

PRESENT JOY FOR FUTURE GLORY: Study Questions for Reflection (Romans 5:1-11)

"And we rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Romans 5:2)

1. THE VISIBILITY OF YOUR JOY

Paul describes a joy that is exuberant, visible, and contagious—like David dancing before the Lord or the father celebrating the prodigal's return. How would others describe your emotional demeanor? Would they use words like "joyful," "exuberant," or "celebratory"? Or would they more likely describe you as serious, somber, stressed, or sad? If your joy isn't visible to others, what might be obscuring it? How does your visible joy (or lack thereof) affect your witness for Christ?

2. JOY VERSUS HAPPINESS

There's a crucial difference between happiness (based on favorable circumstances) and joy (based on guaranteed truth). Think about your emotional patterns over the past month. When do you feel "up" and when do you feel "down"? How much of your emotional state depends on circumstances going your way? What would it look like to have joy that remains constant even when circumstances are difficult? How can you cultivate joy that's rooted in God's promises rather than life's circumstances?

3. THE NATURE OF BIBLICAL HOPE

"We rejoice in HOPE of the glory of God" (Romans 5:2)

In everyday language, "hope" means wishful thinking or uncertain possibility. But biblical hope is confident expectation of something certain and guaranteed. How has your understanding of hope been more like wishful thinking than confident certainty? What specific promises of God do you struggle to believe with full confidence? What would change in your daily life if you truly believed your glorious future is as certain as your past salvation? How does the Holy Spirit's presence in you function as a "down payment" guaranteeing your future inheritance?

4. UNDERSTANDING GLORY: WHAT WE LOST

"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23)

Humanity was created to bear God's image—to reflect His radiant glory. Sin shattered that image, leaving us "falling short" of the glory we were meant to display. What do you think it means practically to "fall short of the glory of God"? How do you see this glory-deficit playing out in human behavior, relationships, and society? In what specific ways do you personally fall short of reflecting God's character? How does understanding glory as something we lost (not just something future) change your view of salvation?

5. PROGRESSIVE GLORIFICATION

"And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another" (2 Corinthians 3:18)

God doesn't just promise future glory—He's actively transforming you into His glorious likeness right now, progressively, "from one degree of glory to another." What evidence of this progressive transformation can you identify in your own life over the past year? Five years? Since you came to Christ? What areas of your character are becoming more like Christ? What areas show little change? How does understanding glorification as a process rather than just a future event affect your approach to spiritual growth?

6. BEHOLDING TO BECOME

"Beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image" (2 Corinthians 3:18)

Transformation happens through beholding—consistently gazing at God's glory revealed in Scripture. How much time do you spend actually "beholding" God's glory through His Word versus just reading for information or obligation? What practices help you move from reading the Bible to truly seeing and savoring God's character? What competes for your gaze—what captures your attention and affection more than God's glory? How might you restructure your schedule or habits to prioritize beholding God?

7. THE PRESENT-FUTURE TENSION

"For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us" (Romans 8:18)

Paul uses accounting language—he's calculated that present suffering is nothing compared to future glory. How do you typically respond when facing trials: with despair over present circumstances or with hope in future glory? What current difficulty feels overwhelming to you? How would viewing it through the lens of guaranteed future glory change your emotional response? What makes it so difficult to maintain eternal perspective when facing temporal problems?

8. CHRIST IN YOU, THE HOPE OF GLORY

"Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27)

Your hope of future glory isn't based on your potential or effort but on Christ's presence in you. How does knowing that Christ Himself is your guarantee of glory affect your confidence about the future? When you think about becoming glorified, do you picture your own self-improvement or Christ's transforming work? How should understanding that "Christ in you" is your hope change how you pursue holiness? In what ways are you trying to manufacture glory through your own efforts rather than receiving it through Christ's presence?

9. THE JOY-MISSION CONNECTION

"Christians who don't enjoy God can't and won't wholeheartedly commend him to others"

There's a direct connection between experiencing joy in God and effectively sharing Him with others. How does your level of joy in God affect your desire and ability to share the gospel? Think about the last time you told someone about Christ—did your words flow from genuine delight in Him or from duty? What would unbelievers around you conclude about God based on observing your joy level? How might cultivating deeper joy in God make you a more effective witness?

10. PURIFYING IN LIGHT OF HOPE

"Everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure" (1 John 3:2-3)

John connects future hope with present purity—those who truly hope to see Christ face-to-face pursue holiness in preparation. What sins or compromises in your life are inconsistent with your claimed hope of future glory? How does anticipating seeing Christ face-to-face motivate you toward holiness? What specific "purification" do you need to pursue this week in light of your guaranteed future with Christ? How would you live differently if you knew Christ was returning next week?