

**Romans – Let’s Do This!**  
**66- “How to Keep from Losing Hope”**  
**Romans 15:4-14**

*Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Brad Bigney / May 22, 2016*

Hope is far more than wishful thinking! When the Bible talks about hope it’s talking about a confident expectation of future blessing that’s based on the character and promises of God, that are centered around the person and work of Christ.

In **Romans 15:4-14**, Paul tells us some things about hope and how to keep it alive.

**I. You’ve Got to Keep Reading God’s Word – All of It!**

**Romans 15:4** “For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience (endurance) and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.”

You have to have the right diet for hope to stay alive. Hope eats God’s Word for breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

Paul tells us three things in **v. 4** that pinpoint exactly what the Scriptures were intended to do for us, and why we fall apart without them.

1. Learning (Greek word ‘didasko’ – a word translated ‘doctrine’ 21x in New Testament)
2. Patience (or Endurance – Greek word ‘hupomenos’ – to stand up under)
3. Comfort (or Encouragement)

It’s for our learning, because bad theology leads to all kinds of bad living, and bad doctrine leads to all kinds of bad decisions and responses to life. You will lose your mind if you don’t know the truth about who God is and what He’s doing in this world!

God’s Word alone has the power to give us endurance and encouragement. We should sit unhurriedly with His Word every day because it renews our minds and changes our thinking, how we see life, and how we process trials and suffering.

You have to make time to read the Bible. It is the only thing in this world designed to keep your hope alive.

**II. You’ve Got to Pray – Asking God to Do in You What Only He Can Do with Your Fickle Heart and Your Fearful Emotions**

One of the functions of prayer is not just to ask God for stuff, but to beg Him to help us see what we’re not seeing.

One of the most important factors as to how well you'll do on any given day is the depth of your perception and the ability to see beyond this world.

Pay attention to what Paul prays for Christians and doesn't pray for them.

**Romans 15:5-6** "Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

**Romans 15:13** "Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."

What does Paul pray for?

1. He prays that they would be caught up in something bigger than their own little world and their own little agenda
2. He prays that they would actually choose to believe God's promises and trust Him
3. He prays that they would increasingly have an awareness of a power that's greater than their own – that's the power of the Holy Spirit

God is a God of hope! The Holy Spirit is God and He lives in you, so that the more you're filled with the Holy Spirit, controlled by the Holy Spirit, led by the Holy Spirit, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, the more hope you'll have.

Some Christians are hopeless because they are trying to live the Christian life in their own power and effort, which is exhausting and hopeless.

### **III. You've Got to Spend Time with Other Christians at Close Range – Who are Trying to Do the Same**

**Romans 15:14** "Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another."

**V. 14** is exactly what our small groups are designed to do, to allow us to get together in a smaller setting, at close range, where we can hold onto each other and where we can help each other when we are losing perspective.

It's also what our biblical counseling ministry is for; when people are stuck and have lost their way and need focused, intentional exhortation to know what God's Word says and how to do it.

### **IV. You've Got to See Past the Promises to the Person of Jesus Christ that Makes it All Possible**

There's something greater than promises, and that's the person of Jesus Christ who makes every one of God's promises sure for us!

The person of Jesus Christ runs through this passage!

**v. 5** "... according to Christ Jesus"

**v. 7** "... just as Christ also received us..."

**v. 8-9** "Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers..."

The end of v. 8 says that Christ came to confirm the promises.

**2 Corinthians 1:20** "For all the promises of God in Him (Jesus) are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us."

This passage tells you where to put your hope and where to place your praise and both are found outside of yourself and this world.

**v. 12** "And again, Isaiah says: 'There shall be a root of Jesse; and He who shall rise to reign over the Gentiles, In Him the Gentiles shall hope.'"

**v. 9** "... that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy..."

Hope is a good thing, but that good thing dies in the lives of people us all the time unless it's tethered to something outside of this world that's unchanging- Jesus Christ!

**I Peter 1:3-7** "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ."