



INTRODUCTION

How are we supposed to remain hopeful in a hopelessly broken world? We want to be optimistic, but when relationships sour, stock prices tumble, dreams disappear, and plans crumble, hope can be hard to come by. In a world without guarantees, hope can feel like a dangerous thing. But what if the tension we feel is the result of putting our hope in the wrong things? What if God has a different plan for us – a plan built on his unfailing love?

PART 3

VIDEO NOTES

There is a great tension many of us are feeling right now – the tension of trying to maintain hope in what seems like a hopeless world. Many of us have experienced the pain of unmet expectations as people, events, and circumstances have let us down. How do we continue to hope when we seem to be constantly disappointed?

Working from this definition – hope is the person or thing in which our expectations are centered – Buck used a ladder to give a visual to show what many of us find ourselves putting our hope in: our abilities, education, talents, finances, and relationships. Naturally, when these things fall through and disappoint us, we feel defeat. We feel as though we've gone from living in the land of plenty to a land of despair and loss.

The Apostle Paul gives us great insight into how to live in a world that is broken and corrupt. The first part of this is bad news – we live in a world that has been wrecked by sin and our very nature is bound to decay. But this is the way it has to be for love to

even be a possibility in our world, for love requires freedom. As we shift from putting our hope into the things of this world to putting our hope in God, we can begin to see how He takes all these broken pieces and uses them for good. He Himself is living proof, no stranger to the sorrows of this world, for He gave us His son and watched Him die on the cross. From this, we recognize that God knows what we need, that He empathizes with us in our grief, and that He will work things out for the best, even when we don't understand how or why.

If we want to maintain hope in a hopelessly broken world, Paul says we have to move our ladder from the plenty, from everything that can be broken and instead lean it against our Heavenly Father. And this is the good news of Paul's message: nothing can separate us from the constant, consistent, never-failing love of God.

Move your hope from **the gifts** to the **Provider of the gifts**.

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

1. Buck defines hope as a person or thing in which our expectations are centered. With that in mind, in whom or what do you most frequently place your hope? In what kinds of things/people do you see your friends and family placing their expectations?
2. What effects have you seen in your life as a result of placing your hope in these things?
3. Read Romans 8:20. How does this verse support the idea of sin as a disease and not an event? Why does this matter in the context of finding and maintaining hope?
4. Read Romans 8:26-30. What phrases or concepts in this passage create hope within you?
5. Read Romans 8:33-39. In this passage, Paul provides a long list of circumstances, culminating with "nor anything else in all creation" that shall separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. If you were to write your list of circumstances, powers, or feelings that you are most afraid would separate you from the love of God, what would be on that list?

THIS WEEK

Hope only works when the object of our hope is certain, when it is consistent, and when it will not fail. God has offered us such an unfailing object: His love. As

evidenced in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for our sins, God has shown that His love is truly without fail. So, although this world will remain broken due to the disease of sin, you can confidently hope without reservation if you transfer all of your hope onto God's unfailing love.

What does it look like practically for you to move your hope from things to God this week? As a group, compile a list of attributes of God that you have experienced and a list of what you're often tempted to put your hope in. When you experience disappointment, return to the attributes list. Next week when you meet, talk about how going back to the character of God impacted your ability to navigate disappointments.

"For I am convinced that neither **death** nor **life**, neither **angels** nor **demons**, neither the **present** nor the **future**, nor any **powers**, neither **height** nor **depth**, nor **anything else** in all creation, will be able to separate us from the **love of God** that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Romans 8:38-39