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Introduction

This writing is for all persons who desire insight into how we are designed, how we function and how we interact with the world around us. We will explore four unique attributes of our soul, heart and spirit that separate humans from all other living forms on earth: hope, belief, faith and trust.

There is an interdependence between the four attributes (rely upon / affected by each other) and synergy (when they work together, they progressively magnify).

1. Each attribute foundationally supports the one above: hope supports belief, belief supports faith, and faith supports trust. For example, is it possible to:
 - a. Extend trust to someone if you do not have faith they will do the right thing?
 - b. Have belief, faith and trust without hope?
2. As we move upward from hope to belief, from belief to faith and from faith to trust, each step increasingly requires:
 - a. More involvement of our heart, soul and spirit.
 - b. An evaluative analysis and choice.
3. It is difficult to move upward from one attribute to the next because we:
 - a. Become increasingly dependent upon whom we extend our hope, belief, faith and trust.
 - b. Increase our vulnerability.
 - c. May have been hurt by someone in the past and we choose to protect ourselves from potential pain.
4. If we extend one of the four attributes towards a human being—and they fail to meet our expectations—that attribute (directed towards that person) will most likely never achieve the same degree once given.
5. With regards to the recipient of an attribute, the value of each attribute increases as we move upward. For example, which of the following means more when someone says to you:
 - a. I hope you do the right thing.
 - b. I believe you will do the right thing.
 - c. I have faith you will do the right thing.
 - d. I trust you will do the right thing.
6. Trust is the:
 - a. Greatest of the four attributes we can give and receive.
 - b. Bond that enables deep and meaningful relationships.



Each of the four attributes does not operate in the physical realm; because they are spiritual and operate deep within our heart, soul and spirit. What's more, they were placed there by God as part of our design because He desires our hope, our belief, and our faith. But most of all, He desires trust with all of our heart.

“And [I pray] that the eyes of your heart [the very center and core of your being] may be enlightened [flooded with light by the Holy Spirit], so that you will know and cherish the **hope** [the divine guarantee, the confident expectation] to which He has called you, the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints (God's people).” Ephesians 1:18 (Amplified Bible)

“But without **faith** it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must **believe** that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.” Hebrews 11:6

“**Trust** in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.” Proverbs 3:5-6

We will now explore each of the four attributes, starting with hope.

Hope

Hope is defined as:

- An optimistic state of mind that life will improve.
- A perception and expectation of future positive outcomes.

Hope can:

- Positively influence our perception of the world (even in the darkest of times).
- Make a tough situation more bearable.
- Inspire and motivate us to take steps to make our life better.

Without hope we can:

- Lack motivation to overcome life's obstacles.
- Sink into discouragement, depression and darkness—where Satan dwells and what he desires for all.
 - Satan does not have hope. He knows his final demise in the eternal lake of fire, and he knows there is no hope of it changing...because God's word declares it! ["The devil was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever."](#) Revelation 20:10
 - Howard Hendricks, who was a professor at Dallas Theological Seminary and speaker for Promise Keepers, said "Discouragement is the anesthetic the devil uses on a person just before he reaches in and carves out his heart."

Because we are designed with the capacity to have hope, what we hope for may be simply categorized by physical or spiritual.

Hope in the Physical Realm	Hope in the Spiritual Realm
Improvements in food, clothing and shelter	Overcoming anger, bitterness and hatred
A loving spouse	Loving the unlovable
An inspiring job that pays more income	Internal peace, joy and happiness
Better means of transportation	Being contented, regardless of circumstances
Having children who give us joy	Becoming more like Jesus
Meaningful relationships	Eternity with God in Heaven after death

What we hope for in the physical realm can be a good thing, based upon:

- Whether or not the object of our hope is in God's will.
- The motivations of our heart.

Here is another aspect of hope to consider: take another look at the comparative listing above and ask yourself which type of hope:

- Has more eternal importance?
- Can deeply motivate us to seek changes within our heart, soul and spirit?

With reflective thought, you will likely identify additional hopes you have. As such, take a few moments and think about your hopes, and write them down. Then evaluate each hope to determine:

- Is it aligned with God's will?
- What is the motivation of your heart that is supporting this hope?
- Is there eternal relevance / importance?

Here are scriptures related to hope in the spiritual realm, which are segmented between present and future hope.

