



## CHRONIC JOY® DEVOTIONAL

### LEAVING HOPE BEHIND

By Hailey Hudson

*Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings,  
knowing that suffering produces endurance,  
and endurance produces character,  
and character produces hope,  
and hope does not put us to shame,  
because God's love has been poured into our hearts  
through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.*  
(Romans 8:3-5)

Above my hospital bed, a monitor beeped. I could see the blurred silhouettes of nurses going back and forth in the hallway beyond the tinted door of my room. The world outside my window was dark.

It was 8:46 P.M. and I was alone in the hospital, having perhaps the most difficult night I have ever lived through. I was in pain from surgery, I was dealing with the emotions and logistics of a new medical device, and my body was exhausted from the stress of being inpatient. Looking for a distraction, I picked up a book that I had asked my library to purchase for me several weeks prior: *Hope Heals: A True Story of Overwhelming Loss and an Overcoming Love*, by Jay and Katherine Wolf. Before I knew it, there were tears running down my face.

As Christians, we talk a lot about hope. Hope is a gift from God. It is our belief and expectation that God will do what He promised — that He is coming back to finish what He started here on earth.

There is a lot written about hope in Romans 5 and Romans 8. In Romans 5, we see how “suffering produces endurance, endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope will not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.”

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Romans 8 reminds us that we wait eagerly for adoption as sons and the redemption of our bodies, and in this hope we are saved. As we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

For us Christians, hope is clearly a very real and present part of our lives and our worldview. Our future hope grounds our present earthly reality. We can view this broken world and the things in it, like illness and disease, through the lens of hope.

I thought I was pretty well-versed in the concept of hope, but that night in the hospital, the Wolfs’ book brought up something I had never considered before: One day we will no longer need hope because we will be living in the fulfillment of our hope. As tears ran down my face and the monitors beeped around my bed (reminding me of my flesh and its tether to earth), I knew that was exactly the message I needed to hear that night.

Hope is a gift from God (and what a precious gift it is!), but the biggest gift of all will be the day when we no longer have a need for it. We will leave hope behind and move forward into eternity to recognize the glorious fulfillment of all our earthly hopes -- and no suffering here can compare to the glory that will be revealed in us.

Until that happens, it’s certainly something to hope for.

#### QUESTIONS TO PONDER

- How would you define hope?
- Where do you find hope?
- What does it mean to you to realize that one day we will no longer need hope?

#### PRAYER

Dear God, thank You for the precious gift of hope to comfort and sustain us here on earth. Thank You even more that You have gone to prepare a place for us where, one day, hope will no longer be needed. Amen.

*There is hope. There is always hope.*

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