

Hope That Doesn't Disappoint | January 2016



A recent article ([link below](#)) explains the scientific reason that only 8% of us are successful at achieving our New Year's resolutions. It's called "False Hope Syndrome" and basically states that our expectations are unrealistic and our dramatic midnight resolutions are doomed to failure almost immediately. The solution? We should be more realistic and set goals that are attainable through consistent "bite-sized" efforts. The article sums it up with this: "While false hope may putter out after several days, realistic hope is far more likely to endure."

Compared to the start of the fall semester, we're off to a relatively slow start with the spring semester. Unlike (at least my experiences with) universities in the States, many students here have exams and papers due in the early weeks of the new year since classes continue from one semester to the next. Our first Wednesday night French Bible study (in Romans) saw just under 30 students come for the dinner, Bible study and following group discussions. Also, the first Panier Partage food bank distribution attendance on Thursday was down slightly (though possibly due to the cold rain). And finally, our plans for the first Sunday night

English Bible study are scaled back because a large number of those who came last semester were on a short exchange program and are now back in the States. That being said, we don't concern ourselves too much with numbers. Just as those who come to get food, get more when there are fewer people, those who come for the Bible studies when there are fewer people benefit from more quality conversations and time together in God's Word and prayer. Keep these activities in prayer as a number of those who come through our doors are not yet saved . . . but they are hungry!

I took a much needed break from the construction projects we have going on here. Thankfully, our bathroom is completely functional again and just needs some finishing touches like trim, shelves and hooks. I still have some tiling and grouting to do for the downstairs shower before that part of the bathroom renovation project is finished. Looking forward into the spring, we have plans to construct a wheelchair ramp to be in compliance with local regulations. Pray that God would continue to provide funds, skilled labor and safety as we work on these projects.

Rachel and our soon-to-be-born baby boy are doing very well and he is growing and developing healthily within the range of what is to be expected. As mentioned before, Rachel's midwife speaks English and is leading a birth preparation class for us and another American couple. The last class is next week, during which we will get a tour of the hospital so we know exactly where to go and what to expect when our baby decides he wants to come out. Another American couple ministering here in France is hosting a baby shower for Rachel soon and many others have been very generous in giving us clothing and other baby related gear. Please continue to pray for the health of Rachel and our baby boy and that his arrival would be around the due date and without complication. We are really looking forward to meeting him!

So, what's your New Year's resolution? Do you have a false hope that will statistically fade away? Or maybe you have a realistic hope that will likely endure? I would like to suggest one better. This year, let's resolve to have

a guaranteed hope that will never disappoint . . . a hope that is anchored in the One who always keeps His promises.

“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 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 5:1-5 NKJV)

See the video update that CMML put together for us: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mWRaU4n43Vs>

The article I mentioned

above: <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/jan/08/false-hope-syndrome-why-we-quit-new-years-resolutions-this-weekend>