Present Spiritual Hope

“That at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.” Ephesians 2:12

“Therefore, gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” 1 Peter 1:13

“For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.” Romans 8:24-25

“Through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only that but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.” Romans 5:2-5

“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.” Hebrews 10:23

“Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God; for I shall yet praise Him, the help of my countenance and my God.” Psalm 42:11

“That by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us. This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil.” Hebrews 6:18-19

Future Spiritual Hope

“Having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.” Titus 3:7

“Hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began.” Titus 1:2

“And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.” Revelation 21:4

Belief

While hope is an optimistic expectation of future positive outcomes, belief is an acceptance that the object of our hope is true or that it exists. Our hopes and beliefs influence our behavior. Plus, they are interdependent and synergistic. For example:

- Consider the different effect on a person’s hope if they believe the object of their hope:
 - Is true and exists.
 - Is a lie and does not exist.
- Take a moment and consider the deceived hope and darkened belief of one who is addicted to sin because:
 - Sin is a lie.
 - The costs of sin far outweigh any perceived benefits.
- Now contemplate why Jesus said believe! Jesus declared:
 - “If you can **believe**, all things are possible to him who **believes**.” Mark 9:23
 - “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who **believes** in Me has everlasting life.” John 6:47
 - “Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have **believed**. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have **believed**.” John 20:29

Our beliefs are formed and shaped throughout our lives by personal experiences, assumptions, the opinions of others and the Bible. In addition, our beliefs are powerful influencers; can provide insight into our heart, soul and spirit; and can be harmful and beneficial.

Beliefs that Harm Us	Beliefs that are Beneficial
I am not worthy.	Because of Jesus, God sees me as being perfect.
I am inadequate.	My inadequacies cause me to be more dependent upon God.
I am a failure.	I desire to learn and grow from my mistakes.
I cannot change things.	It is possible to break free from things that weigh me down.
There’s no reason to try.	I know if I think about it...I can find at least 1 reason to try.
I have no hope.	I may not be able to see it, but I know there’s light at the end of this tunnel.
I can’t live without it.	I’m dying on the inside because of it.
God is angry with me.	God loves me more than I realize.
I need to fix my life.	Only God can change me from within.
God does not exist.	When I stop looking at all of the things that are wrong in my life...and when I stop listening to all of the noise...it becomes easier to see and hear the simple things that quietly declare GOD EXISTS!

Now take a moment and review each harmful belief above and ask yourself...is this a delusional lie? Plus, consider the source of the lie. Jesus said regarding Satan “He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.” John 8:44

If you harbor a harmful belief, consider these scriptures.

“If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and **believe** in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.” Romans 10:9

“For with the heart one **believes** unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture says, ‘Whoever **believes** on Him will not be put to shame.’” Romans 10:10-11

Faith

While hope is an optimistic expectation of future positive outcomes; and belief is an acceptance that something is true or that something exists; faith, however, is different in that it:

- Involves some type of internal response or external behavior based upon our hopes and beliefs.
- Includes a component of a decision-based commitment. For example, I may hope and believe a chair can hold my weight, but I do not extend faith until I decide to sit on the chair.

Hebrews 11:1 provides insight into the role of hope and the application of faith. “Now [faith](#) is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”

Hebrews 11:6 provides insight into the role of belief and the application of faith. “But without [faith](#) it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”

We first have hope in God and belief in His word. The next step is the application of our faith—which is exemplified by what we think and what we do as we seek God. This is what He desires. This is why he designed us with the attributes of hope, belief, faith and trust.

Faith occurs from a strong:

- Hope that God exists.
- Belief that what the Bible says about God and His Son, Jesus Christ, is true.
- Commitment to use and enhance our God-given attributes to know Him.

It is because of our faith in God that we receive His grace—not based upon our hopes, our beliefs, or how good we are—but rather, our faith in Him. “For by grace you have been saved through [faith](#), and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.” Ephesians 2:8-9

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.” John 3:16-17

God’s views us as having His righteousness (holy and without sin) because of our faith in what Jesus Christ did for us on the cross.

“But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through [faith](#) in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through [faith](#), to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has [faith](#) in Jesus.” Romans 3:21-26

“For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of [faith](#).” Romans 12:3

Trust

Trust is commonly defined as having a firm belief, confidence and reliance in the character, reliability, integrity, truth, and ability of someone or something. While this is true, trust is much more. Trust is beyond hope, beyond belief and beyond faith. Trust is a personal choice that involves vulnerability and giving an indescribable “internal part” of us to whom we trust—because when trust is broken—it hurts deep on the inside and can leave scars. As such, when we extend trust, it is supported by hope, faith and beliefs, such as:

- They have my best interests at heart.
- They are prepared to help or defend me, and provide assistance if needed.
- They will not let me down.

