



Faith Versus Hope

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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I am often surprised by the way that people confuse the words faith and hope. They don't understand that although there is a little overlap in their meanings, they are actually very different in their application and the results that they garner.

Let's examine these two commonly used words.

Hope is a wish or desire. Think of the child who, with fingers crossed, hopes that she will get a pony for Christmas. No matter how badly she wants this, she does not have the ability to make it happen or realistic expectation that the pony will arrive.

Often in life, we hope that things will happen that we cannot control. We are disappointed when a weather system hampers our travel plans. We are sad when another person doesn't act as we had hoped they would. We are disappointed when we want something but didn't invest time or effort to give it a start.

Faith, on the other hand, is about having complete confidence in something or someone. We know that we know and experience a quiet assurance. We trust that the sun will rise tomorrow – because it has risen every day of our lives. We have faith that the garden we plant will grow if we just weed and water it. We trust in others who have proven to be trustworthy.

The interesting thing is that different situations can reveal different ideas about hope and faith in individuals, families, cultures and countries. One person might hope that the pandemic will end but doesn't have faith that this will occur. A culture might have strong faith in an omnipresent God who will watch over them. A country who has experienced war may have confidence that this has helped them to develop strength and maturity.

Recently I have been thinking about individuals who had strong faith which was not shared by those around them. The Wright brothers were likely mocked for their idea that involved building a plane that could fly like a bird. The many times that they failed must have encouraged the doubters, but it never reduced the faith of the Wrights!

Sometimes we have to depend on the faith of other people until we cultivate our own faith.

I hope that the problems we have faced over the past year will disappear soon. At the same time, I have faith that no matter what happens, we will be fine. We have lived through polio and tuberculosis outbreaks, world wars, and personal losses throughout the years. We have adjusted during the pandemic even noticing that some benefits have occurred. The environment has improved. People spend more time together – cooking, playing board games, and talking. Many have used time alone to clean drawers, organize paperwork and learn new skills.

Yes, it has been difficult, but I have an unwavering faith that we will get through this and that is stronger than just having hope.