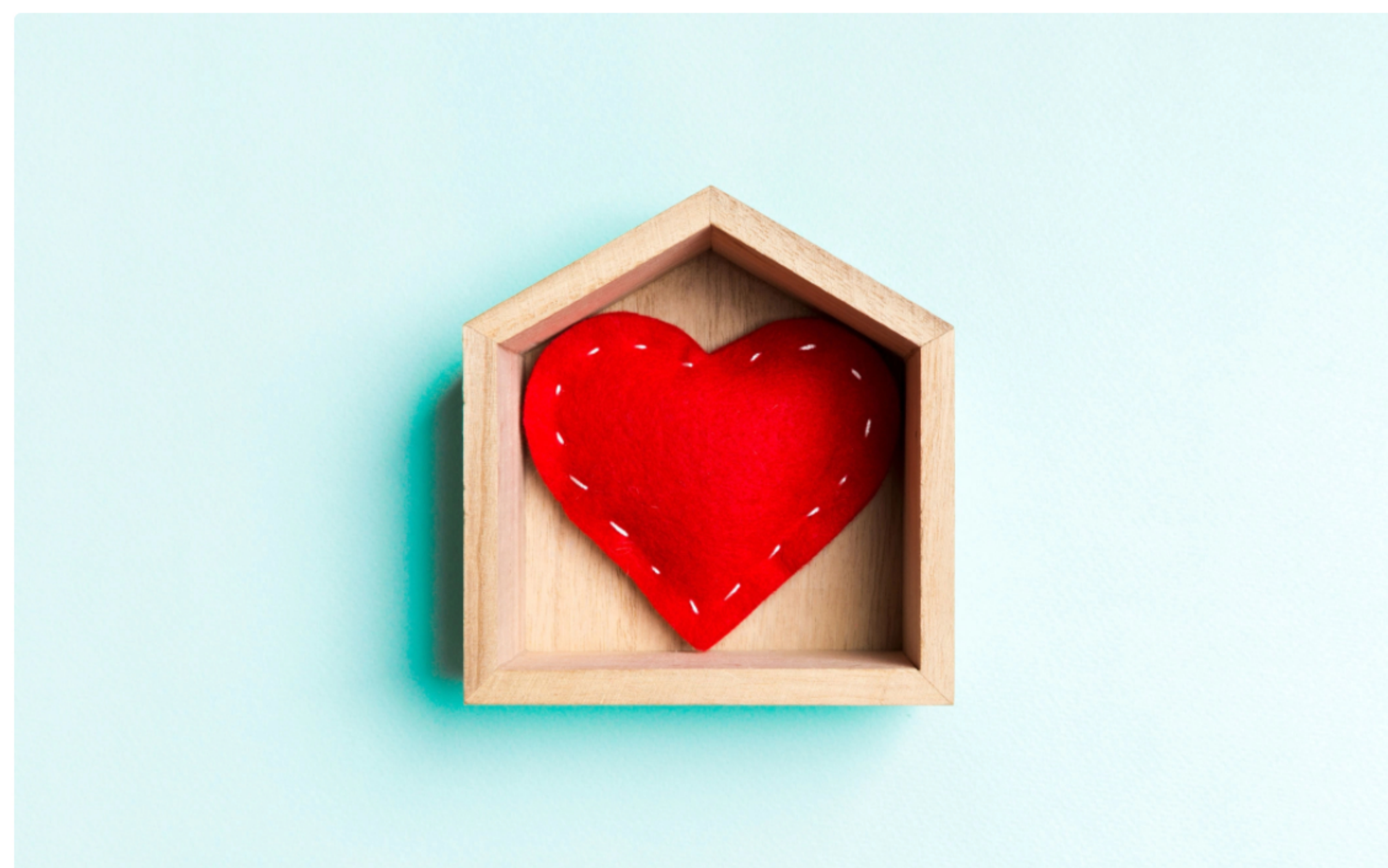


# The Building Blocks of Faith Toolkit

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## The Need to Have Hope

For our faith to grow, we need to have hope—a confident hope through Christ that God will keep God’s promises and that all things are working together for our salvation so that we might bless others.



It was two days after Jesus had been crucified. As two travelers on the road to Emmaus began their journey, they were in a dark place. They had been in Jerusalem when Jesus was killed, and they were shocked and stunned. They had been suffering under Roman rule for their entire lives, and Jesus, who they thought was the Messiah, had arrived and rekindled the dormant hope that was in all of God’s people—that the promised one would come to restore the kingdom of Israel. But now Jesus was dead, and their hope died along with him—until Jesus met them on the road.

[? Support](#)

Christian hope is a difficult concept to explain in our modern era, when hope is often expressed in casual terms: “I hope my team wins” or “I hope I get the job offer.” It’s the slightly more adult version of “wish.” Christian hope, though, is much more than that. It is an expectation that is strong and confident.<sup>1</sup> This is no random wish or shallow desire; it is based on the promises of the Creator of the universe. Our hope is found in the person of Jesus Christ.

The book of Psalms demonstrates this hope, even in the midst of troubles. One third of the psalms are laments—expressions of sadness, disappointment, and grief. In all but one of the laments, though, the writer makes an interesting turn from expressions of despair to a place of hope. The psalmists were not afraid to express their feelings and fears. They were not afraid to express their trust in the Lord and their confidence that God continued to care for them.

Psalm 13 is a short but powerful example of this. The writer begins with, “How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever?” (v. 1). He then goes on to catalog his woes and demand that God answer him. “Look on me and answer, Lord my God. Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death” (v. 3). But even in his sadness he remembers that he belongs to the Lord. “But I trust in your unfailing love,” he writes. “My heart rejoices in your salvation” (v. 5). The psalmist does not merely express a *wish* that God will listen to him. Nor does he question whether God will continue to love him. He is *sure* of it. That is hope.

Psalm 71:4-5 gives us another insight into biblical hope: “Deliver me, my God, from the hand of the wicked, from the grasp of those who are evil and cruel. For you have been my hope, Sovereign Lord, my confidence since my youth.” Hope is the “confident expectation that what God has promised in the Word is true.”<sup>2</sup>

Sometimes, like the travelers on the road to Emmaus, we see only a small part of the big picture. In the daily-ness of life, people get involved in their own struggles, disappointments, joys, and celebrations. We end up looking at only our own situation without opening ourselves up to the promises of God. But our hope is not just about us. It is much bigger than that. God told Abraham, “I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. . . . And all peoples on earth will be blessed through you” (Gen. 12:2-3). As it was with Abraham, so it is with us. God has blessed us to be a blessing to the world. We have confidence not only that God will make all things new but also that God is using us to do it.

Our hope is strengthened by listening to others tell the story of God’s work in their lives and by serving others. We do not have to experience a miracle in order to see God’s renewing work in the world. We can see it in the work of God’s people. Fred Rogers, creator of the children’s television program *Mr. Rogers’ Neighborhood* and a Presbyterian pastor, saw this in times of sadness. He often told a story about when he was a boy and would see scary things on the news: “My mother would say to me, ‘Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.’” Rogers learned that God’s people were doing their work in the world, bringing hope and blessing others.

God is making all things new. God is at work in the world, and we are God’s agents. Our hope gives our lives meaning because God has enlisted us in this great work.

<sup>1</sup> Keathley, J. Hampton, “Hope,” Bible.org. Ed. Hampton Keathley, Bob Deffinbaugh, and Kevin Dodge; n.p., 22 Apr. 2005; web., 6 Oct. 2014; Bible.org/article/hope

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.