

Workbook: Session Seven

The Power of Hope – Colossians 1:5

Lesson Focus™

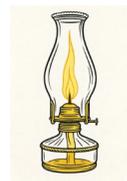
- Explore the Greek concept of *elpis* (hope) in Colossians 1:5
 - Distinguish between **objective** and **subjective** hope
 - Understand **Persian royal traditions** as background to Paul's imagery
 - See how Paul links heavenly reward with **faith and love** through the Spirit
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Scripture Reading

Colossians 1:5 (KJV)

“For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel.”

Greek Word Study™ – Elpis (Hope)



- Hope is not wishful thinking but a **living, sustaining power** (like oil in a lamp).

Greek Word: *Elpis* (Hope)

"Confident expectation, trust, or anticipation."

In **Colossians 1:5**, hope is not wishful thinking but a **living power**—fueling faith in Christ and igniting love for His people.

Paul writes:

"Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints, *for the hope which is laid up for you in heaven*, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel" (Colossians 1:4 and 5).

According to Weest, the phrase "*for the hope*" connects directly to the Colossians' faith and love, not to the thanksgiving. Hope is not their starting point but their **sustaining force**—like oil that keeps a lamp burning brightly.

In the New Testament, *hope* carries two dimensions:

The **sense of expectation. As we shall see in Hebrews 11:1.**

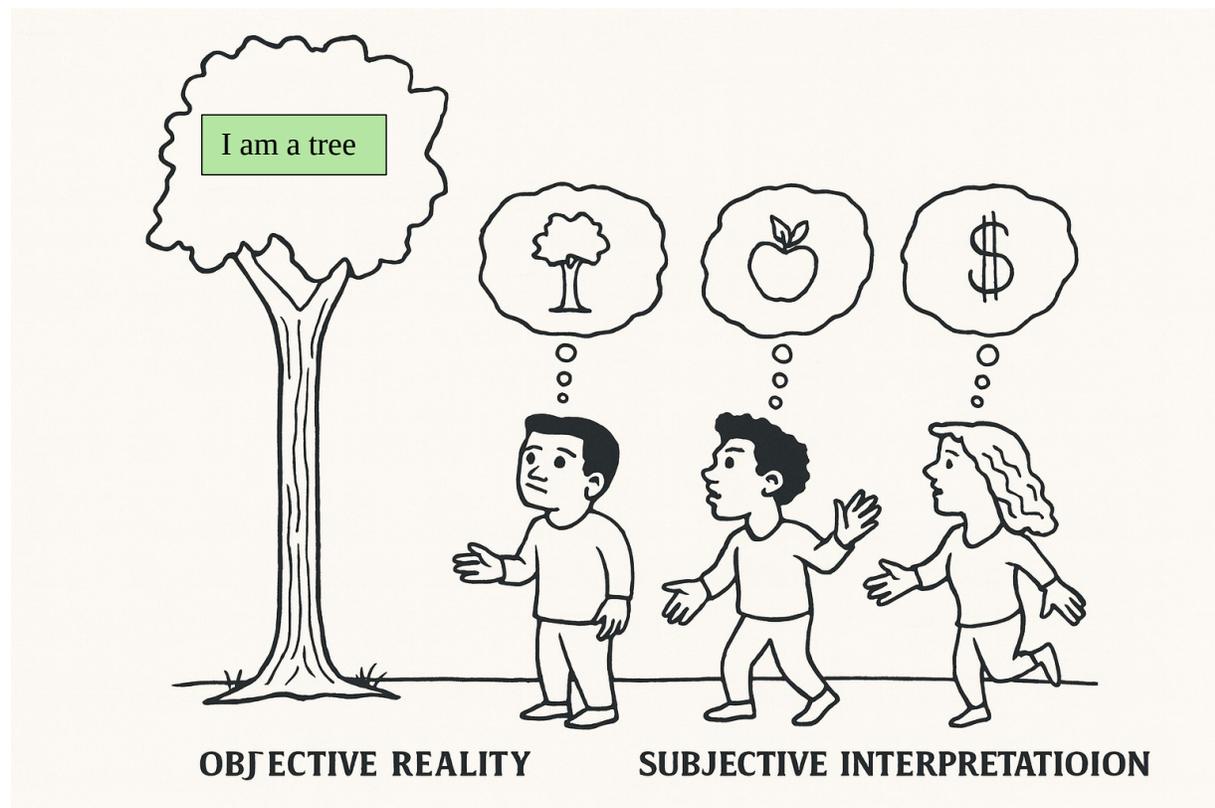
The **object of expectation.**

Here in Colossians 1:5, Paul points to the latter—the secured reality of heavenly treasure. This hope, laid up in heaven, was the **very object of their faith and love**. It was anything but passive; it worked within the Colossians as a dynamic power, **strengthening their faith and energizing their love**

Objective versus Subjective

Objective means not influenced by personal feelings or opinions in considering or representing facts.

An objective perspective refers to a viewpoint or approach that is unbiased, impartial, and based on facts and verifiable evidence



For example, in the picture there is a tree, and three people are looking at the tree. The objective reality is that it is a tree, regardless, to their opinions about the tree (period).

