

## Godly Expectations

- *Expectations can exist in many forms. One can have godly expectations or ungodly expectations.*
- *One can have positive expectations which are the result of hope or negative expectations which are the result of foreboding and fear of what the future holds.*

### Luke 21:25–26 (NKJV)

<sup>25</sup>“And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring;  
<sup>26</sup>men’s hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

- *The Bible teaches that as we approach the end times there will more instability and terrifying events which will cause unbelievers to be overcome by fear because of their negative expectations.*

### Philippians 1:19–20 (NKJV)

<sup>19</sup>For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,  
<sup>20</sup>according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death.

- *Paul held positive expectations fueled by his unshakeable hope in God even in the face of adversity. Writing from prison, Paul expected God to answer the prayers of the Philippians that he would be delivered by the power of Christ’s Spirit.*
- *The word expectation and hope are not only intrinsically linked but many times the Hebrew and Greek words for “hope” are both translated as “expectation.”*

### Romans 8:24–25 (NKJV)

<sup>24</sup>For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees?

<sup>25</sup>But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.

- *The meaning of the word “hope” in the Greek speaks about “a looking forward to in confident expectation.” We see in Romans 8:24-25 that biblical hope is closely linked to the idea of waiting patiently with perseverance until what one is hoping for is fulfilled.*

- *The biblical concept of hope signifies something we are totally confident in with no shadow of uncertainty.*
- *The non-biblical use of the word hope signifies wishful thinking with a certain degree or element of uncertainty.*
- *“we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance” – Hope is not simply waiting patiently with perseverance for something. It denotes an eagerness that will motivate us and keep us refreshed and alert.*
- *“For we were saved in this hope” – The ultimate goal of hope is the fulfillment of God’s plan for His glory. That is why in the Bible hope is linked with the idea of salvation and redemption—not only for us, but for all creation. (Romans 8:19-22).*
- *“But hope that is seen is not hope” – Hope is analogous to our physical sense of sight and allows us to see events with our spiritual eyes that are not visible from our temporal and natural perspective.*
- *While faith speaks about a strong and unshakeable confidence in God, hope provides us with vision and purpose which gives our lives meaning. Hope motivates us with eagerness and an expectation of what God will do.*
- *Hope is not only strongly related to perseverance but is actually one of the main ingredients to developing perseverance. “But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.”*

**Proverbs 29:18 (KJV)**

**<sup>18</sup>Where there is no vision, the people perish: But he that keepeth the law, happy is he.**

**Proverbs 29:18 (NKJV)**

**<sup>18</sup>Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint; But happy is he who keeps the law.**

**Proverbs 29:18 (The Message)**

**<sup>18</sup>If people can’t see what God is doing, they stumble all over themselves; But when they attend to what he reveals, they are most blessed.**

- *Hope gives us spiritual vision to keep focused on God and His purposes. Where the people have no revelation, vision, or hope (purpose) then there is nothing to restrain them from walking in sin and no reason to resist temptation.*

**Matthew 13:18–23 (NKJV)**

<sup>18</sup>“Therefore hear the parable of the sower:

<sup>19</sup>When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside.

<sup>20</sup>But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy;

<sup>21</sup>yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles.

<sup>22</sup>Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful.

<sup>23</sup>But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.”

- *The parable of the sower can be seen in the context of expectations and hope. Lack of hope and expectations cause us to neglect the Word of God and misplaced hope and expectations cause us to become unfruitful. Hope in God produces an expectation that leads to a fruitful life.*
- *The seed that fell on the wayside represents those who hear the Word of God but do not believe it is true or do not believe it can really change their lives. Because of their lack of expectation the enemy can easily come and steal it away.*
- *The seed that fell on the rocky ground represents those who think of the Gospel in a very self-centered and shallow way. Their expectation is that through the Gospel they will always be healthy, rich, and never have troubles or trials. When trials or persecutions come they quickly turn away and give up.*
- *The seed that fell among the thorns represents those who have a limited expectation of God’s faithfulness. They are not confident that God really cares for them in every detail of their lives or that He is able to give them victory in every circumstance they face. The worries of life and their hope in worldly riches to provide security and happiness choke out God’s Word in their lives. Their love for the things of this world is greater than their love for God.*
- *The seed that fell on good ground represents those who hope in God and have great expectations of what God is going to do and who persevere and patiently wait upon God. They not only heard but understood the Word. “But the ones*

that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience.” (Luke 8:15).

