

Romans 15:13 Commentary

**PLEASE NOTE:
THIS PAGE HAS BEEN REVISED
AND CAN NOW BE FOUND AT THIS LINK.**

Romans 15:13 [Now](#) may the [God](#) of [hope fill](#) you with [all joy](#) and [peace](#) in [believing](#), [so](#) that you will [abound](#) in [hope](#) by the [power](#) of the [Holy Spirit](#). ([NASB: Lockman](#))

Greek: O de [theos](#) tes [elpidos plerosai](#) (3SAAO) humas pasas [charas](#) kai [eirenes](#) en to [pisteuein](#) (PAN), eis to [perisseuein](#) (PAN) humas en te [elpidi](#) en [dunamei pneumatos hagiou](#)

Amplified: May the God of your hope so fill you with all joy and peace in believing [through the experience of your faith] that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound and be overflowing (bubbling over) with hope. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

Barclay: May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in your faith, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may overflow with hope.

NET Bible: Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you believe in Him, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Greek = "in the believing" or "as [you] believe," with the object "him" supplied from the context. The referent could be God [Ro 15:13a](#) or Christ [Ro 15:12](#)).

New Jerusalem Bible: May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in your faith, so that in the power of the Holy Spirit you may be rich in hope.

NLT: I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in Him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Phillips: May the God of Hope fill you with joy and peace in your faith, that by the power of the Holy Spirit, your whole life and outlook may be radiant and alive. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

Wuest: Now the God of the hope fill you with every joy and hope in the sphere of believing, resulting in your super-abounding in the sphere of the hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Young's Literal: and the God of the hope shall fill you with all joy and peace in the believing, for your abounding in the hope in power of the Holy Spirit.

ROMANS ROAD to RIGHTEOUSNESS				
Romans 1:18-3:20	Romans 3:21-5:21	Romans 6:1-8:39	Romans 9:1-11:36	Romans 12:1-16:27
SIN	SALVATION	SANCTIFICATION	SOVEREIGNTY	SERVICE
NEED FOR SALVATION	WAY OF SALVATION	LIFE OF SALVATION	SCOPE OF SALVATION	SERVICE OF SALVATION
God's Holiness In Condemning Sin	God's Grace In Justifying Sinners	God's Power In Sanctifying Believers	God's Sovereignty In Saving Jew and Gentile	Gods Glory The Object of Service
Deadliness of Sin	Design of Grace	Demonstration of Salvation		
		Power Given	Promises Fulfilled	Paths Pursued
Righteousness Needed	Righteousness Credited	Righteousness Demonstrated	Righteousness Restored to Israel	Righteousness Applied

God's Righteousness IN LAW	God's Righteousness IMPUTED	God's Righteousness OBEYED	God's Righteousness IN ELECTION	God's Righteousness DISPLAYED
Slaves to Sin	Slaves to God			Slaves Serving God
Doctrine				Duty
Life by Faith				Service by Faith
Modified from Irving L. Jensen's excellent work Jensen's Survey of the NT				

NOW MAY THE GOD OF HOPE FILL YOU WITH ALL JOY AND PEACE : O de theos tes elpidos plerosai (3SAAO) humas pases charas kai eirenes:

- **Hope** - Ro 5:2, 3, 4, 5; 8:20, 24, 25; 12:12. 15:4, 12
- **Fill you with all joy and peace** - Ro 14:17 Jn 14:1,27 Php 4:7 Isa 55:12 Ep 5:18,19

BIBLICAL HOPE

Source: God of Hope

Power: Holy Spirit

Prayer: For filling

Result: Overflowing hope

Now (de) marks a transition to a new subject, something distinguished in some way from the preceding. Paul has just quoted from **Isaiah 11:10-note** regarding the Gentiles hope and **now** he moves from that Scripture to intercession requesting realization of that hope in the lives of his readers.

Bishop Handley Moule comments that **now** refers to "**the Hope**" just cited from the Prophet (Ro 15:12-note), the expectation of all blessing, up to its crown and flower in glory, on the basis of Messiah's work."

William Newell exhorts believers to "Look at this great thirteenth verse: how it blossoms out before us! Here is a verse packed full! The name here *given* to God thrills our hearts: The God of Hope. Hope looks forward with exultation for ever and ever! Now, if God is the God of hope, looking forward with expectancy and delight to the certain, glorious things of the future, then a dejected, depressed, discouraged saint of His is yielding to a spirit directly contrary to His will, which is, for each of us, that we **abound in hope**. ([Romans Verse-by-Verse](#)) (Ed: **If you are not "abounding in hope", consider importuning the God of hope to give you a Spirit enabled supernatural hope. Use the words of Paul to beseech the God of Hope.**)

Alexander Maclaren gives an excellent explanation of how this great passage fits with the overall context of Paul's call in Romans 15 to unity of the saints at Rome...

With this comprehensive and lofty petition the Apostle closes his exhortation to the factions in the Roman Church to be at unity. The form of the prayer is molded by the last words of a quotation which he has just made (quoting Isaiah 11:10-note in Ro 15:12), which says that in the coming Messiah '**shall the Gentiles hope.**' But the prayer itself is not an instance of being led away by a word—in form, indeed, it is shaped by verbal resemblance; in substance it points to the true remedy for religious controversy. Fill the contending parties (Ed: Eg see Ro 15:1, 2, Ro 15:7 for context) with a fuller spiritual life, and the ground of their differences will begin to dwindle, and look very contemptible. When the tide rises, the little pools on the rocks are all merged into one....This is Paul's conception of the Christian life as it might and should be, in one aspect. You notice that there is not a word in it about conduct. It goes far deeper than action. It deals with the springs of action in the individual life. It is the depths of spiritual experience here set forth which will result in actions that become a Christian. And in these days, when all around us we see a shallow conception of Christianity, as if it were concerned principally with conduct and men's relations with one another, it is well to go down into the depths, and to remember that whilst '**Do, do, do!**' is very important, '**Be, be, be!**' is the primary commandment. Conduct is a making visible of personality, and the Scripture teaching which says **first faith and then works** is profoundly philosophical as well as Christian. So we turn away here from externals altogether, and regard the effect of Christianity on the inward life. (From Maclaren's sermon [Joy and Peace in Believing](#))

THE GOD OF HOPE

The God of Hope - The truths conveyed are that God is both the **origin** of hope and the **object** of our hope ("Who inspires hope and imparts it to His children" Harrison). God is the Source of hope and the Giver of hope. Stated another way, the great benefits (hope, joy, peace) Paul prays for the saints at Rome, cannot be possessed apart from God. In the same manner, believers today can possess them only as He gives them to us. And what is the believer's part in this divine transaction? To believe [in believing] as explained below by [Alexander Maclaren](#).

James Denney explains that the **God of Hope** signifies "the God Who gives us the hope which we have in Christ. [Expositor's Greek Testament](#))

John Piper in discussing the name **God of hope** reminds us that "Everything starts with God. If there is hope for joy that is deep and eternal it will be hope that is founded on God. Any other foundation will fail. God is, and God is a God of hope. This we must believe. ([Word of Promise, Spirit of God, Hope of Man](#))

Matthew Henry on the importance of God's names like the **God of Hope** - It is good in prayer to fasten upon those names, titles, and attributes of God, which are most suitable to the errand we come upon, and will best serve to encourage our faith concerning it. Every word in the prayer should be a plea. Thus should the cause be skillfully ordered, and the mouth filled with arguments. God is the God of hope. He is the foundation on which our hope is built, and he is the builder that doth himself raise it: he is both the object of our hope, and the author of it. That hope is but fancy, and will deceive us, which is not fastened upon God (as the goodness hoped for, and the truth hoped in), and which is not of his working in us. We have both together, Ps. 119:49.

What is the "hope" to which Paul refers? In the Greek text note that the definitive article precedes the noun **hope** so that literally the text reads "**the hope**". Thus it is not just **any** hope, but is a specific hope. In Romans 5 Paul describes this **hope** writing that as believers "*we exult in **hope** of the glory of God.*" (Romans 5:2-note). Among other things then, this **hope** of all believers is the joyful certainty that we will indeed see the Glorious One Himself, Christ Jesus, our "**Blessed Hope**" (Titus 2:13-note). Note well that Our God is the **God of hope**, and the hope that He gives centers on the Lord Jesus Christ (1Ti 1:1). This **hope** also includes the confidence that when we see the Glorious One, we will be like Him--glorified (1Jn 3:2-note). As an aside dear saint note that Scripture speaks of three different ways we will experience the glory of God: (1) We will see God in all His glory (Rev 22:4-note, Rev 22:5-note). (2) We will be transformed to reflect His glory (Col 3:4-note). (3) We will live in a world filled with God's glory (Ro 8:21-note). These great truths should cause all God's people to shout "**Glory! Hallelujah!**"

Someone once quipped that "*The only thing we know about the future is that the providence of God will be up before dawn*" As we face what lies ahead, we can count on that maxim (truth). Hope is the God of all our tomorrows provides optimism for our glorious future and gives strength for the trials of today.

In his classic commentary, **Robert Haldane** writes that "God is called the **God of hope**, because He is the Author of all the well-grounded hope of His people. All hope of which He is not the author, in the heart of men, is false and delusive. The world in general may have hope, but it is false hope. All true hope with respect to the Divine favor is effected in the human heart by God Himself (**Ed**: Specifically birthed by His indwelling Spirit's power as Ro 15:13 teaches!). Not only is God the author of all true hope, but He can create this hope in the midst of despair! (**Ed**: This is clear evidence that His "hope" is supernatural, not natural, for dire circumstances "naturally" breed in us a sense of hopelessness. Praise God that He is the God of supernatural Hope!) The most desponding are often raised by Him to a good hope through grace (**Ed**: "Spirit of grace" Heb 10:29-note); and the most guilty are in a moment relieved (**Ed**: 1Jn 1:9-note), and made to hope in His mercy (**Ed**: Ps 119:156). How remarkably was this the case with the thief on the cross (Lk 23:42, 43), and with the three thousand on the day of Pentecost! (Acts 2:41) ...["**fill you**"] implies that there are degrees of **joy and peace** in the minds of Christians. Some may have a measure of these graces who do not **abound** in them. It is a great blessing to be filled with them; and for this blessing the Apostle prays with respect to the Christians at Rome. **If there be different degrees of joy and peace, how important is it to look earnestly to God for the fullest communication of these blessings!** ([Commentary on Romans](#))

May...fill (4137) (pleroo) means literally to fill "to the brim" (a net, Mt 13:48, a building, Jn 12:3, Acts 2:2, a city, Acts 5:28, needs Phil 4:19-note). Metaphorically, pleroo means to make complete in every particular, to pervade, to take possession of and ultimately to control. This is the same verb used by Paul to command the saints at Ephesus to be continually "**filled with the Spirit**." (Eph 5:18-note) The idea is that what fills a person, exercises control over the person's affect, attitude and actions. In the present passage may...fill is in the **optative mood** which expresses a wish or prayer.

You - Paul uses the plural pronoun which speaks of all the saints in Rome, whether they are Jews or Gentile believers.

Beloved, are you looking for a powerful prayer to pray for someone? Here is a prime "candidate" - in fact, consider memorizing this short prayer (see the value of **Memorizing His Word**) and using Paul's powerful prayer to intercede for family, friends and other members of the body of Christ. Will God answer this prayer? Notice what the apostle John says...

And this is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him. (1Jn 5:14, 15-note)

Praying Scripture is a wonderful pattern for productive prayer. **Why not stop now and pray this prayer for someone in your sphere of influence?** You can be assured that what you ask for is in God's will and that you will have the requests you have asked from Him!

Beloved, you can "*put it in the bank*" that even in the **bleakest times**, Christians have the **brightest hope**.

Feeling a bit down today? As discussed above, consider beseeching the God of hope with this hopeful (hope filled) prayer in Romans 15:13. Consider asking a brother or sister in Christ to pray it for you. I think they would be honored at your humble request and consider such intercession a precious privilege! I took my own advice this morning asking another saint to pray Ro 15:13 for me as I prayed it for him - I must say my day has been a wonderful experience of abounding hope by the power of the Spirit.

