The tub was placed in a completely dark room. They timed how long the rat would keep swimming before giving up. The rat struggled to survive for a little over six minutes and then gave up.

Then they placed a second lab rat in the same tub of water, but this time they shone a single ray of light into the room. The rat swam for more than 36 hours before giving up. Just seeing that ray of light gave the rat hope to keep swimming. Hope is a life-giving force. It's powerful and precious!

“The Christian life, if it is grasped according to God’s truth, is a magnificent obsession with an eternal hope, a hope that does not lead to an escapist attitude, but to the pursuit of life on a whole new dimension. It makes you bullish, as we might say today, on the potentials of this life as stewards of God. It gives us power to live courageously, to be all God has called us to be in Christ.” ~ J. Hampton Keathley, III

<sup>1</sup> 1 Thessalonians 5:8 “...and as a helmet the hope of salvation.” (NKJV)

<sup>2</sup> Romans 5:3-5

<sup>3</sup> Romans 15:13 J.B. Phillips New Testament