- *If we are hungry for the Word, hear and understand the Word, we will be fruitful.*

**Proverbs 13:12 (NKJV)**

<sup>12</sup>Hope deferred makes the heart sick, But when the desire comes, it is a tree of life.

- *The Hebrew word “sick” means “to be made ill, be wounded, be made weak” with the idea of producing a heart that is both grieved and worn out.*
- *“Hope deferred makes the heart sick” seems like a conundrum, because one of the very characteristics of hope is waiting and persevering with anticipation for what we have not yet received.*
- *If we understand God’s plan we will never fall into despair and hopelessness.*
- *Why then do we sometimes find ourselves in a place of despair and feeling our hopes have been deferred? Why do we sometimes feel brokenhearted, disappointed, and crushed if we do not quickly see the things we have been hoping for fulfilled?*
- *Many times we experience great disappointments, because we have wrong expectations. Below are four reasons that can cause wrong expectations that lead to disappointments and hopelessness.*
- *1. Sometimes we have wrong expectations because we misunderstand God’s Word and His promises.*

**John 16:33 (NKJV)**

<sup>33</sup>These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”

- *If we believe because we have put our faith in Christ we will not suffer tribulations and difficulties we will be greatly disappointed.*
- *For those who do not know Christ, this life is all they have, so their expectations are only in this life. However, for those who know Christ, our expectations are not limited to this life but extend beyond into eternity.*
- *As believers we have a great expectation of what God is going to do in and through us during our earthly lives, but we also have an even greater*

*expectation of what God has prepared for us when we will be with Christ in eternity!*

**1 Corinthians 7:29–31 (ESV)**

<sup>29</sup>This is what I mean, brothers: the appointed time has grown very short. From now on, let those who have wives live as though they had none,  
<sup>30</sup>and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no goods,  
<sup>31</sup>and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world is passing away.

- *Paul gives us a balanced view of life from an eternal perspective so that we can have the correct expectation of life—life is short. “This is what I mean, brothers: the appointed time has grown very short.”*
- *Some people focus on the joy of family and friends, which in itself is good but if that is our ultimate expectation, goal, and hope then at the end of our lives we will be filled with sorrow and loss as our loved ones depart. “From now on, let those who have wives live as though they had none.”*
- *This life is so short and fleeting. Times of sadness and joy, times of successes and failures, times of winning and losing, they all pass so quickly, as if they hadn’t taken place. “those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing.”*
- *“those who buy as though they had no goods, and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world is passing away.” This life is so short. In reality we never really own anything. We are only loaned things for a short time and eventually we leave them behind.*
- *Those whose hopes and expectations are only in the successes and accomplishments of this life will ultimately be disappointed and even devastated to realize everything they accomplished was not only fleeting but had no eternal purpose. All our worldly possessions and accomplishments are not only left behind but ultimately decay.*
- *This does not mean that our lives on this earth are unimportant. To the contrary, they are very important and the way we live now will affect how we experience eternity. Life on earth is short, but eternity is l-o-n-g!*
- *However, we must have the right perspective and expectations to be able to evaluate our lives so we can make the correct choices and bring forth eternal fruitfulness for the glory of God.*

**1 Corinthians 15:30–32 (NKJV)**

<sup>30</sup>And why do we stand in jeopardy every hour?

<sup>31</sup>I affirm, by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.

<sup>32</sup>If, in the manner of men, I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantage is it to me? If the dead do not rise, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!”