J B Phillips paraphrases this prayer...

May the God of Hope fill you with joy and peace in your faith, that by the power of the Holy Spirit, **your whole life and outlook may be radiant and alive.**

Comment: I like Phillips' phraseology, don't you? Isn't this what all followers of Christ ardently desire...our whole life and outlook radiant and alive? Is this not your desire?

"**Abounding in hope**" ideally should be the description of every follower of Christ. Of all people, the Christian should be the one who manifests the inner strength (and Spirit) to look ahead with a contagious enthusiasm. God has given us hope, the absolute certainty of that God will do good to us in the future.

All joy and peace - "**All**" in Greek means *all without exception*. In other words Paul is praying not for a percentage, portion or fraction, but for all the **joy and hope** that God has promised to those who love Him! God is not a stingy grinch (Dr Suess' character) but He is a gracious Giver and Paul desires that the saints at Rome (and you and I dear child of the Most High God) experience this supernatural **joy and peace** to the max!

Notice also that **joy and peace** are two components of the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:22-note).

Note the qualifier -- "**in believing.**" This speaks of our responsibility. **Do you really believe God is "able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us"** (Ephesians 3:20-note)? Through His prophet ("mouthpiece") **Malachi** (means "Messenger of God") God challenges us...

"Test Me now in this," says the LORD of hosts (**Jehovah Sabaoth, LORD of hosts or of armies**), "if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows." (Malachi 3:10-note)

What impact would it have on the spiritually dead (Eph 2:1-note) and irrevocably decaying world (2Pe 1:4-note) if it were to witness the lives of believers continually filled with the Spirit, walking by the enabling power of the Spirit and bearing the fragrant fruit of the Spirit? Would the "walking dead" not be convicted by the Spirit of sin and of righteousness and of the judgment to come as they saw the irrepressible power of the "Gospel" being lived out in their very presence? And would not some ask "you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence" (1Peter 3:15-note)? The impact of radiant Spirit empowered lives on a society vainly searching for the meaning of life would be dramatic! Indeed, as Paul wrote to the saints in the moral cesspool of Corinth...

we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life. And who is adequate for these things? (2Cor 2:15, 16, See 2Cor 3:5, 6-note for "Who is adequate?")

Charles Hodge - **All joy** means all possible joy. Paul here, as in Ro 15:5, concludes by praying that God would grant them the excellencies which it was their duty to possess (**Ed: But as explained elsewhere in these notes [see especially [Dr Maclaren's explanation](#)], their part, their "responsibility", was believing or trusting or having confidence**) Thus constantly and intimately are the ideas of accountability and dependence connected in the sacred Scriptures. We are to work out our own salvation, because it is God that works in us both to will and to do according to his good pleasure. The God of hope, ie, God Who is the Author

of that hope which it was predicted men should exercise in the root and offspring of Jesse. ([Romans 15 Commentary](#))

Alexander Maclaren has a beautiful description of the **joy** given by the **God of hope** " If I am living in an atmosphere of trust, then sorrow will never be absolute, nor have exclusive monopoly and possession of my spirit. But there will be the paradox, and the blessedness, of Christian experience, 'as sorrowful yet always rejoicing.' For the joy of the Christian life has its source far away beyond the swamps from which the sour drops of sorrow may trickle, and it is possible that, like the fabled fire that burned under water, the joy of the Lord may be bright in my heart, even when it is drenched in floods of calamity and distress." ([Joy and Peace in Believing](#))

Earlier **Paul** had given us a "definition" of the **kingdom of God** writing that "the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and **joy in the Holy Spirit.**" (Ro 14:17-note) **Comment** by Denney: One may serve Christ either eating or abstaining, but no one can serve Him whose conduct exhibits indifference to righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Paul again links the **Holy Spirit with joy** in his letter to the saints at Thessalonica - "You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit." (1Thes 1:6-note) Notice how this passage emphasizes the supernatural nature of joy, for experiencing tribulations is hardly conducive to producing joy in the natural man (1Cor 2:14-note)!

Joy ([5479](#)) (**chara** from **chaíro** = to rejoice) (cf Ro 14:17-note, Ro 15:32-note) is one of Paul's great themes, with **charas** being used by him 21x compared to next most frequent use of 9 by John. The Christian life is to be a life of "JOY". It is founded on faith in Jesus, whose life on earth began as "good news of great joy for all people" (Lk 2:10).

Joy is the deep-down sense of well-being that abides in the heart of the person who knows all is well between himself and the Lord and is independent of whether circumstances are favorable or unfavorable (Jn 16:20, 21, 22).

Joy is God's gift to believers, a component of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-note). Nehemiah declared, "The **joy** of the Lord is your strength" (Neh 8:10).

So Paul prays that they would be filled with **all joy**, that inner gladness and deep seated pleasure which is **independent** of one's external circumstances. It is a depth of assurance and confidence that ignites a cheerful heart. It is a cheerful heart that leads to cheerful behavior.

Paul prays for **Joy** to **fill** the saints at Rome. So as wine fills a man and exerts control over him (just listen to him slur his words and watch his wobbly walk!), in the supernatural way the spiritual fruit of **joy and peace** fill the believer and "controls" him or her.

John Piper - The pathway that the Spirit cuts through the jungle of our anxieties into the clearing of joy is the pathway of faith. Luke says of Stephen in Acts 6:5, that he was "a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit," and he says of Barnabas in Acts 11:24 that he was "a good man full of the Holy Spirit and of faith," The two go together. If a person is filled with faith, he will be filled with the Spirit, the Spirit of joy and peace. The most important text in Paul's writings to show this is Romans 15:13, "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope." Notice that it is in or by believing that we are filled with joy and peace. And it is by the Spirit that we abound in hope. When we put those two halves of the verse together, what we see is that through our faith (our believing) the Spirit fills us with his hope and thus with his joy and peace. And, of course since hope is such an essential part of being filled with joy by the Spirit, what we have to believe is that God is, as Paul says, the God of hope. We have to rivet our faith on all that he has done and said to give us hope. ([Be Filled with the Spirit](#))

Dictionary of Biblical Imagery - Joy is a by-product of life with God. Joy is not found by seeking it as an end in itself. It must be given by God (Job 8:21; Ps 4:7; 36:8). Therefore, it is received by faith with the gift of salvation (1 Sam 2:1; Ps 5:11; 13:5; 20:5; 21:1, 6; 33:21; 35:9; 40:16; Is 12:1; 25:9; Hab 3:18; Lk 1:47; 2:10). In the OT, joy comes with God's presence (1Chr 16:27; Job 22:21–26; Ps 9:2; 16:5–11). In the NT that presence is identified as the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:52; Rom 15:13; Gal 5:22; Eph 5:18, 19; 1Th 1:6).

Jerry Bridges - **It is by the power of the Holy Spirit that we experience the joy of salvation and are enabled to rejoice even in the midst of trials.** (cp 1Thes 1:6) The Holy Spirit uses His Word to create joy in our hearts. Romans 15 contains an interesting connection between God and the Scriptures. Ro 15:4 of that chapter speaks of the endurance and encouragement that come from the Scriptures; Ro 15:5 says God gives endurance and encouragement. That God gives endurance and encouragement through the Scriptures should not surprise us. **God is the Source. The Scriptures are the means.** The same truth applies to joy. Ro 15:13 speaks of the God of hope filling us with joy and peace as we trust in Him. How would we expect God to fill us with joy and hope? The reasonable answer is by means of the comfort of the Scriptures ([The Fruitful Life- The Overflow of God's Love Through You](#))

In another book **Bridges** writes the following on Romans 15:13 - One of the most important aspects of the second bookend is the hope the Holy Spirit provides to believers. Every believer needs this divine encouragement because our opposition is relentless, and there are plenty of disappointments along the way. Sometimes we think we've turned the corner on a particular sin, only to discover a few days later that we've merely gone around the block and are dealing with it again. But there is hope in our battle with sin, and it lies in placing our dependence on the power of the Holy Spirit, our ever-present Helper (John 14:16, 17). ([The Bookends of the Christian Life](#) - **Highly Recommended**)

Warren Wiersbe defines **joy** as "that inward peace and sufficiency that is not affected by outward circumstances. (A case in point is Paul's experience recorded in Php 4:1ff-[see notes].) This "holy optimism" keeps him going in spite of difficulties."

Donald Campbell - **Joy (chara)** is a deep and abiding inner rejoicing which was promised to those who abide in Christ (cf. Jn 15:11). It does not depend on circumstances because it rests in God's sovereign control of all things (cf. Ro 8:28-**note**).

Webster's definition reflects the world's view of joy "the emotion evoked by well-being, success, or good fortune or by the prospect of possessing what one desires". Obviously this is not an accurate description of the JOY independent of circumstances that is available to every believer.

Peace (1515) (**eirene** from verb **eiro** = binding or joining together what is broken or divided) (10 uses of eirene in Romans - Ro 1:7; 2:10; 3:17; 5:1; 8:6; 14:17, 19; 15:13, 33; 16:20) means literally that which has been bound together. It is freedom from disquieting or oppressive thoughts or emotions. Peace in this verse is that inward state of quiet which is independent of circumstances and is that inner attitude which God's Spirit (Gal 5:22-Ga 5:22, Gal 5:23-note) gives His people. Note that this peace is only possible after one has been justified by faith and experienced peace **with** God (Ro 5:1-note). In short peace with God must precede and is the basis for the peace **of** God (Php 4:7-note).

Webster defines **peace** as a state of tranquility or quiet, freedom from disquieting or oppressive thoughts or emotions, harmony in personal relations, a pact or agreement to end hostilities between those who have been at war or in a state of enmity, state of repose in contrast with or following strife or turmoil. ([Click](#) for discussion of "gospel of peace" the believer's spiritual "sneakers").

IN (the) believing: en to pisteuein (PAN):

In believing - The Greek literally reads "*in the believing*" or as Kenneth Wuest renders it "*in the sphere of the act of habitually believing.*"

THE VITAL ROLE OF FAITH IN FILLING WITH JOY AND PEACE

Alexander Maclaren (*don't read his explanation too fast*) says that here Paul links...

man's **faith** and God's **filling**...as the **foundation** of everything. **The God of hope fill you...**—let us leave out the intervening words for a moment—'**in believing.**'

Now, you notice that Paul does not stay to tell us what or whom we are to believe in, or on. He takes that for granted, and his thought is fastened, for the moment, not on the object but on the **act of faith**. And he wishes to drive home to us this, that the **attitude of trust** is the necessary prerequisite condition of God's being able to fill a man's soul, and that God's being able to fill a man's soul is the necessary consequence of a man's trust. Ah, brethren, we cannot altogether shut God out from our spirits. There are loving and gracious gifts that, as our Lord tells us, He makes to 'fall on the unthankful and the evil.' His rain is not like the summer showers that we sometimes see, that fall in one spot and leave another dry; nor like the destructive thunderstorms, that come down bringing ruin upon one cane-brake and leave the plants in the next standing upright.

But the best, the highest, the truly divine gifts which He is yearning to give to us all, cannot be given except there be consent, trust, and desire for them.

**You can shut your hearts
or you can open them.**

And just as the wind will sigh round some hermetically closed chamber in vain search for a cranny, and the

man within may be asphyxiated though the atmosphere is surging up its waves all round his closed domicile, so by **lack of our faith**, which is at once trust, consent, and desire, **we shut out the gift with which God would fain fill our spirits**. You can take a porous pottery vessel, wrap it up in waxcloth, pitch it all over, and then drop it into mid-Atlantic, and not a drop will find its way in. And that is what we can do with ourselves, so that although in Him 'we live and move and have our being,' and are like the earthen vessel in the ocean, no drop of the blessed moisture will ever find its way into the heart.

