

MR. MOODY'S BIBLE CLASS

A Twelve-Part Study in the Doctrines of the Christian Faith

by

Dwight Lyman Moody

Mr. Moody's Bible Class" was a special feature published in *The Ladies' Home Journal*, a popular women's magazine of the 1890s. For twelve months beginning in November 1896, evangelist D.L. Moody published Bible studies that defined the principles of the Christian faith and encouraged readers to engage in daily Scripture reading.

Mr. Moody designed these studies for both individual reflection and group discussion. Whether you're studying alone or with others, take time to read the Scripture passages referenced and answer the reflection questions honestly before God.

These studies are ideal for personal devotions, small group Bible studies, Sunday school classes, or anyone seeking to deepen their understanding of foundational Christian doctrine.

The Scripture quotations are from the King James Version of the Holy Bible.

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LESSON EIGHT

THE CHRISTIAN'S HOPE

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Although faith and hope are very closely connected, they should be clearly distinguished. Faith has work to perform today; hope cheers faith on the way, and points to rewards of service. Faith comes by hearing, the Apostle Paul tells us, while hope comes by experience. (Romans 10:17) Faith accepts the gift of promise, and hope guards the sacred treasure.

Hope confidently expects the fulfillment of promises in the future. The Bible has much to say about hope, but it never uses the term to mean uncertainty or doubt. The Bible always uses it in the sense of implicit confidence in the fulfillment of the promise upon which it rests.

"Faith accepts the gift of promise, and hope guards the sacred treasure."

It is a wrong use of the Scriptural term for anyone to *hope* that they are a Christian, just as it would be absurd for me to hope that I am an

American. That is a fact. I do not hope to be something that I know I am. I may hope always to be a loyal citizen of my country, and, in the sense of truly believing that my patriotism will keep me loyal, I am hoping rightly.

And thus, while we know we are Christians, we may hope, through faith, to be kept from temptation by Him who has redeemed us from sin.

HOPE IS ESSENTIAL TO THE SOUL

There are three classes in the world regarding their relations to hope:

1. Those who have no hope;
2. Those who have a false hope; and
3. Those who have a true hope.

It is providential that those who belong to the first class are not numerous. Hope is as essential to the human soul as faith is to society. A life without hope becomes an unendurable misery, a burden too grievous to be borne.

In the latter days of pagan Rome, people recognized in their gods the reflection of their own weak natures and—realizing the emptiness of their hope—they gave themselves over to the dictates of their wanton hearts. When wearied of life, they were advised by many of their wisest teachers to drown their despair in the forgetfulness of suicide.

Even in our own day the great army of suicides is chiefly recruited from those who have no hope. Day by day the newspapers chronicle the wreck of some poor life driven by hopelessness on the rocks of suicide. Oh, that people would look to the right source for hope: to Him who never turned a deaf ear to the cry of despair or refused to aid the

neediest who came to Him for help. It was He who came “not to destroy men's lives, but to save them.” (Luke 9:56)

What we all need is a hope that will stand the test in the hour of adversity—when everything about us seems full of doubt and uncertainty.

FALSE HOPE IS WORSE THAN NO HOPE

The second class, or those who cherish false hopes, are unlike the first class in that they are very numerous. They are not limited to the so-called dark corners of the earth but are found even in the most enlightened Christian communities.

Now, a false hope is worse than no hope at all. A man who is hopeless may be induced to accept a true hope, but one who has a false hope must first be shown that his hope is false before he will accept a true one.

“A false hope is worse than no hope at all.”

How carefully people examine titles to property that they may purchase, and how exacting they are regarding all the evidence given. And you would say a person was mad who invested his worldly possessions in property of which they were wholly ignorant. How much more unreasonable, then, to build your eternal hopes without a firm belief in the promises of your Redeemer.

VAIN HOPING IN THE HOUR OF EXTREMITY

During the Civil War a young man in Pennsylvania was condemned to death. The man expected to be pardoned and was resting on that hope. The papers were full of statements that Governor Curtin would pardon the young man.

