



# HOPE

## ADVENT | Week 1

Hope is a word we hear often during Christmas or the Advent season. It is important to make sure that our understanding of this powerful word is correct because the New Testament idea of hope is very different from the way the world thinks about hope.

We might hear someone say, “Will the Cowboys win the championship this year?” And someone will respond, “I don’t know, I hope so!” Someone might stop and ask, “Do you think it will snow on Christmas Day?” And often the reply will be, “I’m not sure, but I hope so.” Hope is commonly thought of as a desire for some future event or circumstance that we cannot be certain will come to pass. But that is not the way the New Testament speaks about hope.

**Titus 1:2** “...in hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began.”

**Hebrews 3:6** “...but Christ is faithful over God’s house as a son. And we are his house, if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope.”

**Hebrews 6:11** “...And we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness to have the full assurance of hope until the end...”

We have a fully assured hope because it based on a God who never lies. We have a fully assured hope because it is based on the faithfulness of God’s Son, not ours. We have a fully assured hope because of the countless saints that have gone before us.

## The Recipe for Hope

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“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus that in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge—even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you—so that you are not lacking in any gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.”

### 1 Corinthians 1:3-9 (ESV)

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We really like the word “hope.”

We see it used in political campaigns and charity fundraising and especially at Christmas. Let’s be honest—if you attend a church any time around December, you’re going to hear about hope.

And it’s true. Christmas is absolutely about hope. All those preachers and speakers and songs are right to talk about finding hope during the Advent season.

We like the concept of “hope” because we can attach whatever meaning we want. It’s a nice, warm fuzzy word that’s pretty easy to throw around. But it can be difficult to know exactly what hope is.

“... it can be difficult to know exactly what hope is.”

That's why 1 Corinthians 1:3-9 is helpful for us. It defines hope. This passage opens by telling us that we have all the gifts we need as we wait for the "revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ" (v. 7). As we live and exist in a dark world, it can feel a little hopeless, but this verse tells us we have the skills and ability to live in hope of the coming King.

And then, amazingly, it tells just what those gifts are. It describes these wonderful promises that are actually the very gifts that bring us hope. First, we know we'll be able to endure because Christ sustains us to the end (v. 8). What a promise! We can have hope because Jesus will see us through. But there's more.

**"This is the recipe for hope. To know that even when it's dark... God has promised to keep His children whole..."**

The second gift is even sweeter because God's Word then tells us that Christ will present us guiltless (v. 8)! When Christ returns and makes everything whole and right, His children will stand before the Father completely blameless because of the mercy He's shown.

This is the recipe for hope. To know that even when it's dark—even when it seems like there's no way out of the mess the world is in—God has promised to keep His children whole and steadfast.

And when that glorious day comes when Jesus returns, we won't be marred by sin and death. Because we belong to Him, He'll present us as His own, blameless and free. If you don't know Christ, pray and ask that He would reveal Himself to you. Then confess and believe, and gain a hope that will never run dry.

### Further Reflection | Individual Study Questions

1. Paul's letter to the church in Corinth begins with the word "grace" (v. 3). What is "grace," and from whom is this grace given? How do we see God's grace at work in this passage?
2. What actions or activities does Paul attribute to God in this passage? To Jesus Christ?

### Further Reflection | Family Study Questions

1. As believers in Christ, Paul says that all believers are given gifts (v. 7). What spiritual gifts have you been given by God, and how have you used them?
2. Count all the promises God makes to His people in this passage. How many did you find? What are those promises, and how do they give us hope in this life as we wait for the day of Christ's return?

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