**There must be man's faith
before there can be God's filling.**

Further, this relation of the two things suggests to us that a consequence of a Christian man's faith is the direct action of God upon him. Notice how the Apostle puts that truth in a double form here, in order that he may emphasize it, using one form of expression, involving the divine, direct activity, at the beginning of his prayer, and another at the end, and so enclosing, as it were, within a great casket of the divine action, all the blessings, the flashing jewels, which he desires his Roman friends to possess. '**The God of hope fill you...through the power of the Holy Ghost.**' I wish I could find words by which I could bear in upon the ordinary type of the Evangelical Christianity of this generation anything like the depth and earnestness of my own conviction that, for lack of a proportionate development of that great truth, of the direct action of the giving God on the believing heart, it is weakened and harmed in many ways. Surely He that made my spirit can touch my spirit; surely He who fills all things according to their capacity can Himself enter into and fill the spirit which is opened for Him by simple faith. We do not need wires for the telegraphy between heaven and the believing soul, but He comes directly to, and speaks in, and moves upon, and molds and blesses, the waiting heart. And until you know, by your own experience rightly interpreted, that there is such a direct communion between the **giving God** and the **recipient believing spirit**, you have yet to learn the deepest depth, and the most blessed blessedness, of Christian faith and experience. For lack of it a hundred evils beset modern Christianity. For lack of it men fix their faith so exclusively as that the faith is itself harmed thereby, on the past act of Christ's death on the Cross. You will not suspect me of minimizing that, but I beseech you remember one climax of the Apostle's which, though not bearing the same message as my text, is in harmony with it, 'Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.' (Ro 8:34) And remember that Christ Himself bestows the gift of His Divine Spirit as the result of the humiliation and the agony of His Cross. Faith brings the direct action of the giving God.

And one more word about this first part of my text: the result of that direct action is complete—'the God of hope fill you' with no shrunken stream, no painful trickle out of a narrow rift in the rock, but a great exuberance which will pass into a man's nature in the measure of his capacity, which is the measure of his trust and desire. There are two limits to God's gifts to men: the one is the limitless limit of God's infinitude, the other is the working limit—our capacity—and that capacity is precisely measured, as the capacity of some built-in vessel might be measured by a little gauge on the outside, by our faith. 'The God of hope' fills you in 'believing,' and 'according to thy faith shall it be unto thee.' (**From Maclaren's sermon [Joy and Peace in Believing](#)**)

Joy is linked with **faith** in Paul's letter to the Philippians - "And convinced of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and **joy** in the **faith**." (Php 1:25-note)

Believing (4100)(**pisteuo** from **pistis**; **pistos**; related study = **obedience of faith**) means to consider something to be true and therefore worthy of trust. To have a firm conviction as to the goodness, efficacy or ability of something or someone. **Pisteuo** means to entrust oneself to an entity in complete confidence. To believe in also conveys the implication of total commitment to the one trusted. To be confident about or to be firmly persuaded as to something. **Pisteuo** is in the **present tense** which pictures this believing is one's practice or lifestyle. See **Ray Stedman's** explanation (below) regarding the importance of continually "*believing*" as it relates to **joy and peace and power!**

William Newell - It is in a **believing** heart that these blessed results are brought about. When asked by the Jews in the Sixth of John, "What must we do that we may work the works of God?" our Lord replied, "This is the work of God the one thing He asks of you, that ye believe on Him Whom He hath sent." The **believing** of Romans 15.13 is, of course, that "living by faith in the Son of God" of which Paul speaks in Gal 2:20. **It is stepping out on the facts God reveals about us; and learning to live the life of trust.** (**[Romans Verse-by-Verse](#)**)

Charles Hodge comments that **in believing** means to "fill you with that joy and concord among yourselves, as well as peace of conscience and peace towards God, which are the results of genuine faith." (**[Commentary of the Epistle to the Romans](#)**)

James Denney explains that "The **joy and peace** which He (the God of hope) imparts rest on faith (**in believing**). Hence they are the **joy and peace** specially flowing from justification and acceptance with God, and the more we have of these, the more we abound in the Christian **hope** itself. Such an abounding in hope, in the power of the Holy Ghost (cp the power of the Holy Spirit in Acts 1:8, Luke 4:14), is the end contemplated in Paul's prayer that the God of hope would fill the Romans with all joy and peace in believing. ([Romans 15 - Expositor's Greek Testament](#))

Ray Stedman helps us understand how **all joy and peace** is related to the phrase **in believing**...

I want to stress that briefly because I think that we have gone astray in this respect. Oftentimes people come to me, and say, "What is the matter with my Christian life? I have come to a plateau where I seem to be so bored, and nothing interesting is happening, and I have lost all vision and joy and victory in my life. It seems to be so dull and lifeless. What can I do?" For years I think I gave a wrong answer to that. I said to them, "Well, are you reading the Bible?" And usually it turned out that they weren't. Or, "Are you having times of prayer?" And I gave the pat answer which is so easily given by most of us, "What you need is time for prayer and reading the Scriptures -- prayer and the Bible."

But I have come to see that this isn't the answer. What they need is **to believe** what they read in Scripture, and **believe** what they pray--that is the answer. These other things are merely mechanics which make possible the believing, but **believing** is the real answer. It isn't Bible reading, or prayer or Christian fellowship that unlocks **the power of the Holy Spirit**. It is **believing** what you read or what you pray: When you believe that Jesus Christ indwells you, when you believe that He is all that you need, when you believe that He intends to act through you, then you can act! You discover that all that He is becomes visible through you and accomplishes all that needs to be done. The result is **power** and **joy and peace**, as Paul prays here....

The **God of hope** cannot fill us with **joy and peace** if we don't believe -- which means to act on what we know. But it is when we believe and act that the power of the Holy Spirit begins to work through us and causes us to abound in hope -- for all around us are the evidences that God is at work accomplishing his purposes in our lives. (Read the full message [Power to Please](#)) (bolding added)

In summary, Christian joy and peace are **IM**possible apart from trusting in Him in Whom they are eminently **HIM**possible!

SO THAT YOU MAY ABOUND IN HOPE: eis to perisseuein (PAN) humas en te elpidi:

So that (term of purpose or result) is the preposition **eis**, which is the Greek preposition of motion, and literally can describe motion into any place or thing. Figuratively as used here by Paul **eis** marks the object toward which his supplication points--abounding hope.

May abound (4052)(**perisseuo** from **perissos** = abundant, exceeding some number, measure, rank or need, over and above - from **peri** = in sense of beyond) means to cause to superabound, to be superfluous, to overflow, to be in affluence, to excel or to be in abundance with the implication of being considerably more than what would be expected (and in the present context certainly far more than we deserve!) Notice also that **perisseuo** is in the **present tense** which pictures the believers in Rome (and us) as continually abounding in this great quality of Spirit empowered hope.

Perisseuo carries the idea of exceeding the requirements or of overflowing and is pictured by a river which overflows its banks! It means to exceed a fixed number or measure and so to be more than enough. Thus **perisseuo** was used to describe what was "**left over**" of the loaves after Jesus had fed the 5000 (Mt 14:20)! God's supply exceeded their need. When the God of hope supplies hope there is more than enough so that some is even "left over" so to speak! How quickly we forget the infinite nature of our great God's capability "to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power (dunamis - in the present context **the power of the Holy Spirit** Who indwells us) that works (energeo in the present tense = is continually "energizing") within us." (Eph 3:20-note)

Moulton and Milligan give usages of **perisseuo** in extracts from secular Greek writings - "**more than enough** has been written...if you find any purchasers of the **surplus** donkeys".

And so here we see the purpose of Paul's prayer - that they would be continually overflowing with **hope**. The joy and peace given by God to the believing saint would result in an overflow of hope.

As an aside we note that a common goal in Paul's prayers was that the **saints** would not be "**ain'ts**" so to speak but that they would "super abound" spiritually (See 1Cor 15:58-note Phil 1:9, 10-note, 1Th 3:12-note). In one great passage Paul used **perisseuo** twice to emphasize our Great God's ability to give and give more...

And God is able (present tense = is continually able) to **make** all grace **abound** (**perisseuo**) to you, that (**term**

of purpose or result) always having all sufficiency in everything, you may **have an abundance** (perisseuo) for every good deed (2Cor 9:8)

In the context of Paul's argument in Romans 15, saints who **abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit** have no time to quarrel over nonessentials. Our common **hope** is a powerful unifying force in the Christian life. Hope binds us together in the midst of a world which without Christ is hopeless!

James Witmer writes that...

Paul desired God to fill his readers with **all joy and peace** (Ro 14:17-note). **Joy** relates to the delight of anticipation in seeing one's hopes fulfilled. **Peace** results from the assurance that God will fulfill those hopes (Ro 5:1-note; Php 4:7-note). These are experienced as believers trust in Him (cf. He 11:1-note). As a result believers **overflow with hope** by the **power of the Holy Spirit** (cf. Ro 15:19-note) ([Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., et al: The Bible Knowledge Commentary. 1985. Victor](#))

Ray Stedman adds this comment...

What a magnificent verse! **Whenever I am asked to give an autograph, I almost always include this verse in it.** It is such a beautiful expression. Look how much you have got going for you. All the great words of the Christian faith appear here: **hope**, twice (once it is called "overflowing hope"); and **joy**, great joy; and **peace**, calmness and confidence; and **trust**, belief in a living God; and finally, the **power of the Holy Spirit**, the invisible force that can open doors and no man shuts them, and can shut and no man opens -- the power of God released among us....What the apostle is urging us to do is to unite on the great positive words of our faith, and that we allow these qualities of hope, and joy, and peace, and trust, and power to be visible when others see us gathered together as Christians. When they hear us talking about each other we are to reflect these qualities, rather than the miniscule divisions and arguments that many of us have. (Read the full message [Romans 15:1-13: Our Great Example](#))

William Newell

It is the will of God that you and I--all believers--be **filled with all joy and peace in believing**---blessed spiritual state! that we may **abound in hope in the power of the Holy Ghost**. Some are content if they merely find the way of salvation through faith in the blood of Christ. They are much given to talk about being "saved by grace," but they are not much exercised about holy living.

A second class of believers become deeply exercised as to a life of "victory over sin." These, of course, if instructed aright, accept the wondrous fact that they died with Christ, and are now on resurrection ground, freed from sin, and from that which gave sin its power, the Law.

A third class go further, to the Twelfth of Romans, and enter on true Christian service, by presenting their bodies a living sacrifice to God (Ro 12:1); and discovering thereby His good, acceptable, and perfect will for them (Ro 12:2) -- whatever measure of faith He may give them, and to whatever gift or peculiar service He may call them.

But here, in this great fountain of water in Romans 15.13, we find that a daily, hourly life **filled with all joy and peace in believing, abounding in hope**, is the normal state for every one who is in Christ!

It will not do for us to make excuses for ourselves: God is the **God of hope**! His yearning is to fill you and me with **all joy and peace**, if we will just launch out and **believe**. Others just as unworthy as we have believed; we will never become "more worthy" of believing. "This poor earth is a wrecked vessel," as Moody used to say. Man is drifting on into the night, and judgment is coming. All the more, then, may the God of hope fill **YOU** with all joy and peace in believing, that **YOU** may abound in hope! Many cherish their doubts, even adducing them as a proof of their humility, which is sad indeed. As Charles F. Deems used to say, "Believe your beliefs, and doubt your doubts; most people believe their doubts, and doubt their beliefs." You can believe. **What a wonderful thing to be among those (sadly few!) believers who are filled with all joy and peace, and abound in hope!** ([Romans Verse-by-Verse](#))

Hope ([1680](#))([elpis \[word study\]](#)) in Scripture is not the world's definition of "I hope so", with a few rare exceptions (e.g., Acts 27:20) **Hope** is defined as a desire for some future good with the expectation of obtaining it. **Hope** is confident expectancy. **Hope** is the looking forward to something with some reason for confidence respecting fulfillment.