Another aspect of trust (which makes it difficult for us to extend to someone else or God) is that it means we must relinquish varying degrees of control. We like being in control and prefer to manage all aspects of our life. However, this can create stress and anxiety within us...because in truth, we cannot control all of the variables that impact our life. In addition, our pride will often get in the way as we believe “I can handle this!”

There have been situations in my life when God put me into a corner, where I had no choice but to completely trust Him. Analogous to driving a car, I had to let go of the steering wheel; I had to unbuckle the seat belt; I had to climb into the back seat; and I had to trust in God’s ability to drive me to His desired destination for me. I had to completely let go and trust God. What’s interesting, is the overwhelming amount of anxiety, fear and stress virtually disappeared as I sat in the back seat and went along for the ride. I cannot explain the amount of weight that was lifted from my shoulders, as all of the internal pressure subsided, and I could relax and experience a spiritual calmness deep within my soul. Looking back throughout the years, since the day I asked Jesus to be my Savior and Lord, He has always been in control. All of my vain attempts to “drive” have resulted in me going in the wrong direction, causing accidents and getting lost.

We will make a decision to turn towards God and place our trust in Him when we:

- Are in the midst of confusion, despair and feelings of hopelessness.
- Reminisce and realize the futility of trusting in ourselves or another person.
- Consider the future and have no idea of what to do.
- Have had enough of _____! (You can fill in the blank.)

God desires our hope, our belief, and our faith...but most of all...He desires our unconditional whole-hearted trust for two primary reasons. First, trust is the bond that facilitates deep and meaningful relationships. Second, each and every one of us will encounter events in our lives that will challenge our hope, belief, faith and trust in God. It is inevitable. Reasons why some traumatic events occur in our lives may never be understood until we are with Him in Heaven. For example, my father died of lung cancer when he was at the young age of 38. I was 14 years old. And as long as I live on this earth I will never understand why. But deep in my heart I have hope, belief, faith and trust I will know why when I see my dad again on the other side. Meanwhile, I know God has my best interests at heart; God will defend and assist me; and God will not let me down.

“The fear of man brings a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord shall be safe.” Proverbs 29:25

“The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and He delights in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; for the Lord upholds him with His hand.” Psalm 37:23-24

Why Should I Trust God?

God's word is true, He cannot lie and all of His promises will be fulfilled.

"God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?" Numbers 23:19

"My covenant I will not break, nor alter the word that has gone out of My lips." Psalm 89:35

"The Lord of hosts has sworn, saying, 'Surely, as I have thought, so it shall come to pass, And as I have purposed, so it shall stand.'" Isaiah 14:24

God's plans are perfect, holy and righteous. What's more, He watches over those who love Him and are called according to His purpose.

"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose." Romans 8:28

Is there a sensible alternative? Are humans sinful, unreliable, have limited wisdom, and frequently make bad decisions? As such, is it wise to trust in ourselves or someone else?

"It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man." Psalm 118:8

Interrelationship of Trust and Love

The greatest thing we can offer God is our love. When asked what is the greatest commandment in the law, Jesus replied "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." Matthew 22:37

God desires a relationship and our love. However, for any relationship to grow and reach its full potential it must be foundationally based upon trust. For example, consider the caustic impact upon love within a relationship when one spouse is unable to trust the other. On the other side of the "coin," consider the unending influence of guilt and shame upon the capacity to love by the one who violated the trust of their spouse.

For any relationship to thrive...it must be based upon trust!

Trust During the Last Days

Things will become worse and life will become increasingly difficult as we enter into the last days. For those who have placed their trust in God...what is occurring is the fulfillment of God's word.

Jesus said "There will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened." Matthew 24:21-22

As such, now is the time to let go and trust in God as we witness the truth of His word come to fruition.

(For more information on the last days read "21 Signs of the Last Days" on UniqueBibleStudies.com.)

Praying for Trust

Heavenly Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, my Savior and Lord, I pray. Holy Spirit, guide me into that spiritual place of absolute trust—where my wavering uncertainties, anxieties and fears no longer diminish my love for God. Ground me in Your truth, Your word and Your promises...for I desire to let go, and trust in You.

Jesus said “Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father’s will. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.” Matthew 10:29-31

Jesus said “These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” John 16:33

God Bless You,
Harold D. Thomas

Can you think of one or more persons who could benefit from reading this lesson? If so, pass it on!