

1. *Life Application Study Bible, NLT* Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. 2004

THE FOLLOW UP

THE GIFT OF HOPE
***You have 6 days to get
these 4 devos and the Quiet
Time Challenge done***



*And Jesus' name will be the hope of all the world.
~ Matthew 12:21*

DEVO #1—The Joyous Gift of Hope

READ: Philippians 1:1-19

Someone wrote: "The word *happiness* evokes visions of unwrapping gifts on Christmas morning...being surprised on your birthday...or vacationing in some exotic locale. Everyone wants to be happy; we make chasing this elusive ideal a lifelong pursuit: spending money, collecting things, and searching for new experiences. But if happiness depends on our circumstances, what happens when the toys rust, loved ones die, health deteriorates, money is stolen, and the party's over? Often happiness flees and despair sets in."

In contrast to fleeting happiness, however, is lasting hope and joy. These things run deeper, providing a quiet, confident assurance of God's love and work in our lives.¹

1. Knowing this, how do you think Paul could talk about a "heart full of hope and joy" while in prison awaiting death?
2. Paul knows all about God's gift of hope. Read through verses 12 to 19 again, what good does Paul see coming from his imprisonment?
3. In verse 18, Paul says, "So I rejoice. And I will continue to rejoice." In verse 19, Paul gives three reasons why he can "continue to rejoice." What are they? Do you believe those things are true for you as well?

PRAYER

~Thank God that the joy and hope He gives is greater and stronger than any temporary happiness the world can offer
~Ask God to help you experience that quiet, confident hope/joy
~Bring to God any difficult circumstances you are going through and ask Him to show you how He is working it out for good

ADDITIONAL NOTE SPACE

POSSIBLE ACTION STEPS

- ◆ Be sure to remind yourself that the Lord is always with you and is always ready to fill you
- ◆ Think through the last few times you felt anxious, afraid, hopeless, or despairing. What did you do in those times? Did you turn to the Lord?
- ◆ Keep praying at least ten minutes each day
- ◆ Spend some time literally counting your blessings

QUIET TIME CHALLENGE

NOTE:

The *Quiet Time Challenge* is NOT a devotional in itself. It is designed for you to do separately apart from your daily devotional time.

HOW IT WORKS:

Find a quiet place with no distractions. Make this between just you and God. Clear your mind then read the Bible verse(s). After doing so, work through the questions. At the end, spend five to ten minutes in "listening mode." Just ask God to speak to you and then be quiet and seek to hear His voice.

PART 1 — READ: Matthew 12:21

PART 2 — QUESTIONS

Explain this verse in your own words:

Do you see Jesus as your one and only source of true hope? Why or why not?

PART 3 — LISTEN

Ask God to examine your heart. Let Him point out where you are empty and need a filling of His hope, joy, love, strength, etc. Then seek to hear His voice speak to your soul. (Feel free to jot down anything you hear.)

DEVO #2 — What's Your Source?

READ: Philippians 1:20-30

Have you heard the expression: "That went over like a lead balloon!" Say you're at a party and everyone is laughing and having a good time, and then someone says they have cancer, or shares a story about putting a puppy to sleep. Someone just might say, "that went over like a lead balloon!" Lead balloons don't float. They're heavy and they bring things down.

Have you ever met a person who is like a lead balloon? Some people seem to have no hope or joy. But that is not true of Paul. Even in the ultimate "lead balloon" situation...in prison awaiting possible death, Paul is full of hope. Where did this hope come from?

1. Read verses 20-25 again. Paul says "to live is Christ and to die is gain." Whether facing a long, fruitful life or imminent death, Paul has a continual source of hope in the unchanging Christ. What is your source of hope?
2. When we are sad, depressed, or struggling, we often turn to "temporary lift ups." List the things that you turn to when you should be turning to Christ. (This list might include: shopping, possessions, TV, movies, friends, sports, hunting, etc.)
3. In verse 25, Paul has a sincere desire for the Philippians to "experience the joy of their faith" Have you experienced the joy of your faith? What things are keeping you from that?

PRAYER

~Thank God that, through Christ, He offers you a continual source of unending hope and joy
~Ask God to help you seek Him first when life gets hard
~Give to God the "temporary fixes" that you often turn to for happiness. Ask for the strength to seek Him above those things

DEVO #3 — Hey, Let Me Share My Hope

READ: Philippians 2:12-30

Can you imagine someone coming up to you and saying, "Hey, can I share my hope with you? I just found out I need to have emergency surgery! Or how about, "Hey, can share my hope with you? I just heard my youth pastor's lesson is five hours this week!"

If someone were to say something like that to you, you might start looking for the number to a mental hospital! It is not natural to have "hope enough to share," especially when life is rough. Yet Paul, after talking about possibly being killed for his faith, seems to be ready to share all sorts of hope and joy!

1. Read through verses 14-18 again. Paul says "stay away from complaining and arguing." It is not possible to complain and have hope at the same time. Do you tend to be a complainer? What are ways you can avoid complaining and arguing?
2. In verse 16, Paul says, "Hold tightly to the word of truth." To stay connected to our Source of hope, we must spend time in God's Word. How much time do you spend "holding tightly to the word?" How could you do better?
3. In verse 15, Paul says we should "live clean, innocent lives as children of God." It's hard to have hope and joy when your life is full of guilt and shame. Take a moment to "jettison" past regrets. Give your sin and shame to God and receive His touch.

PRAYER

- ~Thank God that He has made a way for you to experience "hope enough to share" even during the worst times of life
- ~Make sure you take the time to jettison past regrets and give over current worries to God
- ~Ask God to enable you to "hold tightly" to a devotional time

DEVO #4 — Check the Gauges

READ: Colossians 2:1-10

Jason only had his license for a short while when he learned a valuable lesson. While driving a hand-me-down 2002 Ford Taurus, with a dent in the passenger side door, the car suddenly began to jerk and whine, then it stalled right in the middle of an intersection. With people honking all over the place, Jason had to get out of the car and literally push it to the side of the road...and walk home. He'd run out of gas.

A two mile walk later, Jason frustratingly opened the front door and dropped onto the hallway floor. "What's the matter with you?" asked Dad as he rounded the corner.

"I learned a lesson today."

"Yeah, what lesson's that?"

"Always check the gauges."

1. Just as it is important to "check the gauges" on your car, so you must "check the gauges" of your life. Do you know when you're running empty on hope, on strength, on joy?
2. When running empty, do you know where to turn to be filled?
3. Read through verses 1-7 again, what are the benefits of being continually "rooted" in Christ?
4. Verse 10 tells us we are only complete when we are united to Christ. What can you do, on a daily basis, to keep yourself united to Christ?

PRAYER

- ~Thank God that through Christ we can have our tanks filled, and they can stay continually full
- ~Confess to God times you have turned to what the world has to offer to have your tank filled
- ~Ask the Lord to fill your tank with Himself