Related Resource: Believer's Blessed Hope

Hope as the world typically defines it is a desire for some future occurrence of which one is not assured of attaining. The ancient world did not generally regard **hope** as a virtue, but merely as a temporary illusion. Historians tell us that a great cloud of **hopelessness** covered the ancient world. Philosophies were empty; traditions were disappearing; religions were powerless to help men face either life or death. People longed to pierce the veil and get some message of hope from the other side, but there is none outside of Christ.

The book of Hebrews defines **hope** as that which gives "full assurance" (He 6:11-note). Thus we can have strong confidence that God is going to do good to us in future. The opposite of hope is **despair**, (hopelessness; a hopeless state; a destitution of hope or expectation) which is all that those without Christ as Savior can know, for Paul defines hope as "Christ Jesus, Who is our Hope" (1Ti 1:1). Thus genuine Biblical hope is not a concept but a Person, Christ Jesus!

Richards writes...

Hope is a unique word in Scripture, where it indicates "confident expectation." The person with hope has complete assurance about the future. And the overflow of the **hope** we have as we trust in God fills us with joy and peace. (The 365 Day Devotional Commentary)

William Barclay tells the story about **hope**...

It is easy in the light of experience to despair of oneself. It is easy in the light of events to despair of the world. The story is told of a meeting in a certain church at a time of emergency. The meeting was opened with prayer by the chairman. He addressed God as 'Almighty and eternal God, whose grace is sufficient for all things.' When the prayer was finished, the business part of the meeting began; and the chairman introduced the business by saying: 'Friends, the situation in this church is completely hopeless, and nothing can be done.' Either his prayer was composed of empty and meaningless words, or his statement was untrue....There is something in Christian hope that not all the shadows can quench—and that something is the conviction that God is alive. No individual is hopeless as long as there is the grace of Jesus Christ; and no situation is hopeless as long as there is the power of God.

BY THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT: en dunamei pneumatos hagiou:

THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

By the power - Literally "in" the power. In the sphere of His divine, enabling power or as **Wuest** renders it...

Now the God of the hope fill you with every joy and hope in the sphere of believing, resulting in your superabounding **in the sphere of the hope by the power of the Holy Spirit**

Bishop Handley Moule comments "in His power," clasped as it were within His divine embrace, and thus energized to look upward, heavenward, away from embittering and dividing temptations to the unifying as well as beatifying respect of your Lord's Return."

Let us meditate for a moment on this important phrase "the power of the Holy Spirit"- Remember that when Jesus was on earth, having emptied Himself of His divine prerogatives (albeit still fully God - mystery of mysteries! See Phil 2:5, 6, 7-note), He presented us the perfect example of how to live a supernatural life. And what was Jesus' "secret"? Luke unfolds the beautiful truth that at the beginning of His ministry, "*the Holy Spirit descended upon Him*" (Luke 3:22, compare Isa 11:2, Isa 61:1, 2, 3, notice also the timing = Luke 3:23 "*And when He began His ministry...*"). Note what Luke is saying - Jesus receives the manifestation of the Holy Spirit and this event marks the inception of His powerful ministry over the next three years. Luke goes on to record that then "full of the Holy Spirit" (Luke 4:1, see Paul's command to believers to be continually full of the Spirit, Eph 5:18-note), Jesus "*was led about by the Spirit in the wilderness*" (Luke 4:1b) which resulted in a period of intense temptation "*by the devil*" (Luke 4:2-17). In short, Jesus gives us **His example for powerful ministry** - filling with and submission or surrender to the Holy Spirit, the same Holy Spirit Who now indwells all believers (Ro 8:9-note, 1Cor 6:19-note, 1Cor 6:20-note). In the book of Acts, Luke reiterates the vital role of the Holy Spirit in Jesus' ministry recording Peter's declaration...

You yourselves know the thing which took place throughout all Judea, starting from Galilee, after the baptism which John proclaimed. You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how **God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power (dunamis)**, and how He went about doing good, and healing all who were oppressed by the devil; for God was with Him. (Acts 10:37-38)

Notice the association of the **Holy Spirit** with the presence of enabling **power**, power to accomplish the ministry the Father had assigned to His Son (Do you see the Trinity at work?). Now return to Luke 4 and notice that after His victorious temptation "Jesus returned to Galilee in the **power (dunamis) of the Spirit**." (Luke 4:14)

Jesus **filled** with the Holy Spirit, **led** by the Holy Spirit and **empowered** by the Holy Spirit began His ministry. In so doing, Jesus the perfect Man is providing us the pattern for powerful ministry! **Have you learned the "secret" of the Holy Spirit's power in your life?** Paul (1Cor 11:1), Peter (1Peter 2:21-note) and John (1Jn 2:6-note) all call on believers to follow in the steps of Jesus. Notice how this pattern "dovetails" with Jesus' promise of "greater works" in John 14:12. While clearly there are some exceptions (Jesus' miracles of raising the dead, walking on water, etc., etc.), the basic pattern of power for supernatural ministry is provided - the secret is the Holy Spirit! Jesus' charge to His men in Acts 1:8-note and the working out of the truth of that verse in the remainder of the book of Acts substantiates the basic principle of the Holy Spirit's power enabling us to live the Christian life as more than conquerors!

May God open the eyes of our heart to the surpassing greatness of the power of the Holy Spirit (Eph 1:18, 19-note) available in our lives so that we might experience an abundant, fruit filled life (Gal 5:22-note, Gal 5:23-note), in turn so that God the Father might be greatly glorified by the supernatural deeds the Spirit of grace (Heb 10:29b) enables us to perform (cp Mt 5:16-note, Jn 15:8) as we progressively learn more and more to yield to Him, to be filled with Him and to walk by Him (Eph 5:18-note, Gal 5:16-note).

Power ([1411](#)) (**dunamis**) (7x in Romans = Ro 1:4-note Ro 1:16-note Ro 1:20-note Ro 8:38-note Ro 9:17-note Ro 15:13, Ro 15:19-note) refers to inherent power residing in something by virtue of its nature. Here the power Source is the Holy Spirit.

In the context of Romans 15, we learn that the Holy Spirit's **inherent** enabling power is the means by which unity will be accomplished as He causes believers to abound in hope. The Holy Spirit supernaturally enables the stronger and weaker brothers to abound in hope and to see each other's positions in a clearer (eternal) perspective which causes them to refuse to let their differences mar the unity that they have in Christ. Christ is our Hope (1Ti 1:1) and to paraphrase an old hymn, when we fix our eyes on Jesus (cp Heb 12:2-note, Col 3:1-note, Col 3:2-note), "*the things of this world will grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace*" ([Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus by Alan Jackson](#)) and the result will be true spiritual power to accept one another.

Notice also that what was described as the effect of Scripture in Romans 15:4 is now attributed to the work of the Holy Spirit. Paul here follows a pattern evident throughout the New Testament in which God's saving acts are attributed to God's Word as well as to the work of the Holy Spirit.

Omnipotence is one of the characteristics of the divine essence. **Father:** Mk 14:36 and Lk 1:37; **Son:** Col 1:16-17; Heb. 1:3; **Spirit:** Ro 15:13: (1) God the Father is omnipotent (Eph 1:17; 2Pe 1:2-3). (2) Holy Spirit is omnipotent (Acts 1:8; Ro 15:13, 19; Eph 3:16; 1Th 1:5). (3) Word of God is omnipotent (Ro 1:16; 1Co 1:18, 24; Heb 4:12).

Charles Hodge reminds us that it is "through the power of the Holy Spirit, through Whom all good is given and all good exercised." ([Commentary of the Epistle to the Romans](#))

Cranfield - The existence of this **hope** in men is no human possibility but the creation of **the Spirit** of God. ([Cranfield, C. E. B Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans. Vol 1: Ro 1-8.; Volume 2: Romans 9-16](#))

Barclay comments on the believer's need for **power of the Holy Spirit** - Here is the supreme human need. It is not that we do not **know** the right thing; it is not that we do not **recognize** the fine thing; the trouble is **doing** it. The trouble is to cope with and to conquer things....That we can never do alone. Only when the surge of Christ's power (**Ed:** The Spirit of Christ) fills our weakness can we have control of life as we ought. By ourselves, we can do nothing (cp Jn 15:5, 2Cor 3:5-6-note, John 6:63, 1Cor 15:10-note); but, with God (**Ed:** The resurrection power of the Holy Spirit), all things are possible. ([The Daily Study Bible](#))

Holy Spirit - The book of Romans is "Spirit filled" so to speak = His full name is mentioned in Ro 5:5 Ro 9:1 Ro 14:17 Ro 15:13 Ro 15:16. He is mentioned by the single name **Spirit** in Ro 1:4, 2:29, 7:6, 8:2, 4, 5 (twice), Ro 8:6, 9 (3x), Ro 8:11 (twice), Ro 8:13, 14, 16, 23, 26 (twice), Ro 8:27, 15:19, 30. **The total mentions of the Holy Spirit/Spirit in Romans = 27** including once as the **Spirit of holiness** (Ro 1:4), once as the **Spirit of life in Christ Jesus** (Ro 8:2), once as the **Spirit of Him** Who raised Jesus (Ro 8:11), twice as the **Spirit of God** (Ro 8:9, 14) and once as the **Spirit of Christ** (Ro 8:9). Even from a cursory observation of His names in Romans, we receive a glimpse of the Trinity.

Tony Evans on the **Holy Spirit - What's the difference between a rowboat and a speedboat?** A rowboat requires human effort; a speedboat moves based on another power source. A rowboat represents my determination to get there. A speedboat represents the Christian who relies on the power of the Holy Spirit to propel him forward into his Christian life and get him where he needs to go. The moment you pull away from the filling station, dissipation occurs. As you drive, you use up the gasoline. Over time you will burn gas. The length of time from **full** to **empty** depends on how far you travel, how fast you travel, and the amount of air-conditioning or heat used. The fuel indicator slowly goes from full to empty because driving the car uses the energy the fuel provides. Eventually the car will need to be filled up again with gasoline. The filling of a car is an ongoing responsibility. In the same way, as we live life, we get drained spiritually. We go to church, have our devotions, and spend time in fellowship with other Christian believers so that we

can fill our tanks. But as we live our lives, we run empty as we expend our spiritual energy doing the work God has for us. In order to continue to do the work, we have to continue to get refilled.

Henry Drummond described the **Holy Spirit** this way - The pearl-diver lives at the bottom of the ocean by means of the pure air conveyed to him from above. **His life is entirely dependent on the life-giving Spirit.** We are down here, like the diver, to gather pearls for our Master's crown. The source of our life comes from above. (**Amen. Are you learning to cast off self reliance and put on Spirit dependence?**)

Arthur Pink has some wise words on the meaning and practical significance of the **power of the Holy Spirit**. "Through the power of the Holy Ghost." The Father is the Giver, but the Spirit is the Communicator of our graces. Though it is the Christian's duty (**our responsibility**) to be filled with joy and peace in believing and to abound in hope, yet it is only by the Spirit's enablement such can be realized (**God's provision**). Here, as everywhere in the Word, we find the kindred truths of **our accountableness** and **dependency** intimately connected. The joy, peace, and hope here are not carnal emotions or natural acquirements but **spiritual graces**, and therefore they must be **divinely imparted**. Even the promises of God will not produce these graces unless they be **divinely applied** to us. Note that it is not merely "through the operation" but "through the power" of the Holy Spirit, for there is much in us which opposes! Nor can these graces be increased or even maintained by us in our own strength—though they can be decreased by us, through grieving the Spirit (Eph 4:30). They are to be sought by prayer, by eyeing the promises, and by looking for the enablement of the Holy Spirit. That hope is but a vain fancy which is not fixed on God and inwrought by Him. "Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope" (Ps. 119:49)." (**Prayer In Hope**)

In the **RBC Booklet [The Promise of the Spirit](#)** Bill Crowder asks...