One day Governor Curtin met Mr. George H. Stuart (the noted philanthropist) on the street, and said, "Stuart, you know this man who is sentenced to death. He is entertaining a hope that I am going to pardon him, and I can't do it. Now, go and tell him."

Mr. Stuart afterward told me that it was the hardest duty he had ever performed, but it was an act of mercy. When he entered the cell, the prisoner rushed to him and cried, "Mr. Stuart, you are a good man, I know you bring me a pardon."

Mr. Stuart did not know what to answer, but he summoned courage and told the young man the truth. The man fainted at Mr. Stuart's feet when he found his false hope taken away, but it prepared the way to tell him where he could find a true and lasting hope.

DANGER OF BUILDING ON FALSE HOPES

False hopes are apparently all-sufficient until the testing time, when they fail. Many people found their hope on their neighbor's weakness or their own conceit.

People say to me, "I think I am as good as so-and-so," or, "I'm doing as well as I know how." They forget that a hope, to be real or true, must rest on something outside of oneself.

I am like a man trying to build a house without a foundation if I think that anything about myself is a sufficiently secure or lasting ground on which to found my hopes.

Every thief believes they will escape detection; every drunkard builds on a false hope that they are strong enough to stop at any time; every defaulter believes they can repay what they have overdrawn. These are false hopes, because—not built on a firm foundation—they are like the “foolish man which built his house upon the sand.” (Matthew 7:24–27)

THE INDIVIDUAL MUST LIVE HIS OWN LIFE

Many build their hopes on the piety of their parents. But a person's relations to God are independent of all others. Eli's sons were punished for their sins, and David's family was wrecked through their own passions. It is a sacred birthright and a privilege—not to be thought of lightly—to have godly parents, but it is not a firm ground on which to hope. Even wisdom that does not have its foundation on the fear of God is nothing but “vexation of spirit.” (Ecclesiastes 1:14; 2:11)

Turn to the opinion of the King of Israel, whose wisdom has become proverbial, and whose fame is undimmed by the ages: “For in much wisdom is much grief; and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.” (Ecclesiastes 1:18)

HOPE IS THE SILVER LINING TO EVERY CLOUD

Hope is the silver lining to every dark cloud in the Christian life, and brings with it the ever-radiant presence of the Sun of Righteousness. It is this fact that makes Christianity the religion of gladness.

"Hope is the silver lining to every dark cloud in the
Christian Life."

I remember hearing Dr. Andrew Bonar once make the statement that "everything before a child of God was to be glorious." At once I made a study of the Christian's future and found the statement to be literally true. Peter tells us that already we are "partakers of the glory that shall be revealed," and Paul asserts that when "Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." (1 Peter 5:1 and Colossians 3:4)

These bodies, now so full of infirmities, are to be raised again in glory, and "be fashioned like unto His glorious body." (Philippians 3:21) Our future home, the "New Jerusalem," will have no night nor darkness, because the "glory of God" will abide in it. (Revelation 22:5) And we shall then see Him face to face, "by whom we now rejoice in hope of the glory of God." (Romans 5:2)

There is, then, good reason for the Christian to live in bright anticipation of future joy, as well as the assurance that here on earth all things are subject to a loving Heavenly Father, who directs everything for the best interests of those who trust Him.

NO REPENTANCE BEYOND THE GRAVE

Then some look to an opportunity for repentance beyond this life. Such a hope has no encouragement in Scripture. The Bible teaches that "now

is the accepted time,” and again that “when a wicked man dieth, his expectation shall perish: and the hope of unjust men perisheth.” (2 Corinthians 6:2 and Proverbs 11:7)

Even hope in our church membership is vain. There was probably no more conspicuous church member in Jerusalem than the Pharisee who made such a parade of his temple devotions. He thanked God that he was “not as other men,” that he gave so largely for the Lord's work, and was such an exemplary member of society. (Luke 18:11) Had you asked him, he would have boasted of his ancestry and his church relations. And yet with all his religion he did not have a good ground for his hope, for it was not resting on a sound foundation. Any hope in a religion that does not keep a person from sinning is a false and dangerous one.

“Any hope in a religion that does not keep a person from sinning is a false and dangerous one.”