- *We can only have the correct expectations and evaluation of this life when we view them in the light of our resurrection and eternity.*
- *2. Sometimes we have wrong expectations because we misunderstand God’s timing.*
- *Abraham was promised a son through Sarah, his wife, but he had to wait 25 years before that promise was fulfilled.*
- *Joseph was given two dreams about God’s purposes for his life, but he had to wait 13 years before he and the circumstances around him allowed for the fulfillment of that promise.*
- *Moses longed to see Israel redeemed from the bondage of Egypt, but he had the timing wrong. He needed to spend 40 years in the wilderness tending sheep before he was prepared to be the kind of leader that God could use.*
- *Timing is a very important element for us to develop both faith and character.*
- *In the lives of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David, and in fact all of the great men and women of faith, there was always a considerable amount of time between receiving the promise of God and its fulfillment.*
- *Seeing God answering our prayers ignites our faith, but our faith develops and matures through times of waiting on God when it appears that His promises will not come to pass. As we wait upon God with hope and expectation we learn to look to Him and not the circumstance that we may face.*

**1 Peter 1:3 (NKJV)**

“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.” *We have a living hope because we have a living Saviour.*

- *The ultimate fulfillment of all of God’s promises will happen at the resurrection of the saints.*
- *3. Sometimes we have wrong expectations because we misunderstand God’s goals.*

**Mark 9:31–32 (NKJV)**

<sup>31</sup>For He taught His disciples and said to them, “The Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill Him. And after He is killed, He will rise the third day.”

<sup>32</sup>But they did not understand this saying, and were afraid to ask Him.

- *Jesus tried to explain God’s plan to His disciples, but they misunderstood the ultimate goal.*
- *As Jesus Christ hung on the cross, to the world and His disciples it appeared as if His life ended in total failure, but in reality it produced the greatest victory.*
- *Many times our goal is focused on success, while God’s goal for our lives is for us to be faithful.*
- *If our hope is focused on success, whose criteria determines if we have been successful?*
- *Some of the greatest Christians we will meet in Heaven were never known by name on this earth.*
- *Their great accomplishment—they were faithful where God placed them, even if in an apparently insignificant role in the eyes of men but in an essential role in God’s kingdom.*
- *Paul spent a number of years in Roman prisons and from the natural point of view it would have seemed like a total waste of time, but it was in those prisons where many of the New Testament epistles were written.*
- *At the end of Paul’s life, he sat in prison awaiting his execution because of his faith in Jesus Christ and many of those he had ministered to and disciplined had forsaken him. “This you know, that all those in Asia have turned away from me, among whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.” (2 Timothy 1:15).*
- *However, while Paul waited in prison, he was not despondent, discouraged, embittered, nor downcast. On the contrary he was rejoicing and looking forward to meeting the Lord, the One whom he had faithfully served. “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.” (2 Timothy 4:7–8).*

- *Paul's expectations and hope had been in the Lord and God had not let him down. Paul had finished the race faithfully and had accomplished all that God planned for him to do.*
- *Joseph spent many years either in slavery or in prison, but when he got to Heaven I believe his great rejoicing would not have been that he became the second ruler over Egypt, but that he had been found faithful before God.*

**John 3:30 (NKJV)**

<sup>30</sup>**He must increase, but I must decrease.**

- *This is our goal in life.*
- *Our goal in life is not the quantity of our ministry for Christ, but the quality of our relationship with Christ.*
- *4. Sometimes we have wrong expectations, because we misunderstand God's process.*

**John 16:20–22 (NKJV)**

<sup>20</sup>**Most assuredly, I say to you that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; and you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy.**

<sup>21</sup>**A woman, when she is in labor, has sorrow because her hour has come; but as soon as she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world.**

<sup>22</sup>**Therefore you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you.**

- *The process that we go through to become like Christ is less like following a recipe for baking a pie and more like the labour pains of a woman birthing a child.*
- *It is not simply a step-by-step process that can be done in a methodical way, but it deals with the most intimate depths of our being and requires both perseverance and times of suffering. During the entire time God's love, grace, mercy and faithfulness are there to comfort and strengthen us through the process.*
- *The process transforms us from being narcissistic to a person who knows how to love, give, and serve others.*
- *We start off as a nursing child who is totally self-centered and gradually moves through the stages from being a child, to a young man, and finally a mature man.*



**1 Peter 1:6–7 (NKJV)**

**<sup>6</sup>In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials,**

**<sup>7</sup>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,**

- *Trials are meant to drive us closer to God, because every time we experience a disappointment He is there to teach us something.*
- *Sometimes disappointments drive us to God, because we realize we need to be totally dependent upon Him.*
- *Sometimes when we experience disappointments God is trying to correct a misconception we have about Him or about ourselves.*
- *Maybe we think too little of God or maybe we think too much of ourselves. There is nothing like trials and disappointments to help us realize how frail we are and how strong and faithful He is.*

