



Daily Verse and Comment

Psalm 31:24

(24) Be strong and take heart,
all you who hope in the LORD.

New International Version

It may sound impossible, but we can have hope in the face of the monumental problems facing, not just the United States, but also the entire world. Our hope is not physical, for no place exists on earth where we can run and expect to find an island of [peace](#) and hope.

Mankind's problems are endless and insurmountable. They are also complex, requiring [wisdom](#) and power to execute solutions that are beyond what any man possesses. Vain men keep attempting to convince others that they have the solutions, but we know innately and from history that they will fail. More wars and further economic collapses will come. [God](#) has willed that Christians must pass through these perilous times with [the world](#).

Christians can have hope for three major reasons: First, God has forgiven our sins, so even death should hold no terror for us. Second, we have God's unbreakable promise to send [Jesus Christ](#) and establish His [Kingdom on earth](#). Third, because of God's calling, we believe His Word and have the indwelling of His Spirit to guide and empower us through whatever comes along.

But why are God's promises of good delayed in times like this, when every culture on earth is breaking down, and sheer terror may soon confront us? Does not [Proverbs 13:12](#) read, "Hope deferred makes the heart sick"? It is easy for a person with a frustrated, anxious spirit, troubled from observing mankind's violence and greed, to become weary of constant discouragement.

In fact, [Revelation 6:10](#) envisions saints crying out from their graves, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on earth?"

Hope is generally defined as "an expectation of good in spite of the obvious presence of multiple obstacles to a positive outcome." Some equate it with a wish, but biblical hope is far more. A *wish* is merely "a desire for a particular end," and one can be made when absolutely no valid reason for the desired outcome exists. It can be a mindless, unreasonable fantasy with no solid basis, nothing more than a senseless, exaggerated drift of thought beyond honest logic.

In [Psalm 42:5](#), David provides counsel: "Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance" (see verse 11; [Psalm 43:5](#)). His advice points to the difference between biblical hope and a wish. Real hope is anchored in the unfailing character and power of Almighty God, not in a mere whim of a careless mind. It is impossible for God to lie ([Hebrews 6:18](#)); He does not change ([Malachi 3:6](#); [Hebrews 13:8](#)).

In [1 Corinthians 13:13](#), hope is listed along with [faith](#) and [love](#) as three of the greatest virtues a Christian can have as part of his character. Because of the ever-present reasons for despair, we can presume that hope is a necessity of Christian life. [Hebrews 6:18-19](#) tells us to "lay hold of the hope set before us," and that hope in God's promises is "an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast." Thus, when we have hope in God, it can truly dispel our fears of falling into frustration and despair.

God often delays answering and/or providing things that, based on His Word, we have justifiable hope to receive. We have the example of David, who prayed in such a circumstance: "My God, My God, [why have You forsaken Me](#)? Why are You so far from helping Me, and from the words of My groaning? O My God, I cry in the daytime, but You do not hear; and in the night season, and am not silent" ([Psalm 22:1-2](#)). We are by no means equal to David, yet have we not all been in such a circumstance? David's prayer reveals his strong sense of urgency as he endured his trial. However, we also know that his trust did not break; he persevered through it. [Psalm 22:19-21](#) shows that God eventually answered David.

David's hope—his internal attitude—remained steadfast because it was anchored in the pure and unchanging character of God and His promises—the ground or reason for his expectation of good. Did God answer because David totally deserved to be answered? No, He answered because He is the [merciful](#) God and because David, as part of His purpose, was being prepared for what lies ahead.

In this lies the answer as to why God withholds the good. He is in no way being mean, thoughtlessly unaware, or distracted by other events. As Creator, He knows far better than we can even begin to imagine what each individual within His purpose needs to fit precisely into His creation. Does the created thing know his exact place in God's plan? Does he know exactly what qualities he needs to develop? God knows, and even He needs time to develop them.

The charge for us, then, is twofold: To avoid mere vain wishing, we must make sure our reasons for hope are firmly anchored in God Himself and His words of promise to His children. Then, with that solid foundation, let hope arise within to motivate the working out of our salvation. This gives evidence that our faith, hope, and love, functioning together, are glorifying God.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

To learn more, see:
[Why Is Hope Delayed?](#)

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