Subjective means based on, or influenced by, personal feelings, tastes, or opinions. A subjective perspective can also be called a personal perspective or an individual point of view. Subjective views do not have to be provable or grounded in fact, though they may incorporate facts.

Referring again to the image of the tree, and the three people viewing it.

Objective -- the tree remains a tree; however, one person thinks the tree is a fruitless tree. The second person thinks it is an apple tree. And the third person is hoping it's a money tree. **Subjective - it is about what each person believes about the tree**. Yet, it doesn't change the objective reality – it's a tree.

- **Objective:** the thing laid up in heaven (inheritance, crown, treasure).
- **Subjective:** the inward expectation, the confident leaning into God's promise.

The Inner Stance of Our Belief System is Important.

In Matthew 25:14–29, a master entrusted his servants with talents (money) before leaving on a journey. Two servants invested what was given to them and doubled their master's wealth. The master rewarded them with greater responsibility and invited into his inner circle. The third servant, however, buried his single talent, returning only what he had been given. He excused himself by saying he viewed his master as "hard," and his belief led to inactivity. His talent was taken away, and he was cast out.

All three servants had the same master

and the same opportunity of trust.

The first two saw their master through the lens of **objective and subjective hope** — they acted on the reality: objective, they had been given wealth to invest, and they had the hope of reward that awaited faithful service. Subjective, their hope – inner stance of faith – was anchored in the master’s character, action, and promise.

The third only operated in a distorted **subjective hope** — an inward stance rooted in disbelief, fear, suspicion, and self-protection rather than confident trust. Perhaps he was jealous of the others. As he only received one piece of gold. His expectation was not aligned with reality, as the master did give him something to invest, so his hope - inner stance of faith - and actions withered.

. “Whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel.”

It Does Matter WHAT You Believe,

“[Jesus] said, ‘Take care what you hear...’ (Mark 4:24).

and HOW You Believe!

“Be careful, therefore, how you hear...” (Luke 8:18).

The King’s Reward – Cultural and Biblical Insight

- Persian kings stored up delayed rewards for loyal servants (Esther 6).
- Paul draws on this familiar practice to illustrate God's **delayed but certain** reward.
- *2 Timothy 4:8* – “A crown of righteousness is laid up (*apokeimai*) for me.”
- *Hebrews 6:10* – God does not forget our labor and love.

Paul's Opening to the Colossians (1:1–5)

1. Paul's Greeting

"To the saints and faithful brethren..."

Marked by steadfastness, trustworthiness, proven loyalty.

2. Persian Custom of Reward

Kings stored treasures (gold, garments, land, honors) for loyal servants.

Rewards were delayed but securely reserved until the appointed time.

3. Paul's Connection

The Colossians' faith and love are fueled by their hope laid up in heaven.

God, like the righteous King, has secured eternal treasures for His faithful ones.

The King's Reward for the Faithful



To reiterate, In the New Testament, hope has two dimensions:

The sense of expectation.

The object – eyes on the prize

In Colossians 1:5, Paul points to the second—the secured reality of heavenly treasure. This hope, laid up in heaven, was the very object of the Colossians' faith and love. Far from being passive, it worked within them as a dynamic power, strengthening their faith and energizing their love.

👉 Comparison:

Those who live with objective hope see their treasure in heaven as fact. This energizes bold action and growth.

But when hope is reduced to a false or fearful subjective view, as with the unfaithful servant in Matthew 25, it paralyzes faith, extinguishes love, and forfeits reward.

That is why Paul wrote the Colossian letter to attack the Gnosticism infiltrating the church. Trying to separate the believers from the hope of rewards.

Let's look at a biblical example of reward laid up for the faithful.

The Word of the Truth of the Gospel™

- Greek: *aletheia* = nothing hidden; full and revealed truth.
- Paul contrasts true gospel with **distorted versions** (*Galatians 1:6–7*).

- The true gospel does not **mix law and grace**, but anchors hope in **Christ alone**.
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Activity 1: Hope Assessment

- List 3 current “hopes” you carry. Are they objective or subjective?
 - Match each one with a Scripture that either confirms or challenges it.
 - What practical step can you take to live anchored in **objective hope** this week?
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Activity 2: Gospel Filter

- Reread *Colossians 1:5* alongside *Galatians 1:6–7*.
 - What false “mixtures” or pressures challenge your understanding of the gospel?
 - Write a summary of what the “Word of Truth” means to you in your current season.
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Self-Reflection Questions

1. How does the concept of **delayed reward** stretch or test your faith?
2. Have you ever felt like Mordecai—**faithful but forgotten**?
3. What might God be storing for you in His divine “**layaway**”?

4. In what ways have you allowed **law, performance, or approval** to distort the gospel?
 5. How is **hope fueling your faith and love** today—or is it running low?
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Final Reflection™

The hope Paul describes is not fragile. It is **royal**. It is **laid up**, not left out. The gospel is not partial—it is the **full truth** that fuels our faith and sustains our love.

Let us wait well, serve faithfully, and trust that the **King remembers—and rewards**.