The first winter that my wife Marlene and I were married was marked by severe blizzards. I can vividly remember one Sunday when we awoke to find that the electricity had been knocked out by an ice storm. Huddled around a battery-powered radio for news on that frigid Sunday, we heard a most unusual announcement. The announcer, before giving the list of church services canceled due to the ice storm, said,

**"The following churches will be closed
due to lack of power."**

What an interesting comment! I knew what he meant, but I was struck by what he said. The idea of churches closing due to lack of power conjures up some spiritual parallels that directly tie into Jesus' promise of the Spirit. Just prior to His ascension, Jesus told His men in Acts 1:8, "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." He directly attached the coming of the Spirit to the empowering of believers. This gives us reason to examine some important issues in this concluding section.

What Is Power? The word power used by Jesus in Acts 1:8 is the Greek word *dunamis*. It is defined variously as "strength, power, or ability." Specifically, it refers to "inherent power, power residing in a thing by virtue of its nature, or which a person or thing exerts and puts forth." This spiritual power is not inherent to the believer, however. Notice very carefully that it is inherent to the Person of the Holy Spirit who resides within the believer. How does this power manifest itself in our lives? I would suggest that there are at least three (though probably more) clear ways the Holy Spirit expresses His power in the lives of the redeemed.

How does the Spirit express life in us? By causing our lives to be profoundly different from the hopeless world that surrounds us. Notice Paul's words in Romans 15:13, "*Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*" The power of the Holy Spirit provides for us the things that human effort and human religion and human righteousness could never achieve. He is there to empower our living with a glorious sense of joy, peace, and hope that can carry us through the trials and hardships that are the inevitable by-products of life in a fallen world. The power we need is found in a Person Who has been sent by the Father to bring fullness to our lives. In a world that is in mad pursuit of happiness, we can have JOY by the power of the Holy Spirit. In a world that is crying out from the grief of constant conflict, we can have true PEACE. In a world that is filled with empty despair and a bleak future, we can have a bright HOPE. Why? Because the **power of the Holy Spirit** can equip us for (**Ed**: "supernatural") life in a way that the world cannot grasp. His power can enable us to experience the things that the world craves and cannot secure, but are ours by the Spirit. This is the **ABUNDANT LIFE** Jesus spoke of (Jn 10:10)—a life that is full and rich and deep and lasting. A life that is lived by the power of the Holy Spirit

**THE TRUE CHRISTIAN'S
TRUE LIFE**

H C G Moule gives an excellent summary of Paul's great prayer writing that...

Meanwhile, let us take this benedictory prayer, as we may take it, from its instructive context, and carry it out with us into all the contexts of life. What the Apostle prayed for the Romans, in view of their controversies, he prays for us, as for them, in view of everything. Let us "stand back and look at the picture."

Here—conveyed in this strong petition—is Paul's idea of the true Christian's true life, and the true life of the true Church.

What are the elements, and what is the result ?

It is a life lived in direct contact with God "Now the God of hope fill you." He remits (sends or refers) them here (as above, Ro 15:5) from even himself to the Living God. In a sense, he sends them even from "the things fore-written," to the Living God; not in the least to disparage the Scriptures, but because the great function of the divine Word, as of the divine Ordinances, is to guide the soul into an immediate intercourse with the Lord God in His Son, and to secure it therein. God is to deal direct with the Romans. He is to manipulate, He is to fill, their being.

It is a life not starved or straitened (hemmed in, restricted in scope), **but full.** "The God of hope fill you." The disciple, and the Church, is not to live as if grace were like a stream "in the year of drought," (Jer 17:8KJV) now settled into an almost stagnant deep, then struggling with difficulty over the stones of the shallow. The man, and the Society, are to live and work in tranquil but moving strength, "rich" in the fruits of their Lord's "poverty" (2Cor 8:9); filled out of His fulness; never, spiritually, at a loss for Him; never, practically, having to do or bear except in His large and gracious power.

It is a life bright and beautiful; "filled with all joy and peace." It is to shew a surface fair with the reflected sky of Christ, Christ present, Christ to come. A sacred while open happiness and a pure internal repose is to be there, born of "His presence, in which is fulness of joy," and of the sure prospect of His Return, bringing with it "pleasures for evermore." Like that mysterious ether of which the natural philosopher tells us, this joy, this peace, found and maintained "in the Lord," is to pervade all the contents of the Christian life, its moving masses of duty or trial, its interspaces of rest or silence; not always demonstrative but always underlying, and always a living power.

It is a life of faith; "all joy and peace in your believing." That is to say, **it is a life dependent for its all upon a Person and His promises.** Its glad certainty of peace with God, of the possession of His Righteousness, is by means not of sensations and experiences, but of believing; **it comes, and stays, by taking Christ at His word.** Its power over temptation, its "victory and triumph against the devil, the world, and the flesh," is by the same means. The man, the Church, takes the Lord at His word;—"I am with you always" (Mt 28:20); "Through Me thou shalt do valiantly" (Ps 60:12KJV-note, Ps 108:13KJV-note);—and faith, that is to say, Christ trusted in practice, is "more than conqueror." (Ro 8:37KJV-note)

It is a life overflowing with the heavenly hope; "that ye may abound in the hope." Sure of the past, and of the present, it is—what out of Christ no life can be—sure of the future. The golden age, for this happy life, is in front, and is no Utopia. "Now is our salvation nearer" (Ro 13:11KJV-note); "We look for that blissful (makarian = blessed) hope, the appearing of our great God and Saviour" (Titus 2:13-note); "Them which sleep in Him God will bring with Him" (1Th 4:14-note); "We shall be caught up together (with them; we shall ever be with the Lord" (1Th 4:17-note); "They shall see His face (Rev 22:4-note); thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty (Isa 33:17KJV).'

And all this it is as a life lived "in the power of the Holy Ghost." Not by enthusiasm, not by any stimulus which self applies to self; not by resources for gladness and permanence found in independent reason or affection; but by the almighty, all-tender power of the Comforter. **"The Lord, the Life-Giver," giving life by bringing us to the Son of God, and uniting us to Him, is the Giver and strong Sustainer of the faith, and so of the peace, the joy, the hope, of this blessed life.** ([The Epistle to the Romans - Expositor's Bible Commentary](#))

W H Griffith Thomas in his chapter entitled **THE FULNESS OF LIFE-HOW IT COMES** expounds on **Romans 15:13, 14...**

A CHRISTIAN man was on his death-bed. He had spent a long life of service in the Kingdom of God, and a friend at his side was encouraging him with the thought of his approaching entrance into the Home above, and the joy of meeting his Lord after all his earnest labor and faithful service. The dying man responded with beautiful humility, "I shall be satisfied if I can but creep into heaven on my hands and knees." We can easily

understand the spirit which prompted these words; he felt that his service was as nothing compared with his need of the Mercy of God through which alone he would reach the heavenly Kingdom. At the same time there is another sense in which the words are not rightly applicable to the Christian, for St. Peter speaks of our having "an abundant entrance ministered unto us into the everlasting kingdom" (2Pe 1:11). In keeping with this St. Paul was constantly emphasizing the Christian life under such figures of speech as "wealth," "riches," "abundance," "fulness," and he prays that Christians "might be filled with all the fulness of God." He was not satisfied with a bare entrance into heaven, he wished his converts and himself to have the fullest possible Christian life and experience here below, and then to enter fully into the joy of the Lord above. This is the true Christian life, the life of fulness, depth, power and reality; the only life emphasized in the Word of God, the only life that can glorify God or satisfy His purpose concerning us.

This fulness of life is brought very definitely before us in the above passage, which deserves and will need our most careful consideration. It has no less than six aspects of the full, rich, abundant Christian life.

THE FULNESS OF GOD WHAT IT IS

The fulness of God is the fulness of joy.

"Fill you with all joy." Joy is one of the most important and prominent elements of the Christian life. It is a condition of soul which is the immediate result of our definite personal relation to Christ. There is a twofold joy in the Bible—the joy of salvation and the joy of satisfaction. The joy of salvation comes from the experience of sin forgiven, from the consciousness that the burden has been rolled away, and that all the past is covered in the righteousness of Christ. This was the experience of the jailer at Philippi, who "rejoiced, believing in God" (Acts 16). It was the restoration of this joy for which David prayed (Ps 51:12).

The joy of satisfaction is the other element of the fulness of joy. "Satisfaction!" some one answers, "is it possible to use such a word in connection with the Christian life of the present?" Should we not limit this idea of satisfaction to the life to come? Satisfied with what? Not with ourselves, nor with our own attainments or service, but satisfied with Christ. The Apostle Peter's glowing words are not to be postponed to the life to come, "whom, having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory" (1Pe 1:8). This is one of the searching and supreme tests of life—our satisfaction with our Lord. How easy it is to sing,

**Thou, O Christ, art all I want,
More than all in Thee I find**

and yet how possible it is for the words to be really meaningless and no true expression of our personal experience. God's purpose for us is fulness of joy: "Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, rejoice," (Phil. 4:4).

The fulness of God is the fulness of peace.

"Fill you with all . . . peace." This brings before us the passive, as joy gives the active side of the Christian life. As with joy, so also there is a twofold peace in the Word of God, the peace of reconciliation and the peace of restfulness. The peace of reconciliation is the foundation: "Being justified by faith we have peace with God" (Rom. v. 1). The enmity has been removed, the barriers are broken down and the soul is reconciled with God through Him Who is our peace. And then comes the peace of restfulness: "The peace of God" (Phil. iv. 7). The soul at peace with God enjoys a precious realisation of His presence as the God of peace, and restfulness arises and abides moment by moment in the heart. This again is part of the fulness of life which God intends for us in Christ Jesus, the fulness of His own peace. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee" (Isa. 36:8).

The fulness of God is the fulness of hope.

"That ye may abound in hope." Hope in the New Testament is a Christian grace wrought in the soul by the Holy Spirit. It is to be carefully distinguished from our modern use of the word as equivalent to hopefulness, just a mere matter of buoyancy of temperament. The Christian hope will undoubtedly produce hopefulness, but the two are never to be confused, much less identified. The one is the cause, the other the effect. Hope always looks on the future and is concerned with that great object which is put before us in the New Testament. Joy looks upward, peace looks inward, hope looks forward. The Christian hope is fixed on the coming of our Lord, and this is a very prominent element of New Testament teaching. It is to be feared that it does not obtain great prominence in much of present day Christianity. Most people look forward, not to the coming of the Lord, but to

death; yet the one object of expectation set before us in the New Testament is the coming of our Lord. Now-a-days, the general idea is that death will come, and the Lord may come; but Scripture reverses this and says, "Death may come, but the Lord will come." It is impossible for the Christian to look forward to death with happiness and peace. There is something in the very fact of dying which is abhorrent to the Christian man. It is not that he is afraid to die, but that he naturally shrinks from that which is ever spoken of in the Bible as man's "enemy." "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (1 Cor. 15:26). The Lord's coming, on the contrary, is a subject of joy, satisfaction, blessedness, and the contemplation of it can do nothing but good to the soul.

It is interesting to notice the place and order of "hope" in the light of what has preceded this word in our text. It is the present consciousness of joy and peace that gives us our warrant for hope. As the Apostle himself says in another place it is "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27). "Experience (produces) hope" (Ro 5:4).

The fulness of God is the fulness of goodness.(Ro 15:14)

"Ye also are full of goodness." The place of this word following the other three in order is very noteworthy. Joy, peace and hope are intended to have their personal and practical effect in producing goodness. Our experiences are intended to result in character, and if they stop short of this, there is something greatly lacking in our Christian life. Character is a settled state of goodness which comes from the experience of Christ and His grace, and if our experiences are merely intermittent our goodness will be intermittent also. What is needed above all else in the present day is goodness, character, reality. The finest testimony that can be given to any man is that which was said of Barnabas, "He was a good man" (Acts 11:24). A minister may be an indifferent preacher, or an ineffective visitor; he may be lacking in genius and great capacity, but if he is a good man this is the first and supreme factor of Christianity. "The fruit of the Spirit is . . . goodness" (Gal. 5:22).

