

LESSON 4
DOWN AND UPS
2 CORINTHIANS 4:1—5:10



1 Finish these sentences:

To a marathon runner, hope is _____

To a football coach, hope is _____

To a salesperson, hope is _____

To a teacher, hope is _____

To a detective, hope is _____

To an investor, hope is _____

To a minimum wage worker, hope is _____

To a prisoner of war, hope is _____

To a hostage, hope is _____

To a cancer patient, hope is _____

To a Christian, hope is _____

Read 2 Corinthians 4:1—5:10 and the following notes:

☐ 4:8–12 ☐ 4:15–18 ☐ 4:16 ☐ 4:17 ☐ 4:18 ☐ 5:5 ☐ 5:6–8 ☐ 5:8



2 What was Paul going through that could have caused him to lose hope (4:8–12)?

3 What gave him hope (4:16–18)?

4 How will we be changed when we die (5:1)?

5 How should the final judgment influence how we live now (5:2–10)?

If anyone was aware of his mortality, it was Paul. He suffered a great deal in his travels. But he did not live in despair or stoic detachment. Rather, Paul took hope in the resurrection. He knew that God has a “heavenly body” for each of us. It is easy to become discouraged and lose hope because of our human frailties, weaknesses, and sufferings. When we become too attached to this life, we become susceptible to losing hope. But every Christian will live forever. Every Christian will be raised from the dead. We can take hope in the reality of Christ’s promise of a bodily resurrection.



6 In what ways are we weak and fragile?

7 What can every Christian look forward to?



8 In what do people in our society put their hope?

9 To what escapes do people turn when they feel hopeless?

10 What does the gospel offer to people who feel hopeless?

11 Of which aspect of your mortality are you most aware?

12 What about the future with Christ do you look forward to?

13 What are some ways you can focus your thoughts on “what we have not yet seen” this week (4:18)?



14 Whom would you most like to tell about the hope that all in Christ will live forever?

A Why do many people not see the truth of the gospel (4:4)? Who is responsible for changing their mind (4:4–6)? How can you pray for such people in your life?

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B What happens to Christians when they die (5:1–9)? How does this contrast with life on earth? How does this change your perspective on your present problems?

C If we are saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8, 9), how is it possible for Christians to be judged “for the good or evil we have done in our bodies” (2 Corinthians 5:10)? How does the final judgment motivate you to live for Christ?