**1 Timothy 1:1 (NKJV)**

**<sup>1</sup>Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God our Savior and the Lord Jesus Christ, our hope,**

**1 Peter 1:21 (NKJV)**

**<sup>21</sup>who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.**

- *“The Lord Jesus Christ, our hope” “Your hope is in God” – The hope that sustains us in not a hope in certain events, people, ministry, or financial successes, but our hope in God.*
- *Our calling is not for our benefit but God’s. However, the reward for faithfulness to the calling is for us. One of the greatest rewards for being faithful is faithfulness itself—the character of Christ in us!*
- *We will never be disappointed when our hope is that by the grace of God we will stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ be found faithful and hear the words, “Well done good and faithful servant.”*

David and Svea Flood Story:

Back in 1921, a missionary couple named David and Svea Flood went with their two-year-old son from Sweden to the heart of Africa-to what was then called the Belgian Congo. They met up with another young Scandinavian couple, the Ericksons, and the four of them sought God for direction. In those days of much tenderness and devotion and sacrifice, they felt led of the Lord to set out from the main mission station and take the gospel to a remote area.

This was a huge step of faith. At the village of N'dolera they were rebuffed by the chief, who would not let them enter his town for fear of alienating the local gods. The two couples opted to go half a mile up the slope and build their own mud huts'.

They prayed for a spiritual breakthrough, but there was none. The only contact with the villagers was a young boy, who was allowed to sell them chickens and eggs twice a week. Svea Flood-a tiny woman only four feet, eight inches tall-decided that if this was the only African she could talk to, she would try to lead the boy to Jesus. And in fact, she succeeded. But there were no other encouragements. Meanwhile, malaria continued to strike one member of the little band after another. In time the Ericksons decided they had had enough suffering and left to return to the central mission station. David and Svea Flood remained near N'dolera to go on alone. Then, of all things, Svea found herself pregnant in the middle of the primitive wilderness. When the time came for her to give birth, the village chief softened enough to allow a midwife to help her. A little girl was born, whom they named Aina. The delivery, however, was exhausting, and Svea Flood was already weak from bouts of malaria. The birth process was a heavy blow to her stamina. She lasted only another seventeen days. Inside David Flood, something snapped in that moment. He dug a crude grave, buried his twenty-seven-year-old wife, and then took his children back down the mountain to the mission station. Giving his newborn daughter to the Ericksons, he snarled, "I'm going back to Sweden. I've lost my wife, and I obviously can't take care of this baby. God has ruined my life." With that, he headed for the port, rejecting not only his calling, but God himself. Within eight months both the Ericksons were stricken with a mysterious malady and died within days of each other. The baby was then turned over to some American missionaries, who adjusted her Swedish name to "Aggie" and eventually brought her back to the United States at age three.

This family loved the little girl and were afraid that if they tried to return to Africa, some legal obstacle might separate her from them. So they decided to stay in their home country and switch from missionary work to pastoral ministry. And that is how Aggie grew up in South Dakota. As a young woman, she attended North Central Bible College in Minneapolis. There she met and married a young man named Dewey Hurst.

Years passed. The Hursts enjoyed a fruitful Ministry. Aggie gave birth first to a daughter, then a son. In time her husband became president of a Christian college in the Seattle area, and Aggie was intrigued to find so much Scandinavian heritage there. One day a Swedish religious magazine appeared in her mailbox. She had no idea who had sent it, and of course she couldn't read the words. But as she turned the pages, all of a sudden a photo stopped her cold. There in a primitive setting was a grave with a white cross-and

on the cross were the words SVEA FLOOD. Aggie jumped in her car and went straight for a college faculty member who, she knew, could translate the article. “What does this say?” she demanded. The instructor summarized the story: It was about missionaries who had come to N’dolera long ago ... the birth of a white baby ... the death of the young mother ... the one little African boy who had been led to Christ ... and how, after the whites had all left, the boy had grown up and finally persuaded the chief to let him build a school in the village. The article said that gradually he won all his students to Christ... the children led their parents to Christ... even the chief had become a Christian. Today there were six hundred Christian believers in that one village.... All because of the sacrifice of David and Svea Flood. For the Hursts’ twenty-fifth wedding anniversary, the college presented them with the gift of a vacation to Sweden.