The fulness of God is the fulness of knowledge.(Ro 15:14)

"Filled with all knowledge." The meaning of this can hardly be intellectual capacity, or even intellectual attainments. It must be that spiritual knowledge, that perception of spiritual realities which is the mark of a true and growing Christian. This spiritual perception is the result of the foregoing elements of joy, peace, hope and goodness, and it is a sure proof of spiritual growth and maturity. The latest Epistles of the three great Apostles, St. Paul, St. Peter, and St. John are very emphatic as to spiritual perception as the mark of Christian maturity. A careful consideration of the Epistles of St. Paul, known as those of his first captivity—Philippians, Ephesians and Colossians, will reveal to us the frequent occurrence of the word "knowledge" and the original term is almost always a word which implies "mature" or "thorough knowledge." The second Epistle of St. Peter is also characterised by the same word, and although it consists only of three chapters, its emphasis on knowledge is really remarkable. The word is found in all three and then the Epistle closes with the exhortation to "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour." The great Epistle of St. John, known as the first Epistle, is also full of this idea of knowledge. Indeed the word "know" may be regarded as the keynote of the whole writing. "These things have I written unto you that ye may know" (1 John v. 18). Spiritual perception is of the greatest possible importance in view of the various forms of error that are rife on every hand. It is for the lack of it that many Christians are led astray; they have not that ripe spiritual apprehension which enables them to perceive the error and to cleave to the good. The Apostle's prayer for his friends at Philippi was that "their love might abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment, and that they might distinguish things that differ" (Phil. i. 9, 10, Greek). This is our need to-day—a sense of spiritual discrimination to "prove all things, to hold fast that which is good," and to "approve those things which are excellent," because they are in accordance with the mind and will of God.

The fulness of God is the fulness of capability.(Ro 15:14)

"Able also to admonish." This is the practical outcome of all our experience, character and knowledge; they ought to be and must be put to practical account. The Christians at Rome did not keep their blessings to themselves; they had become capable ("able") and this capability expressed itself in testimony, in passing on God's truth and grace to others through the medium of lip and life. This type of Christianity is sorely needed to-day. Christian testimony is far too frequently limited to the ordained ministry, or to a few Christian workers as distinct from the large body of Christian people. It ought to be true of every genuine follower of Christ that he is "able to admonish," able to express spiritual experiences, able to bear witness to his Master's grace, able to lead a soul to Christ, able to help fellow-Christians in spiritual difficulty, able to work for the Master either at home or abroad. There would be very much less dependence upon a professional ministry in time of spiritual difficulty if Christian people as a whole were more capable of dealing with spiritual anxieties of soul. This is the crown and consummation of all our knowledge and experience, the ability to do good to others and to bless them by word and deed.

These six elements of the fulness of life should be carefully noted. Each one by itself is essential and important. Their order is also to be observed; their measure, too, must not be overlooked. Not only are we to possess them; we are to have them in their fulness.

And yet perchance some reader is saying that this is quite beyond us and utterly impossible. Are we quite sure, however, that this is so? Can we for an instant think that the Apostle Paul would pray this prayer for those Roman Christians if he did not expect an answer? God never mocks us by putting before us an impossible ideal. His "biddings are enablings," and this very passage which reveals all this wonderful fulness of blessing, reveals also its secret and shows the way thither.

THE FULNESS OF LIFE HOW IT COMES

The passage before us brings a threefold answer to this question.

We are shown the Divine Source.

"The God of hope." The fulness of life in the Christian is necessarily Divine not human. It comes from God, not from man. This title of God is very striking and occurs only in this place. "The God of hope." What does it mean? Probably in the first place it means "the God Who is the source of hope." But it may also include the idea of "The God Who is Himself hope," thus calling attention to hope as one of the characteristics of the Divine Nature. If this is the meaning, or even a part of the meaning, it is full of significance for our purpose in discovering the secret of life. We know well what hope does in connection with the teaching and training of children. If we wish a little one to undertake a task, and we show by our manner when we set the task that we expect the child to fail, we are almost guaranteeing the failure by robbing the little one of hope and encouragement. On the other hand, every true teacher knows the power of hope and encouragement in dealing with children. If we show that we expect the little one to succeed, we go far to guarantee the success. In like manner, God's attitude to His children is one of definite and powerful hope. He knows what His grace can do, if only His children are willing to receive it. He does not expect His children to fail, but to succeed. He looks down from heaven as we yield ourselves to Him, and is to us the God of hope, full of Divine hope concerning us as we live in Christ. What a joy it is to be trusted by our God! What an inspiration to holiness and service to be assured of the Divine expectation of success and blessing! Surely we come at once to one of the deepest secrets of spiritual fulness of blessing, God's trust in us, God's hope concerning us as we yield ourselves unreservedly to His all-sufficient grace and power.

We are taught the Divine Medium.

"Through the power of the Holy Ghost." All the elements of the fulness of life already considered are stored up for us in Christ, and it is through the Holy Ghost that they are bestowed upon us. Our joy is "joy in the Lord"; and the Kingdom of God is "joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 14.17). Our peace is the peace of Christ (John 14:27) and this becomes ours by the Holy Spirit. Our hope comes from the indwelling of Christ (Col. 1.27); and this is made ours by the power of the Holy Spirit (Ro v. A). Our goodness is due to the indwelling of our Lord, and this becomes ours in the power of the Holy Spirit (Gal. v.22). Our knowledge and capability are also gifts of the Risen Lord which are made ours in personal experience by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. And thus he is the Divine Medium through Whom everything comes which is needed for the fulness of life and power and blessing.

We are told of the human channel.

"In believing." On our side, Faith is the response to Divine grace. Faith brings joy and peace; these in turn lead to hope; hope develops into goodness; goodness into insight; and insight into capability and usefulness. And thus Faith is the channel and means of everything God wants us to have. When we think of hope we at once realise that it is impossible without faith. God desires us to love Him supremely, but we cannot love a God Whom we distrust. God wishes our obedience, but it is impossible to obey one Whom we deny. God asks for our service, but we cannot serve a God Whom we discredit. Faith is at the root and foundation of everything in the Christian life.

Faith as revealed to us in Scripture is of a twofold nature; there is the faith that asks and the faith that accepts; the faith that appeals and the faith that appropriates. This is probably the reason why prayer and thanksgiving are so often associated in the writings of St. Paul. They represent to us the two aspects of faith. Prayer is the faith that asks; thanksgiving is the faith that takes. We lose a great deal in our Christian life by failure to distinguish between these two aspects of faith. We keep on asking, when we ought to commence accepting.

"Believe that ye have received, and ye shall have" (Mark 11:24). Two intimate friends were once lunching together, and after the host had said the usual grace, "For what we are about to receive, may the Lord make us truly thankful," his friend asked him when he was expecting to have that prayer answered. "What do you mean," was the reply. "Why," was the rejoinder, "to my certain knowledge you have been praying for the last twenty-five years to be made thankful: is it not about time that you were thankful?" This friend was trying to illustrate the difference between praying to be made thankful, and saying, "I am thankful." In the same way in the Christian life there comes a time when we should cease asking and commence obtaining. This is the value of the distinction between God's promises and God's facts. The promises are to be pleaded and their fulfilment expected. The facts are to be accepted and their blessings at once used. When we read, "My grace is sufficient for thee," it is not a promise to be pleaded, but a fact to be at once accepted and enjoyed. When we say "The Lord is my shepherd," we are not dealing with a promise or the groundwork of prayer, we are concerned with one of the present realities of the Christian experience. A man kneels down before leaving home in the morning and asks God for grace to be kept every moment that day. Then he rises at once and goes about his work. Has he done all his duty in thus simply asking for grace? There was something more and better that he should have done. He should have given a moment more after asking, for the purpose of taking, by saying to God, "O my God and Father, I believe that Thou art now giving me the grace that I have asked for; I here and no A take Thy grace." As the hymn aptly puts it,

**I take,
He undertakes**

The faith that takes is the secret of power and blessing, and the more trust of this kind we exercise the more power and the more fulness will come into our Christian life; and day by day we shall live a life of faith and shall say with the Apostle, "I can do all things through Him who is empowering me" (Phil. iv. 18: Greek), because we are able to say, "The life that I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God Who loved me and gave Himself for me." ([The Christian Life and How to Live It - online](#))

A W Pink - PRAYER IN HOPE ROMANS 15:13

IN HIS PRECEDING PRAYER the Apostle Paul had made request that the God of patience and consolation would grant the saints at Rome to be "like-minded one toward another, according to Christ Jesus" (Rom. 15:5) so that amity and concord might prevail among them. He had followed this by reminding them that the Redeemer's mission embraced not only the Jews but also the Gentiles, that the eternal purpose of God respected an elect portion from both parts of the human race (vv. 8–9). In support of this statement he quoted no less than four Old Testament passages, taken respectively from the Law, the Psalms, and the Prophets (the principal sections into which the divine oracles were divided; see Luke 24:44), each of which foretold that the Gentiles would take their place alongside the Jews in worshiping the Lord. Thus the Hebrew Christians need have no hesitation in welcoming believing Gentiles into their midst. The apostle then concluded this section of his epistle, by again supplicating the throne of grace on their behalf, thereby evidencing his deep solicitude for them, and intimating that God alone could impart the grace necessary for obedience to the injunctions given them.

Vital instruction is to be obtained by attending closely to the connection between Romans 15:13 and the verses which immediately precede it. In the context Paul had cited a number of Old Testament passages which announced the salvation of the Gentiles and their union with believing Jews. Now the prophecies of Scripture are to be viewed in a threefold manner. First, as proofs of their divine inspiration, demonstrating as they do the omniscience of their Author in unerringly forecasting things to come. Second, as revelations of the will of God, announcements of what He has eternally decreed, which must therefore come to pass. Third, as possessing a moral and practical bearing upon us: where they are predictions of judgment, they are threatenings and therefore warnings of the objects to be avoided and the evils to be shunned—as the before announced destruction of the papacy bids us have nought to do with that system; but where they consist of predictions of divine blessing, they are promises for faith to lay hold of and for hope to anticipate before their actual fulfillment. Paul is viewing them in this third respect.

Our Use of the Divine Promises

Here the apostle shows us what use we are to make of the divine promises, namely, turn them into believing prayer, requesting God to make them good. As God draws near to us in promise, it is our privilege to draw near to Him in petition. Those prophecies were infallible assurances that God intended to show mercy to the Gentiles. No sooner had Paul quoted them than he bowed his knees before their Giver, thereby teaching the

Roman saints—and us—how to turn the promises to practical account, instructing them what to ask for. In like manner when he would have the Ephesian saints beg God to enlighten their understandings, that they might know the great things of the gospel, he set them an example by praying for that very thing (1:17–18). So here; it was as though he said, “Thou hast promised that the Gentiles should hope in Thee [v. 12]. Thou art ‘the God of hope.’ Graciously work in these saints so that they ‘may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost,’ and that they too may from my example be constrained to supplicate Thee and plead this promise for the attainment of this very blessing.”

That the reader may have a more definite view of the connection, we will now quote the verse before our prayer: “And again, Esaias [Isaiah] saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust.” That is taken from one of the great Messianic prophecies, recorded in Isaiah 11. Whatever may or may not be its ultimate accomplishment, Paul was moved to make known to us that that prediction was even then receiving fulfillment. Literally the Greek reads, “In Him shall the Gentiles hope,” and it is thus rendered correctly in the Revised Version. Though intimately connected, as Hebrews 11:1 shows, there is a real difference between faith and hope. Faith is more comprehensive in its range, for it believes all that God has said concerning the past, present, and future—the threatenings as well as the promises—but hope looks solely to a future good. Faith has to do with the Word promising; hope is engaged with the thing promised. Faith is a believing that God will do as He has said; hope is a confident looking forward to the fulfillment of the promise.