MARRYING A MAN TO REFORM HIM

There is another hope that I believe is one of the most subtle and deceitful which ever existed, and one that wrecks the happiness of many a young women's life. I refer to the common delusion that a woman can best reform a man by marrying him. It is a mystery to me how people can be so blinded to the hundreds of cases in every community where tottering homes have fallen and innocent lives have been wrecked, because some young woman has persisted in marrying a scoundrel in the hope of saving him. I have never known such a union—and I have seen hundreds of them—to result in anything but sadness and disaster. Let no young woman think that she may be able to

accomplish what a loving mother or sympathetic sisters have been unable to do. Before there is any contract of marriage there should be convincing proof that there has been real and thorough regeneration.

And let no Christian woman believe that she can disregard Saint Paul's injunction, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." (2 Corinthians 6:14) I have always noted that the husband loses respect for the wife's faith, and she, too, follows her Master "afar off," or denies Him wholly. (Matthew 26:58)

I cannot leave this subject without adding just one more word in regard to woman's duty to society. She stands as the sacred guardian of future homes and our nation's prosperity, and we must look to her for true reforms. Society must come to her standard. Let her be sure to place it high and keep it pure, and make it apply impartially to all people.

Let her keep out those whom she knows fall short of her standard, and never condone in men what she condemns in women.

Let her not think to elevate society by hiding or condoning the evils which surround her on every side, but only by shutting out those whom she has found it impossible to raise to her standard. Then future generations will arise who will bless her for their heritage, instead of cursing her for their misery.



READ MORE ABOUT ...

Mr. Moody teaches that hope confidently expects the fulfillment of God's promises. Study these Bible passages to understand the nature of true hope, the danger of false hope, and the glorious future that awaits those whose hope rests on God's promises.

☐ Confident Hope in God's Promises:

- Deuteronomy 31:6
- Lamentations 3:24
- Jeremiah 17:7
- Jeremiah 29:11
- Psalm 39:7
- Isaiah 40:31
- Romans 5:3–4
- Romans 15:13
- Hebrews 6:19
- Hebrews 11:1

☐ Hope During Adversity:

- Romans 8:28
- Romans 12:12
- Psalm 42:11
- Psalm 46:1
- Joshua 1:9

☐ The Danger of False Hope:

- Jeremiah 17:5
- Proverbs 14:12
- Matthew 7:24 – 27
- Luke 18:9–14

(Continued on next page)

- Christians' Futures Sharing in Glory:
 - Romans 8:17 and 18
 - 1 Corinthians 15:43
 - Colossians 1:27
 - Colossians 3:4
 - 1 Peter 4:13
 - 1 Peter 5:1
 - Revelation 21:4

- Repentance Beyond the Grave:
 - 2 Corinthians 6:2
 - Hebrews 9:27
 - Luke 16:26
 - Proverbs 11:7

- Marriage and the Unequally Yoked:
 - 2 Corinthians 6:14
 - 1 Corinthians 7:39
 - Amos 3:3

PERSONAL APPLICATION

A lesson about hope is also an invitation to search our own hearts. Mr. Moody has shown us that true hope is not a vague wish but a confident trust in the One who never breaks His promises.

Use the following questions to examine whether your own hope rests on a sure foundation — or one that may not hold in the hour of testing.

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ABOUT THIS EDITION

The core text of this Bible study—Mr. Moody's teaching on the Christian's hope—was originally published in *The Ladies' Home Journal* in 1897. As a work published over 125 years ago, Mr. Moody's original text is in the public domain and free for anyone to use. Scripture quotations are from the King James Version, also in the public domain.

ABOUT THIS TEXT

This edition faithfully preserves D.L. Moody's original teaching. We have made minimal edits for modern clarity—correcting obvious errors, updating a few archaic terms, and adjusting occasional grammatical inconsistencies—while keeping Mr. Moody's voice and meaning completely intact.

WHAT'S NEW IN THIS EDITION

This 2025 edition includes:

- Updated formatting for modern readers
- Reflection and study questions
- Organized Scripture references
- Introductory paragraphs to sections titled “Mr. Moody’s Bible Verses,” “Read More About ...,” and “Personal Application”

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