

## Holding onto Hope

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Romans 12:12 "Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer." (NIV)

When I was in graduate school, my favorite professor was Dr. Bob Castagnola. Although he taught different techniques to use when working with clients, Dr. Bob would often tell his students that occasionally the only thing you can do for someone is to hope for them, until they can hope for themselves. Additionally, he encouraged us to find the hope that situations and relationships would improve and change for the better.

Throughout the Bible, we are encouraged to place our faith and trust in The Lord because He is our hope. According to Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology, the definition for hope is "To trust in, wait for, look for, or desire something or someone; or to expect something beneficial in the future." Like every good father, it is The Lord's desire to bless us, so faith in the future is rewarding in itself.

In the past decade, there have been numerous studies on hope, and science has simply affirmed what God's word has already encouraged us to do. Researchers have discovered that when a person has hope there is a positive physiological effect on circulation, respiration, and motor function. Furthermore, having hope can positively alter the neurochemistry in the brain.

Researchers are quick to explain that hope is active, and it is distinguished from a "false hope" or "denial." For example, when a person is under going a trial and they have hope, they accept the situation they find themselves. However, they believe there can be positive change. Whereas, someone without hope may simply accept the difficult situation, but not believe there can be positive change or even be fearful of change.

Dr. Bob, my dear professor, would also caution us that one of the most hurtful things we can do is tell someone else that there is no hope or to take their hope away.

May you be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer, and may hope bring you comfort and peace.

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