The Remote Context

Having sought to point out the instructive connection between the apostle’s prayer and the verses immediately preceding, a word now on its remoter context. This prayer concludes that section of the epistle begun at Romans 14:1, on unhappy division in the company of the Roman saints. Without taking sides and expressly declaring which was in the wrong, Paul had laid down broad and simple principles for each to act upon, so that if their conduct was regulated thereby, Christian love and Christian liberty would alike be conserved. He set before them the example of their Master, and then showed that both Jews and Gentiles were given equal place in the Word of prophecy. To borrow the lovely language of Moule, “He clasps them impartially to his own heart in this precious and pregnant benediction, beseeching for both sides, and for all their individuals, a wonderful fullness of those blessings in which most speedily and most surely the spirit of their strife would expire.” The closer a company of Christians are drawn to their Lord, the closer they are drawn to one another.

“Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.” The “God of hope” is both the Object and the Author of hope. He is the One who has prepared the blessings which are to be the objects of our hope, who has set them before us in the gospel, and who by the power of the Spirit enables us to understand and believe the gospel, which awakens motives and sets in action principles that ensure hope. The burden of Paul’s prayer was that the saints might abound in this spiritual grace, and therefore he addressed the Deity accordingly. As Matthew Henry pointed out, “It is good in prayer to fasten upon those names, titles and attributes of God which are most suitable to the errand we come upon and will best serve to encouragement concerning it.” A further reason why the apostle thus addressed the Deity appears from the preceding verse, where it was announced of the Lord, “In him shall the Gentiles hope.” More literally our verse reads, “Now the God of that [or ‘the’] hope”—the One who is the Inspirer of all expectations of blessing.

“The God of Hope”

This expression “the God of [that] hope” had special pertinency and peculiar suitability to the Gentiles—who are mentioned by name no less than four times in the verses immediately preceding. Its force is the more apparent if we consider it in the light of Ephesians 2:11–12, where Gentile believers are reminded that in time past they “were without Christ [devoid of any claim upon Him], being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world”—without any knowledge of Him, without a written revelation from Him. But the incarnation of Christ had radically altered this. The grand design of His mission was not restricted to Palestine but was worldwide, for He shed His atoning blood for sinners out of all peoples and tribes and, upon the triumphant conclusion of His mission, commissioned His servants to preach the gospel to all nations. Hence the apostle had reminded the Roman saints that God said, “Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people” (v. 10). He had now become to them “the God of hope.”

If God had not revealed Himself in the Word of truth we should be without any foundation of hope. But the Scriptures are windows of hope to us. This is evident from the fourth verse of our chapter: “For whatsoever

things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (v. 4). Thus the God of hope is revealed in His living oracles with the design of inspiring hope. If we would be filled with faith, joy, and peace it must be by believing what: is presented to us in Holy Writ. Before we have any true inward ground of hope, God Himself as revealed in the Bible must be our confidence. Through God's Word the apostle discovered there was hope for the Gentiles; and so may the most burdened heart find solid consolation therein if he will search and believe its contents. Every divine promise is calculated to inspire the believer with hope. Therein is to be found a sure foundation, on which to rest.

Let us now consider the petition the apostle here presented to the God of hope: that He would "fill you with all joy and peace in believing." This is to be considered first in its local bearing. The phrase "in believing" looks back to those blessed portions of the Old Testament which had just been quoted. Paul prayed that God would graciously enable those saints to lay hold of such promises and conduct themselves in harmony therewith. We quote Charles Hodge: "In the fulfillment of that promise [v. 12] Christ came, and preached salvation to those who were near and to those who were afar off (Eph. 2:17). As both classes had been thus kindly received by the condescending Savior and united into one community, they should receive and love each other as brethren, laying aside all censoriousness and contempt, neither judging nor despising one another." In other words, the apostle longed that both should be occupied alike with Christ. Let faith and hope be duly operative, and joy and peace would displace discord and strife.

Regarding this prayer of the Apostle Paul, Handley Moule wrote: "Let that prayer be granted, in its pure depth and height, and how could the 'weak brother' look with quite his old anxiety on the problems suggested by the dishes at a meal and by the dates of the Rabbinic calendar? And could 'the strong' bear any longer to lose his joy in God by an assertion, full of self, of his own insight and liberty? Profoundly happy and at rest in the Lord, whom they embraced by faith as their Righteousness and Life, and whom they anticipated in hope as their coming Glory; filled through their whole consciousness by the indwelling Spirit with a new insight into Christ, they would fall into each other's embrace, in Him. They would be much more ready when they met to speak 'concerning the King' than to begin a new stage of their not very elevating discussion. How many a church controversy now, as then, would die of inanition, leaving room for living truth, if the disputants could only gravitate, as to their always most beloved theme, to the praises and glories of their redeeming Lord Himself!"

As our Lord's prayer in John 17 was not confined to His disciples then but reached forward to "them also which shall believe" (v. 20), so this prayer of Paul's is suited to all the children of God. "The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing." Let it be duly noted that Paul did not hesitate to ask for these particular blessings. We make that remark because we very much fear that some of our readers are well-nigh afraid to cry to God for such things; but they need not be. Fullness of spiritual joy does not unfit its possessor to live his life in this world, nor does fullness of peace produce presumption and carnal security. If such experiences were dangerous, as Satan would fain have us conclude, the apostle would not have sought them on behalf of his fellow Christians. From his making request for these very blessings we learn they are eminently desirable and furnished warrant for us to supplicate for the same, both for ourselves and our brethren.

The Apostle's Example

The example which the apostle has here set before us evidences not only that it is desirable for Christians to be filled with joy and peace, but also that such a delightful experience is attainable. C. H. Spurgeon stated, "We may be filled with joy and peace believing, and may abound in hope. There is no reason why we should hang our heads and live in perpetual doubt. We may not only be somewhat comforted, but we may be full of joy; we may not only have occasional quiet, but we may dwell in peace, and delight ourselves in the abundance of it. These great privileges are attainable or the apostle would not have made them the subject of prayer ... The sweetest delights are still grown in Zion's gardens, and are to be enjoyed by us; and shall they be within our reach and not be grasped? Shall a life of joy and peace be attainable, and shall we miss it through unbelief? God forbid. Let us as believers resolve that whatsoever of privilege is to be enjoyed we will enjoy it."

Once again we appeal to the context, for clear proof is found there that it is God's revealed will for His saints to be a rejoicing people. In Romans 15:10 the apostle cited a verse from the Old Testament which says, "Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people." Israel had been given no monopoly of joy; those whom God had purposed to call from out the nations would also share therein. If there was joy for Israel when redeemed from the house of bondage and led through the Red Sea, much more so is there joy for those delivered from the power of Satan and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son. Observe that the passage quoted is not in

the form of a promise, but is a specific precept: regenerated Gentiles are expressly bidden to “rejoice.” Nor did the apostle stop there. As though anticipating our slowness to enter into our privileges, he added, “And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles” (v. 11)—not merely the most eminent among them but all alike. Where there is praise there is joy, for joy is a component part of it. Thus one who professes to be a Christian and at the same time complains that he is devoid of joy and peace, acknowledges that he is failing to obey these precepts.

Degrees of Blessing

“The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace” intimates three things. First, there are degrees of these blessings. A few Christians enjoy them fully, but the great majority (to their shame) experience but a taste thereof. Each of us should look to God for the fullest communication of these privileges. Second, the breadth of the apostle’s words, as also his “that ye may abound in hope,” manifest how his heart was enlarged toward the saints and what comprehensive supplies of grace he sought for them. Third, thus we honor God in prayer: by counting on the freeness of His grace. There is no straitness in Him, and there should be none in us. Since we are coming to heaven’s King, let us “large petitions with us bring.” Has He not given us encouragement to do so? Having given His beloved Son for us and to us, “how shall he not with him also freely give us all things” (Rom. 8:32)! Has He not invited us to “drink, yea, drink abundantly” (Song 5:1)! Then let our requests be in accord with His invitation; let us not approach Him as though He were circumscribed like ourselves.

Privileges and Duties

The fact that the apostle prayed for these blessings indicated not only that they are desirable and attainable, but also that it is incumbent upon us to enter into possession of them. We cannot now attempt proof, but will here state the fact that the things we may ask God to give us are, at the same time, obligations upon ourselves. Privileges and duties cannot be separated. It is the duty of the Christian to be joyous and peaceful. If any should question that statement, we would ask him to consider the opposite; surely none would affirm that it is a spiritual duty to be miserable and full of doubts! We do not at all deny that there is another side to the Christian’s life, that there is much both within and without the believer to make him mourn. Nor is that at all inconsistent. The apostle avowed himself to be “sorrowful,” yet in the very same breath he added “yet always rejoicing” (2 Cor. 6:10). Most assuredly those who claim to be accepted in the Beloved and journeying to everlasting bliss bring reproach on Him whose name they bear and cause His gospel to be evil spoken of, if they are doleful and dejected and spend most of their time in the slough of despond.

Blessings Obtained by Prayer

But we proceed one step further. The apostle here made known how these most desirable and requisite blessings may be obtained. First, they are to be sought in prayer, as is evident from Paul’s example. Second, they can only be attained as the heart is occupied with “the God of hope,” that is, the promising God, for the things we are to hope for are revealed in His promises. Third, these blessings come to us “in believing,” in faith’s laying hold of the things promised. “Fill you with all joy and peace in believing.” Many seek, though vainly, to reverse that order. They will not believe God till they feel they have joy and peace, which is like requiring flowers before the bulb has been set in the ground. You ask, “But how can I have joy and peace while engaged in such a conflict—mostly a losing one—with indwelling sin?” Answer: You cannot successfully oppose indwelling sin if you are joyless and full of doubts, for “the joy of the Lord is your strength” (Nehemiah 8:10). There is no genuine joy and peace except “in believing,” and in exact proportion to our faith will be joy and peace.

“That ye may abound in hope.” This clause gave the Roman saints and us the reason why the apostle made the above request, or the design he had in view for them. They were established as to the past, joyous in the present. He would have them to be confident as to the future. The best is yet to be, for as yet the Christian has received but an earnest of his inheritance, and the more he is occupied with the inheritance itself the better equipped he will be to press forward to it, through all difficulties and obstacles, for hope is one of the most powerful motives or springs of action (Heb. 6:11–12). In our day some of the Lord’s people need to be informed that the word hope has quite a different meaning in Scripture from that accorded to it in everyday speech. On the lips of most people “hope” signifies little more than a bare wish, and often with considerable fear that it will not be realized, being nothing better than a timid and hesitant desire that something may be obtained. But in Scripture (e.g., Romans 8:25; Hebrews 6:18–19) hope signifies a firm expectation and confident anticipation of the things God has promised. As joy and peace increase “in believing” so too does hope.

The Power of the Holy Spirit

“Through the power of the Holy Ghost.” The Father is the Giver, but the Spirit is the Communicator of our graces. Though it is the Christian’s duty (**our responsibility**) to be filled with joy and peace in believing and to abound in hope, yet it is only by the Spirit’s enablement such can be realized (**God’s provision**). Here, as everywhere in the Word, we find the kindred truths of **our accountableness** and **dependency** intimately connected. The joy, peace, and hope here are not carnal emotions or natural acquirements but **spiritual graces**, and therefore they must be **divinely imparted**. Even the promises of God will not produce these graces unless they be **divinely applied** to us. Note that it is not merely “through the operation” but “through the power” of the Holy Spirit, for there is much in us which opposes! Nor can these graces be increased or even maintained by us in our own strength—though they can be decreased by us, through grieving the Spirit (Eph 4:30). They are to be sought by prayer, by eyeing the promises, and by looking for the enablement of the Holy Spirit. That hope is but a vain fancy which is not fixed on God and inwrought by Him. “Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope” (Ps. 119:49).

