

## LEAD! B.3 From Mockery to Hope

### *In Which Our Souls Find Hope Amidst Suffering*



Hope is the primary virtue of the Soul. It provides Reasons to encourage positive Emotions, and the Emotional energy to search for better Reasons. It can be defined as "*the ability to joyfully pursue a higher purpose -- even when painful.*"

Hope is particularly needed by the Mocker, who is driven by both the *need* to control (due to fear) and the *illusion* of control (due to pride). Yet if they can unclench their soul enough to hope in God's wisdom, Mockers may yet discover that true freedom comes from *giving up* control.

Though such learning usually only comes after great suffering...

### ***Assigned Reading***

1. Peter Kreeft: *Back to Virtue*
  - 5.B (Hope) The Three Theological Virtues
2. Dick Hockett: *Foundations of Wisdom*
  - 5. The Mocker

### ***Admonition***

Read Isaiah 28. Why should Mockers build their lives on God's Wisdom instead of their own?

### ***Bible***

#### Romans 5

The story of hope begins with faith in God, which produces peace:

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

Perhaps surprisingly, mockers rarely have peace. They may seem complacent -- even smug -- but that is a fragile facade, for they only feel comfortable as long as they imagine themselves to be in control.

Contrast that with the wise, who have true peace because -- by faith -- they know that the One who is *really* in control is looking out for their best interests. And thus they stand not in their own strength, but by the grace of God [C.1]:

2 through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand,

and [rejoice](#) in [hope](#) of the [glory](#) of God.

Because of that, the wise do not seek their own comfort or convenience, but rather the [glory of God](#). In fact, the word translated "rejoice" ([kauchaomai](#)) is actually a synonym for glory -- both convey the idea of exalting/exulting in something wondrous. [C.2]

Because the wise realize that their peace and joy are found in God's glory -- unlike the mockers, who trust only in their own glory -- they are even able to rejoice in suffering:

<sup>3</sup>And not only that, but we also glory in [tribulations](#), knowing that tribulation produces [perseverance](#);

[C.3] Why? Because they want to see God's glory revealed in their own character:

<sup>4</sup>and perseverance, [character](#); and character, hope.

Hope means believing that God will do the best thing we can imagine -- or if not, then something even *better* than we can imagine. We usually hope for a world (or at least a life) free from pain from suffering, which means we are usually disappointed.

But if we fix our hope instead on the glory of God, we will never be put to shame:

<sup>5</sup>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.

Unlike [faith](#), which is primarily in the *mind*, hope is a virtue of the *soul*. It is not something we can create by an act of our will, but (in large part) an emotional response to experiencing the love of God in our hearts. [C.4]

It is only as we abide in the [Spirit](#) and remember how hopeless we were without God...

<sup>6</sup>For when we were still [without strength](#), in due time Christ died for the [ungodly](#). <sup>7</sup>For scarcely for a [righteous](#) man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die.

...that we realize how much reason we **now** have for hope, because of [Christ's](#) sacrifice:

<sup>8</sup>But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still [sinners](#), Christ died for us.

Christ's death fundamentally changes our relationship with the [creator](#) of the universe, transforming us from enemies to sons [C.5]:

<sup>9</sup>Much more then, having now been [justified](#) by His blood, we shall be [saved](#) from wrath through Him. <sup>10</sup>For if when we were [enemies](#) we were [reconciled](#) to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

Which is just the beginning:

<sup>11</sup>And not only [that], but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the [reconciliation](#).

That is, we are not just rejoicing in the *gifts* of salvation, but in the *Giver* Himself!

<sup>12</sup>Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned--

(we skip the parenthetical to continue with verse 18)

<sup>18</sup>Therefore, as through one man's [offense](#) [judgment] came to all men, resulting in [condemnation](#), even so through one Man's righteous act [the free gift came] to all men, resulting in justification of life.

We are born into a world of sin through the [fall of our great-father Adam](#), which is why we can never fully escape from suffering in this life. [C.6] Yet thanks be to God, through our Lord Jesus Christ there is still hope:

<sup>19</sup>For as by one man's [disobedience](#) many were made sinners, so also by one Man's [obedience](#) many will be made righteous.

Christ's redemptive work doesn't immediately wipe away all the consequences of Adam's sin. Instead, it transforms that sin into an opportunity to reveal God's grace, and thus His glory:

<sup>20</sup>Moreover the law entered that the offense might [abound](#). But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more,

Which is merely a down payment on the ultimate hope of a future life, when righteousness will reign forevermore:

<sup>21</sup>so that as sin [reigned](#) in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to [eternal](#) life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

To appropriate that hope, all we need do is cease trying to reign over our own lives, and surrender ourselves as slaves to God's glory.

### ***Conversation***

1. Share a time you experienced God's peace even when your circumstances were out of control.
2. Have you ever willingly entered into a difficult or painful situation because you were pursuing something wondrous? Was it worth it?
3. What tribulations has God used to teach you patience / perseverance?
4. When has the experience of God's love given you hope in difficult times?

5. Do you remember what it was like to be at war with, or feel abandoned by, God? Do you still feel that way on occasion? When and why?
6. Deep down, do you ever feel you God owes you a life free from suffering?

### ***Decision***

- **Repentance:** Where in your life do you feel you **must** be in control? Ask God to take that away.
- **Action:** What can you do to help bring grace to an area where sin is abounding?
- **Worship:** Ask God to pour out His love into your heart via the Holy Spirit.

### ***Explore More***

- [Peace – International Standard Bible Encyclopedia](#)
- [Hope – International Standard Bible Encyclopedia](#)
- [Rejoicing in Hope](#)
- [The Official Footprints In The Sand Page](#)
- [YouTube – You Never Let Go – song by Matt Redman](#)

### ***For Next Week***

For next week, read [John 13](#). To whom does Jesus show love? How?

### ***References***

1. **Blue Letter Bible.** "[Romans 5](#) – New King James Version." Blue Letter Bible. 1996–2009. 08 Jan 2009. < <http://www.blueletterbible.org/Bible.cfm?t=NKJV&b=Rom&c=5> >
2. **New King James Version** (NKJV) Copyright © 1982 by [Thomas Nelson, Inc.](#)