There Aggie sought to find her real father. An old man now, David Flood had remarried, fathered four more children, and generally dissipated his life with alcohol. He had recently suffered a stroke. Still bitter, he had one rule in his family: “Never mention the name of God- because God took everything from me. After an emotional reunion with her half brothers and half sister, Aggie brought up the subject of seeing her father. The others hesitated. “You can talk to him,” they replied, “even though he’s very ill now. But you need to know that whenever he hears the name of God , he flies into a rage. Aggie was not to be deterred. She walked into the squalid apartment, with liquor bottles everywhere, and approached the seventy-three-year-old man lying in a rumpled bed. “Papa~” she said tentatively. He turned and began to cry. “Aina,” he said. “I never meant to give you away.” “It’s all right, Papa,” she replied, taking him gently in her arms. “God took care of me.” The man instantly stiffened. The tears stopped. “God forgot all of us. Our lives have been like this because of Him.” He turned his face back to the wall. Aggie stroked his face and then continued, undaunted. “Papa, I’ve got a little story to tell you, and it’s a true one. You didn’t go to Africa in vain. Mama didn’t die in vain. The little boy you won to the Lord grew up to win that whole village to Jesus Christ. The one seed you planted just kept growing and growing. Today there are six hundred African people serving the Lord because you were faithful to the call of God in your life. ... Papa, Jesus loves you. He has never hated you.” The old man turned back to look into his daughter’s eyes. His body relaxed. He began to talk. And by the end of the afternoon, he had come back to the God he had resented for so many decades. Over the next few days, father and daughter enjoyed warm moments together. Aggie and her husband soon had to return to America-and within a few weeks, David Flood had gone into eternity.

A few years later, the Hursts were attending a high-level evangelism conference in London, England, when a report was given from the nation of Zaire (the former Belgian Congo). The superintendent of the national church, representing some 110,000 baptized believers, spoke eloquently of the gospel’s spread in his nation. Aggie could not help going to ask him afterward if he had ever heard of David and Svea Flood. “Yes, madam,” the man replied in French, his words then being translated into English. “It was Svea Flood who led me to Jesus Christ. I was the boy who brought food to your parents before you were born. In fact, to this day your mother’s grave and her memory are honored by all of us.” He embraced her in a long, sobbing hug. Then he continued, “You must come

to Africa to see, because your mother is the most famous person in our history.” In time that is exactly what Aggie Hurst and her husband did. They were welcomed by cheering throngs of villagers. She even met the man who had been hired by her father many years before to carry her back down the mountain in a hammock-cradle. The most dramatic moment, of course, was when the pastor escorted Aggie to see her mother’s white cross for herself. She knelt in the soil to pray and give thanks. Later that day, in the church, the pastor read from John 12:24: “I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.” He then followed with Psalm 126:5: “Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy.”

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What caused David Flood to become disappointed, bitter and turn away from God and give himself over to temptations and sin was not the loss of his wife but the disappointment and seemingly purposeless of his losses and his wife’s death. God in His tender mercy sought to restore David even by his own daughter. When finally he knew a whole village had come to Christ he knew his sacrifice was worth it. He didn’t realize that his sacrifice had impacted an entire nation!!

- *1. Sometimes we have wrong expectations because we misunderstand God’s Word and His promises.*
- *2. Sometimes we have wrong expectations because we misunderstand God’s timing.*
- *3. Sometimes we have wrong expectations because we misunderstand God’s goals.*
- *4. Sometimes we have wrong expectations, because we misunderstand God’s process.*

**Proverbs 13:12 (NKJV)**

<sup>12</sup>**Hope deferred makes the heart sick, But when the desire comes, it is a tree of life.**

- *The first part of the proverb warns against wrong expectations that can lead to disappointments. The second half contains the promise we can hold onto with joy. When we stand before Jesus, the Tree of Life, and see Him face to face, all our labours for Him will be rewarded and the hopes and dreams He gave us will come to fruition.*