

Questions for discussion

1. How do you use hope?

Today, think about how you use hope. I knew a woman that hoped for many things. All her life I heard of this hope. Yet, I am not sure she received much of what she hoped for. Yet, probably unknowingly, she loved using that word. I feel most of us love it too.

“Let’s move over to the end of the definition of hope. We expect a certain thing to happen. Not just anything, but a certain thing. Hope is always directed towards a thing. We hope we get better. I am hoping for good results. I hope to see someone today. I bet if we kept count, we hope a lot. There is a list of things we hope for too. I hope to get a new stereo. I hope for more money to do it too. I hope to finish this book. You hope I’d stop writing. We do a lot of hoping.” Chapter 3, p, 2

2. Hope is just a word.

People proudly say they have great hope. Then in a tragic moment they lose all hope in their words and actions. Was their hope hanging on good times? I do believe we should say the word hope. It’s a positive word. Yet, it could be an anchor to where we are. Waiting and hoping are fine as long as life moves on with you. Think about it.

“The trick is in the words hope through. Hope is just a word. That passage of scripture is adding Jesus to that hope. If Jesus will rather than if hope will. What I’m trying to illustrate is that we should add hope to something. If a fireman saves a house from destruction, we hoped he would. If a bullet missed me, I hoped it would. Hope is found in the fireman and bad aim. Hope itself is not a person, place, or thing. In the dictionary it calls it a verb and a noun. I personally disagree in calling it a noun. Hope is fictitious. Jesus and the fireman are not.” Chapter 3, p, 5

3. What are you trading for hope?

I have a bunch of old hockey cards. I suppose they are a little nest egg. When to sell them? Am I banking my future on their price? No, I am working and saving the best that I can for retirement. The cards I hope will have been worth keeping when I sell them. I’m working with hope. Not banking on things to bring me hope.

“Money is good. Money is speculative. Currency is the flavor of the day. What are you trading with. Is it a dollar or time? My thought is that you cannot buy hope. It does not work that way. On the surface this word is said when we gamble or dream. However, financially, it’s worthless. Yet, we will give up money with the hope for more. We will trade time with the hope that something better will come along. Money certainly helps pay bills and put food on the table. Yet, hoping for money will not feed you, or make your dreams come true.” Chapter 3, p, 7

4. Do we want the perfect?

This is such a strange concept. I want a great life. Do I want the perfect life? That is a good question. Personally, I wish and pray for myself very little. I like the life I have been given. Yet, I

Prayer and Wishes Chapter 3 (What we hope for)

have said it could be better. Is that ignoring how good it is compared to others? There is a danger in chasing the perfect.

“It seems that if life is not perfect then we pout. We will do anything to make it as perfect as we can. Then cancer strikes. A car strikes. The bad economy strikes. Then we go on strike until life returns to the perfect. We need to recognize our pursuit of the perfect. It’s just not realistic. I have no problem hoping, praying, and wishing. Yet, when they dominate our lives, yes, I do have an issue with that. When our desires dominate our ability to be happy, then yes, I do have a problem with that. The pursuit of the perfect will become the perfect crime: the destruction of a good life.” Chapter 3, p, 8

5. We need a healthy perspective on hope.

I just want us to look forward. It’s ok to view the past but never dwell there. Hope might be a plan. Hope might be an idea. We go on this path. How will it end? Let’s hope it will, but until then keep walking forward.

“Hope in life is far better than hope in death. I just want us to have perspective on Prayer and Wishes. Don’t hinge your life on a prayer or a wish. Don’t make hope more than it is. We hope in a prayer. We hope in a wish. That is why we make them. That is why I would make them. Yet, prayer is so much more than just hope. I think positive thinking is so much more than hope too. I bet if I read more of Snyder’s work he would say hope is the beginning of action. There is at some point the realization: I think I can. Then there can be also: I know I can. You have to begin at the beginning. It probably does begin with hope.” Chapter 3, p, 11

6. Hope points us forward.

I know stuck people. We are allowed to stop and dwell for a time. It’s healthy. Hope is in learning, growing, and striving. We can achieve. It’s good that we have hope in success. Hanging life’s success on a prayer or wish request leaves us anchored to the past and present. Hope is found in the future. Go get it on a wish and a prayer.

“Maybe that is it in a nut shell. To be fit for heaven means we positively look forward. We are mindful of the past but hope ahead to the future. We pray and wish for things to improve our lives. Those in heaven trusted something greater than themselves. They hoped in something greater than their circumstances. Use a wish but don’t rely on a coin. Use a prayer but listen for the answer. It might be different than we asked. Hope for a better life and world. Yet, it seems that those who overcome tend to make the world a better place. Sometimes that’s all we can hope for.” Chapter 3, p, 13