

HOPE DEFERRED

Request: “I fell in love and married a person who I thought was wonderful. We were married about four years with our first child when he announced he wasn’t in love with me and was leaving. I have been heartsick for the last three years. I can’t seem to get rid of it. People tell me time will heal it. Does the Bible have an answer?”

There is some truth that time and treatment can heal the living but it doesn’t help with the present pain – “For whoever is joined to the living, there is hope; surely a live dog is better than a dead lion.” (Eccl.9:4)

“Hope (tocheleth) deferred (mashak / pual ptc) makes the **heart (leb) sick (chalah / hiphil ptc)** but longing (taawah) [desire or wish] fulfilled is (bo / kal ptc) [come to pass] a tree of life.” (Prov.13:12)

“But a longing (taawah) fulfilled (hayah / niphil ptc) come to pass, [realized] **is sweet to the soul.**” (Prov.13:19)

NOTE: Hope deferred is contrasted to longing fulfilled with different consequences. Write the different consequences on the blank lines.

- Hope deferred makes the _____.
- Longing fulfilled is _____ and _____.

The Hebrew word for HOPE (tocheleth) comes from the hiphil form of the verb (yachal). It refers to developing a waiting attitude or hope – “For I hope in Thee, O Lord; thou wilt answer, O Lord my God. (Ps.38:15)

The Hebrew word for LONGING (taawah) comes from the piel form of the verb (awah). It refers to an intense desire for something that occupies much of your thinking time.

The English dictionary defines HOPE as a cherished desire with expectation of fulfillment. Do you know what a Hope Chest is?

We would all agree that hope deferred (disappointment) is not as difficult to deal with as hope dashed (devastation). However, spiritually they are dealt with in a similar way.

This lesson will study Three aspects of Hope Deferred and illustrate how to spiritually deal with it.

1. There are three elements of hope that must be rebuilt when hope is deferred or dashed. These three are realistic expectations, trust, and unconditional love.

- It is important to rebuild **realistic expectations** upon the truth of the word of God and not upon experiences of pain. (Rom.4: 16-24; Heb.6: 13-15).
- It is important to rebuild **trust** upon truth of the word of God and not upon experiences of pain (1 Pet.3; 1-7; Gen12 and 20).
- It is important to rebuild **unconditional love** upon the truth of the word of God and not upon experiences of pain (Hosea; 2:19-20; 3:1; 1 Cor.13: 7).

2. Redefining clearly the expectations of your hope and being objective and not subjective about red flagged problems is important for hope fulfilled to become sweet to the soul.

Hannah's pregnancy is an example of this point (1 Sam.1:1-20; 2:1-3).

Like most women, Hannah married expecting to fulfill the woman curse of childbirth (Gen.3: 16). But the Lord had closed her womb (1:5). Because she was unable to accept reality of this truth, she chose to be miserable (Rom.5: 3-5).

Principle: Hope deferred makes the heartsick (Read - 1 Sam.1: 5-8).

- How is her emotional state of mind described? _____ (1:7-10, 16)
- How was her emotional state observed? _____ (1:13-14)
Note how she redefined her expectations _____. (1:10-11)
- Did Scripture state that anyone else knew about her redefined hope? _____
- How did her trust change with her redefined hope? _____ (1:17-20)
- How did her unconditional love change with her redefined hope? _____ (1:22-28)

Principle: But a longing fulfilled is sweet to the soul (read – 1Sam.2:1-2).

3. The source you trust for the fulfillment of your hope is important to whether in the end you experience sickness of heart or sweetness of soul.

Job's suffering of losses is an example of this point (family, friends, finances, and frail health) – “ Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble? In all this Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing.” (1:22; 2:10).

Principle: Hope deferred makes the heat sick (Job 6:11-15; 7:3-7; 17:13-16)

Job didn't expected undeserved suffering to come to a spiritual mature believer – “Even today my complaint is bitter; His hand is heavy in spite of my groaning. If only I knew where to find Him; if only I could go to His dwelling! I would state my case before Him and fill my mouth with arguments.” (Job 23:1-4)

The Lord responded – “Who is this that darkens counsel with words without knowledge? Brace yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me. Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me, if you understand.” (38:1-4) “Will the one who contends with the Almighty correct him? Let him who accuses God answer him!” (40:1-2, 7)

Note how Job redefined his expectations (42:1-6) – “Be joyful in hope (Rom.12: 12). **When God is the source, certainty is added and confident hope results** (Rom.15: 13; Ps.62: 5-6; Heb.6: 17-20; 1 Pet.1: 20-21; 1 Tim.5: 5).

Principle: A longing fulfilled is sweet to the soul – “The Lord blessed the latter part of Job's life more than the first.” (42:12)

“Brothers an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. As you know, we consider blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.” (James 5:10-11)