George Morrison...Joy and Peace in Believing

Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing--Rom 15:13

It is a question we ought to ask ourselves, in our quiet hours of meditation, whether we really know the joy and peace which are the benediction of our text. It is a great thing to be resigned amid the various buffetings of life. Resignation is better than rebellion. But resignation, however good it is, is not peculiarly a Christian virtue; it marks the stoic rather than the Christian. The Christian attitude towards the ills of life is something more triumphant than acceptance. It has an exultant note that resignation lacks. It is acceptance with a song in it. It is such a reaction to experience as suggests the certainty of victory--the victory that overcomes the world. It is a searching question for us all, then, whether we truly know this joy and peace. Does it characterize our spiritual life? Is it evident in our discipleship? And that not only on the Lord's day and in the sanctuary, but in our routine dealings with the world.

Joy and Peace in Daily Life

Contrast, for instance, joy and peace in believing with joy and peace in working. Many who read this are happily familiar with joy and peace in working. It is true that work may be very uncongenial; there are those who hate the work they are engaged in. There are seasons, too, for many of us, when our strength may be unequal to the task. But speaking generally, what a good deal of joy and peace flow into the lives of men and women in prosecuting their appointed task. Again, think of joy and peace in loving; how evident is that in many a home. What a peaceful and happy place a home becomes when love lies at the basis of it all. The splendid attitude of children, their gladness that makes others glad, spring not only from the heart of childhood, but from the love that encircles them at home. Now Paul does not speak of joy and peace in working, nor does he speak of joy and peace in loving. His theme here is different from these: it is joy and peace in believing. And the question is, do we, who know these other things, know this in our experience of life and amid the jangling of our days.

The Joy and Peace of God Is for Every Christian

Think for a moment of the men and women to whom St. Paul originally wrote these words. Their cares and sorrows were just as real to them as our cares and sorrows are to us. They were called to be saints, and yet they were not saints. They were very far from being saints. Some were slaves, and some were city shopkeepers, and some were mothers in undistinguished homes. Yet Paul, when he writes to them, makes no exceptions. This blessing was for everyone of them. It never occurs to him that there might be anybody incapacitated for this joy and peace. We are so apt to think that an inward state of mind like this can never be possible for us. We have anxieties we cannot banish; we have temperaments we cannot alter. But just as Paul never dreamed there were exceptions in the various temperaments he was addressing, so the Holy Spirit who inspired the words never dreams there are exceptions now. This is for me. It is for you. It is for everybody who knows and loves the Lord. Not rebellion--not even resignation when life is hard and difficult and sorrowful- but something with the note of triumph in it, a song like that which Paul and Silas sang, a peace that the world can never give--and cannot take away.

The Marriage of Joy and Peace

Lest anyone should misread this inward attitude that is the peculiar possession of believers, note how here, as elsewhere in the Scripture, joy and peace are linked together. There is a joy that has no peace in it. It is feverish, tumultuous, unsettled. It is too aggressive to be the friend of rest; too wild to have any kinship with repose. Its true companionship is with excitement, and, like other passions, it grows by what it feeds on, ever

demanding a more powerful stimulus and at last demanding it in vain. There is a peace that has no joy in it. "They make a solitude and call it peace." It is like a dull and sluggish river moving through an uninteresting country. But the beautiful thing is that on the page of Scripture as in the experience of the trusting soul, joy and peace are linked in closest union. The Kingdom of Heaven is not meat and drink; it is righteousness and joy and peace. The fruit of the Spirit is not love and joy alone; it is love and joy and peace. And our Lord in His last great discourse, when He declares His legacy of peace, closes with the triumphant note of joy. "These things have I spoken unto you" (and He had been speaking of His peace) "that your joy might be full." Whom God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. There is a joy that has no peace in it. There is a peace that is dull and dead and joyless. But the mark of the followers of the Lord is the mystical marriage union of the two. It is joy and peace in believing.

And how eminently fitted is the Gospel message to sustain this fine reaction on experience. The Gospel is good news; it is the most joyful news that ever broke upon the ear of man. Sweet is the message of returning spring after the cold and dreariness of winter. Sweet is the message of the morning light after a night of restlessness or pain. But a thousand times sweeter, a thousand times more wonderful, is the message which has been ours since we were children and which will be ours when the last shadows fall. Do we believe it? That is the vital question. Do we hold to it through the shadows and the buffetings? Do we swing it like a lamp which God has lit over the darkest mile our feet have got to tread? Then, like joy and peace in working and in loving (with which we are all perfectly familiar), we shall experience with all the saints joy and peace in believing.

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The Pledge and Power of a Promised Hope (Romans 15:13) - When the Norwegian explorer [Fridtjof Nansen](#) left for the North Pole in 1893, he took with him a strong, fast carrier pigeon. For many difficult months, Nansen explored the desolate Arctic regions. One day during that time, he penned a tiny message, attached it to the pigeon, and prepared to release the bird to travel the 2,000 miles back to Norway. Nansen took the trembling bird in his hand and flung her upward into the foreboding atmosphere. She circled three times and then headed south — a thousand miles over ice and another thousand over the ocean. When the bird finally arrived at the Nansen home, the explorer's wife knew her husband was safe.

Similarly, the heavenly Dove, the Holy Spirit (Mt 3:16, Mk 1:10, Lk 3:22, Jn 1:32), brought **encouragement** (**Ed**: The essence of the meaning of His Name "Paraclete"-see related words parakaleo and paraklesis) and **hope** to the early Christians on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1, 2, 3, 4). Before the Savior left this earth, He promised to send them a Helper, a Comforter (Jn 14:16, 17, 26, 15:26, 27, 16:7, 8, 9, 10, 11).

Today the Holy Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are God's children (Ro 8:16-note). He assures us that [All Is Well \(Great song - take a moment and really listen to the encouraging words sung by Robin Mark\)](#) —Paul R. Van Gorder

May God open the eyes of our heart to the great truth that...

**Christ departed
so that
His Spirit could be imparted.**

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The English poet Alexander Pope said, "Hope springs eternal in the human breast, man never is but always to be blessed." As Christians, we know there is only one sure and abiding source of hope, and that is God (cp 1Ti 1:1 = "*God our Savior, and of Christ Jesus our hope*"). If hope originated in ourselves, we would be cast into the depths of despair because life's complex problems have a way of squeezing every last ounce of it from our hearts. But when we trust God, hope abounds by the power of the Holy Spirit.

In his book *Live With Your Emotions*, Hazen G. Werner quotes part of a letter from a woman who had run out of hope. She wrote,

A vile and ugly sin had dogged my way for years. My soul had been eclipsed in darkness. I began to feel I would never be emancipated from its grasp. Then one evening in the midst of my despair, I felt the impulse to say, 'Thank you, God, anyway,' and for a moment it was light. I said to myself, 'That must be the way.' I began to thank Him still more, and the light continued and grew, and for a whole evening I was relieved of my burden.

What that woman seemingly stumbled onto by accident, the psalmist (of Psalm 42) knew from experience. The power of gratitude can lift the weight of the most pressing trial. Turning the gaze of his soul heavenward, he saw God as an inexhaustible source of hope.

When we get discouraged, we can talk to ourselves as David did: "Why are you cast down, O my soul? . . . Hope in God" (Psalm 42:5-[note](#)). No matter how dark the path, thank God for Himself. It will open a window to heaven and let in a ray of hope. —D. J. DeHaan.

**Hope, like an anchor,
is fixed on the unseen.**

(See Hebrews 6:19, 20-note)

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Prepare to Live (Romans 15:13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19) - In 1931, Jane Whyte felt she was nearing the end of her life. Her husband Alexander, the famous Scottish preacher, had died 10 years earlier. As she looked at the world around her, she was depressed by the moral and political chaos. There seemed to be no reason for her to go on, nothing for her to do.

At dinner one evening, she sat next to a man who sensed her dejection. "What is your greatest concern?" he asked. "I'm preparing to die," said Mrs. Whyte. "Why not prepare to live?" he suggested.

That was the question Mrs. Whyte needed to hear to break the deadlock in her life. She began to see that God wanted her to live and to touch others for Him. Her attitude changed and within a year she led a Christian outreach team on a mission to Geneva, Switzerland. That trip profoundly affected the lives of many people.

Life can seem overwhelming at times, but God offers us hope. Paul wrote, "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (Ro 15:13).

Regardless of your age or circumstances, don't despair and "prepare to die." Believers in Christ can prepare to live—filled with hope, joy, and peace. — David C. McCasland ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The hope we have in Jesus Christ
Replaces all despair;
He fills us with His joy and peace
And shows His love and care.—Sper

No one is hopeless who hopes in God.

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Are You Full? (Ecclesiastes 6:7-12, Romans 15:13) - As a boy, I laughed and cried as I read *The Adventures Of Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn*. I gave little thought to the author of these books, though, until I saw a dramatized version of Mark Twain's life.

Twain had his share of tragedy. He blamed himself for his younger brother's death in a steamboat accident at age 20, and for the death of his only son, who died from diphtheria at 19 months. He grieved bitterly over the deaths of two of his daughters—one from meningitis at age 23 and one from a heart attack at age 29.

But instead of turning to God, Twain became bitter and pessimistic. When he died at 74, he was desperately lonely, unhappy, and hopeless.

Mark Twain had an emptiness that could not be satisfied with money and fame. His success as a writer only increased his misery and sense of loss. His life illustrates the folly of living without God, which is described in Ecclesiastes 6:7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. If only he had trusted Christ for salvation and looked to Him for comfort and fulfillment!

Have life's hardships left you feeling empty and bitter, or have they strengthened your relationship with God and made you better? Turn in faith to Christ, and "the God of hope [will] fill you with all joy and peace" (Romans 15:13). — Herbert Vander Lugt

The sun that hardens clay to brick
Can soften wax to shape and mold;
So too life's trials will harden some,
While others purify as gold. —Sper

Life's trials should make us better—not bitter.

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Happiness And Faith (Romans 8:28-39) - The chorus of the old hymn "At The Cross" concludes with these cheerful words: "And now I am happy all the day!" I don't know about you, but I can't honestly say that just because I know Jesus as my Savior I'm happy all day. I'm a rather optimistic person and I don't let much get me down, but some circumstances don't warm my heart and make me smile.

Troubles may make us wonder: Isn't our faith supposed to make us happy all the time? Shouldn't Jesus shelter us from harm and danger?

Some people teach these things, but the Bible doesn't. God's Word makes it clear that we will have trouble. In Romans 8, for example, the apostle Paul talked frankly about tough times we could face (Ro 8:35, 36, 37, 38, 39). The fact is, Jesus doesn't protect us from all trouble, but His love and His companionship guide us as we go through it.

A more realistic attitude than being "happy all the day" is one stated by a Christian who said, "Now that I'm saved, I'm happier when I am down than I was when I was happy before I was saved."

With Jesus Christ, we can have real joy and make it through even the bad times. — Dave Branon

The hope we have in Jesus Christ
Brings joy into our heart;
And when we know the love of God,
His peace He will impart. --Sper

**Happiness depends on happenings,
but joy depends on Jesus.**

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Health-giving Hope (1Peter 1:13-21, Romans 15:13) - It is well-known that our emotions can have a profound effect on our bodies. And the condition of our bodies can affect our emotions.

For example, a 1997 article in the journal published by the American Heart Association points to the negative physical consequences of hopelessness. It essentially said that those who had experienced extreme feelings of despair had a 20-percent greater increase in arteriosclerosis (hardening of the arteries) over a 4-year period. Other studies have also connected hopelessness with heart disease, heart attacks, and death.

The relationship between one's emotional well-being and physical condition, however, is not a modern discovery. In the Old Testament book of Proverbs, we read that "a merry heart does good, like medicine" (Pr 17:22), and that the wisdom found in God's words "are life to those who find them, and health to all their flesh" (Pr 4:22).

A proper relationship to God and His Word can benefit us spiritually, physically, and emotionally. The central concern of the gospel is to bring us into a right relationship with God through faith in Christ. Its blessed byproduct is an abundant life filled with health-promoting hope—the assurance of total forgiveness of sins and eternal life with Christ. — Vernon C. Grounds

God's Word promotes the body's health,
It soothes the ache of guilt and shame;
For Jesus died to bear our sin,
To give new hope in His blest name. —D. De Haan

Hope in the heart puts a smile on the face.