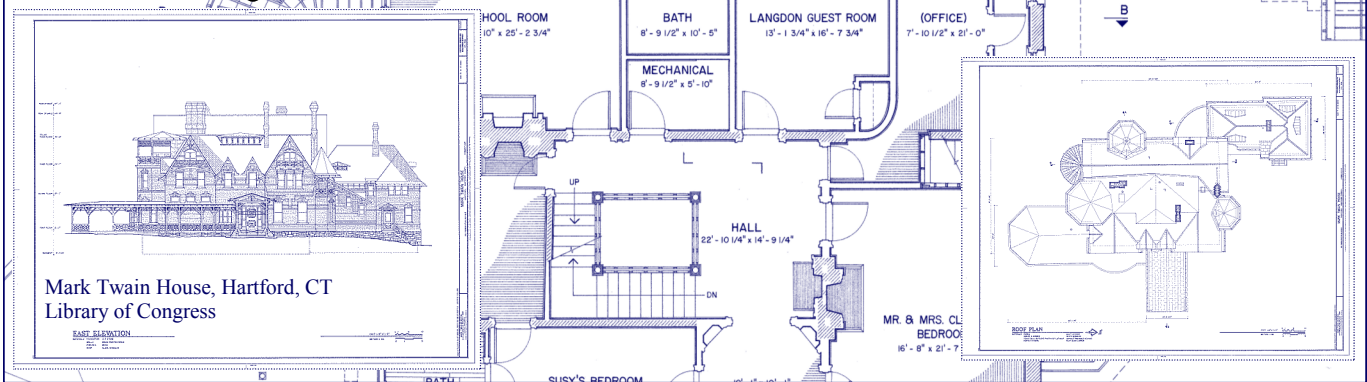


Becky Combee Ministries, Inc.



I hope so!

"I Hope so!" This oft-voiced response is full of insecurity. When someone asks, "Is Mable coming to the party?" we cannot answer. We want her to attend, but we are not certain she is coming. Our "I hope so" says maybe-so, could-be or even the familiar, "I have my fingers crossed." It does not say, "We confidently expect Mable to be here." Yet in *Vines Complete Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* "hope" is defined as "favorable and confident expectation."

This definition is very important because the Scripture records, "Faith is the substance of things hoped for."¹ The *New English Bible: New Testament* says, "Faith gives substance to our hopes."² Another translation concludes, "Now faith means that we are confident of what we hope for." Hope is the first step toward faith's abounding victory. Faith's glorious confidence begins with hope. When you build a house, construction cannot begin without an architectural drawing. Faith cannot work effectively without hope. Hope envisions God's goal, His dream, and His desire. It declares, "This is our expectation." Confidently, it grasps the hand of faith and together they build God's house.

The source of hope is unveiled in the Scripture. The psalmist says, "For thou art my hope, O Lord God."³ He declares, "Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the



Lord his God."⁴ He adds to these proclamations "I hope in thy word."⁵ In the New Testament, the apostle Paul writes to Timothy, "Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Savior, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope."⁶ These Scriptures record that our hope is found in God, in His Word, and in His Son, Jesus Christ.

Every Christian has hope. This hope is as specific as architectural renderings, as certain as the birth of a child, as complete as the repayment of a bank loan. I love the example of hope given by the Scripture in Job 14:7. It says, "For there is

For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future (Jer 29:11 NIV).

hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again." In Florida, gardeners trim shrubbery because they know it will sprout again. They confidently expect new growth. It is the same with a bank loan. The bank expects payment and we are certain that we must make payment.

God communicates specific hopes, expectations, and goals to our spirit. Psalm 37:4 says, "He shall give thee the desires of thine heart." The Hebrew verb "give" can be translated by many English words such as "add, assign, cause, deliver, and frame."⁷ If we substitute any of these words for the word "give," we understand that our great God causes certain desires to manifest in us. He delivers His will to us or frames His goals in our inner man.

God is constantly working in our spirits to unveil His desires. The apostle Paul writes, "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."⁸ As we walk with Him, we become aware of His goals, His dreams, His hopes and expectations. I am so glad we don't have to "guess." God stirs our heart and reveals His will. He works in us!

Now, with hope in our heart, we go to God's Word and add faith to God's holy expectation. It is like adding a second story to a house. The first level is hope, the second level is faith. Our first story, hope, always says, "It will happen soon," or "It will happen tomorrow." This is not sufficient grounds for victory. We must meditate in the Word of God until "faith comes." Faith sees the house complete. It declares, "I have it now." It recognizes the work of our Lord on the cross and is assured of great benefits and blessings through His shed blood. While human hope says, "it can be," God's hope says, "it will be." But faith says,

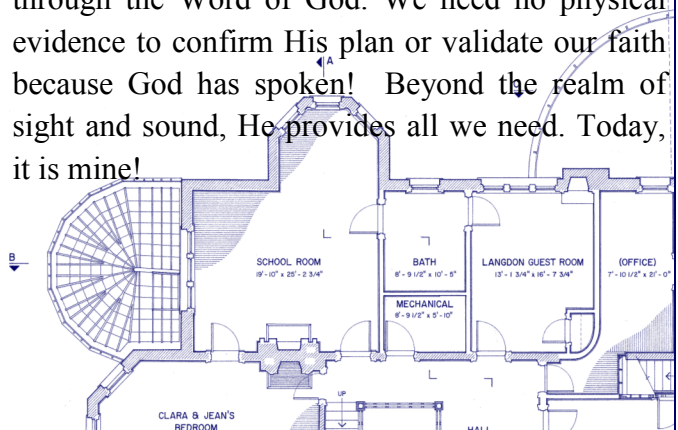
"It is."

The interaction of hope and faith is like the functioning of an air conditioning system. On the control panel, there is a thermostat that we set at 73 degrees. This is our hope. It is our goal. Yet our goal by itself will not give us air conditioning. Our thermostat must be wired into the power units. It is when they are wired together that we have cool air.

The functioning of hope and faith also remind me of the operation of a train. Hope is the railroad track. It is our destination, our goal. However, we need more than railroad tracks. We need an engine. When the engine steams down the tracks, we reach our destination.

It is important to embrace both faith and hope. We can confirm the work of these two forces in our lives by answering several questions. First, what is my goal? Secondly, what does the Word of God say about my goal? Finally, am I expecting an answer "sometime" or do I have the answer now?

Remember, God has a plan at work in us. As we become aware of His plan, we add faith to it through the Word of God. We need no physical evidence to confirm His plan or validate our faith because God has spoken! Beyond the realm of sight and sound, He provides all we need. Today, it is mine!



¹ Heb 11:1

² *The New Testament: A New Translation* (James Moffatt)

³ Ps 71:5

⁴ Ps 146:5

⁵ Ps 119:81,114

⁶ 1 Ti 1:1

⁷ *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*

⁸ Php 2:13