



# Hope

by Katherine Harms

**Romans 5:3-5** – We also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces [hope](#), and [hope](#) does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

**The story** – Paul was wintering in Corinth, where he had founded a church. He wrote to a church in Rome, a church he knew only by report. However, he felt led to write to them for a variety of reasons. This church had been fractured first by persecution that drove the Jewish members out of Rome, and second by the division that arose when the Jews returned and discovered that the Gentiles planned to continue in their roles of leadership. Paul’s own life demonstrated the challenge of being a Christian in a pagan world, and in his letter to the church at Rome he provided encouragement for Christians of all eras who face that same challenge. Whether the challenge works out in extreme persecution or simply in social scorn, Christians need help to weather those storms.

**Context of this verse** – Paul covered several issues in the letter, but this section includes guidance for dealing with persecution, material which has application in the everyday challenges of life. Having established that we are made righteous in Christ because of faith, not works, Paul makes it clear that our troubles are not because God is punishing or paying us back for our sins. Our sins are forgiven, and we can hope in God, no matter how bad things are.

- Look up the word *hope* in an English dictionary.
- Look up the word *hope* in a Bible Dictionary
  - Harper’s Bible Dictionary
  - The New Bible Dictionary
  - There are others, but these are good standards

- Topical Bibles or indexes may help round out your understanding of the word *hope* as you read other texts
  - Nave's Topical Bible
  - NASB Topical Index
  - New Topical Textbook
  - If you don't have such a book, look in your Bible to see if it provides cross-references
  
- Read some texts that help you understand the word *hope*
  - Isaiah 33:18
  - Psalm 43
  - Psalm 71
  - Lamentations 3:19-24
  - I Timothy 1:1
  - Ephesians 1:17-19
  - Romans 8:24-31

Take notes. Write down questions and comments as they occur to you.

- Do all the texts use the same word the same way?
- After reading in both the Old and New Testaments, do you see the word any differently than when you read the starting text in Romans 5:3-5?
- Could you write a meaningful definition of the word *hope* in your own words after this study?
- If someone asked you what the Bible says about hope, would you feel comfortable answering that question after your study?

Write a definition for the word *hope* in your own words

Read Romans 5:3-5 again.

Write the meaning of these verses using what you have learned about *hope* as you studied this word.

What is the Bible all about? How do we learn what we need to learn from the Bible? Why do people say that studying the Bible will change a person's life?



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