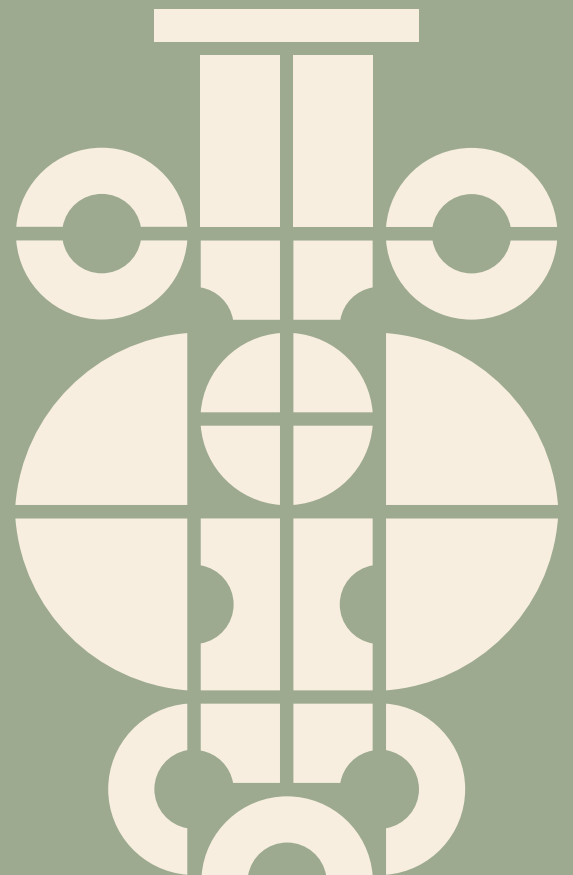


ROMANS

FROM GUILT ————— TO GRACE

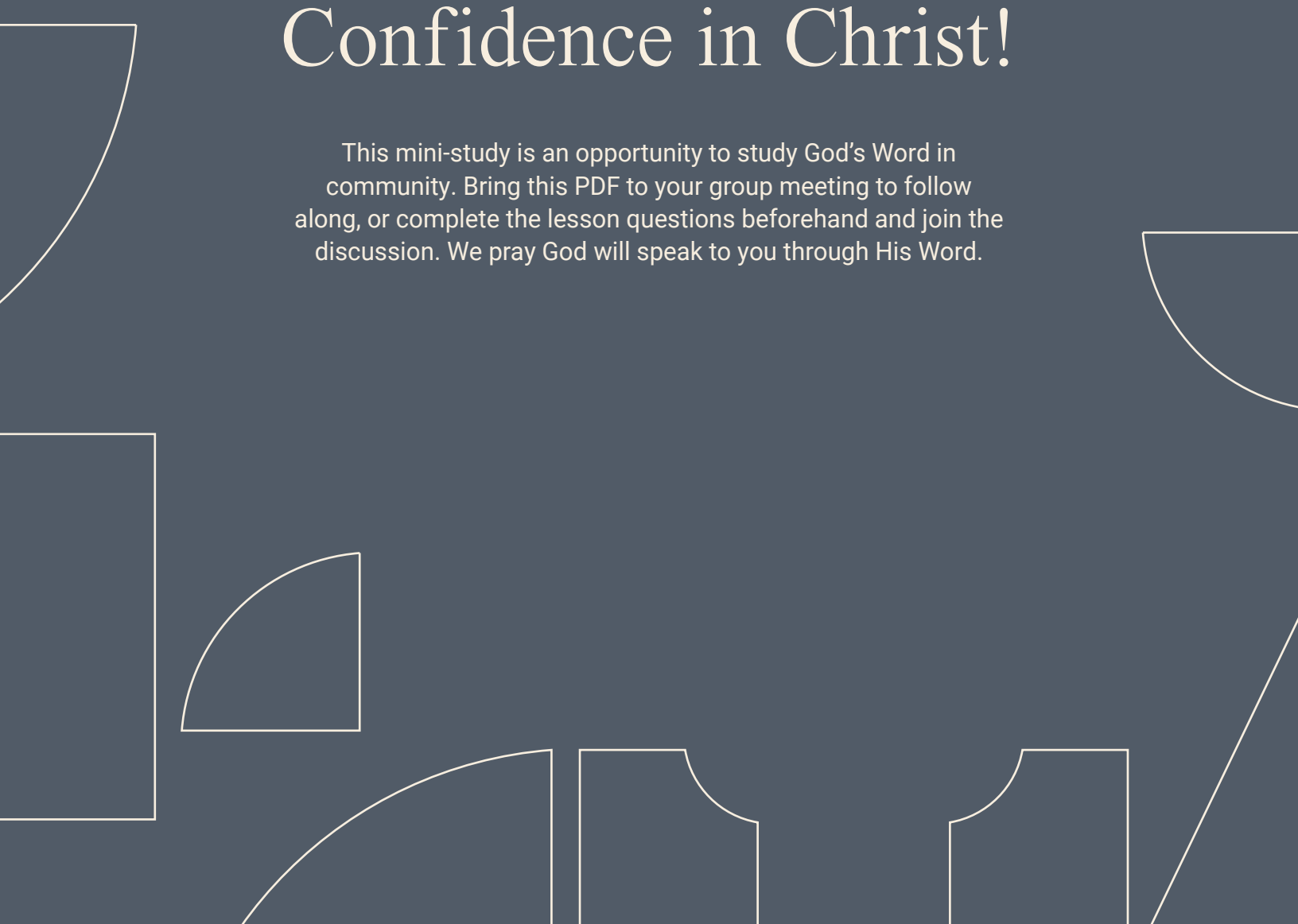
CONFIDENCE IN CHRIST





Welcome to Confidence in Christ!

This mini-study is an opportunity to study God's Word in community. Bring this PDF to your group meeting to follow along, or complete the lesson questions beforehand and join the discussion. We pray God will speak to you through His Word.





What is BSF?

Bible Study Fellowship is a global community of 500,000 men, women, students, and kids studying God's Word together. Each year, BSF groups study for 30 weeks, either in person or online.

How does the Bible study work?

This mini-study includes three lessons. Each lesson takes one week to complete.

To get started:

Read and answer the questions for the assigned passage each day.

Attend a BSF group to discuss your answers or listen to the discussion.

Listen to the weekly teaching on the week's passage (with your group or via the recorded audio lecture).

Read the notes with the passage's historical background and life application.

Repeat for each lesson!

How do I join BSF?

Since a friend has invited you to join their group, simply attend with them. Otherwise, to find a class in your local area, or to join a BSF Online group, go to join.bsfinternational.org.

We hope you enjoy using this four-fold approach to exploring God's Word in community with others. Thanks for choosing to study with Bible Study Fellowship!



ROMANS:
From Guilt to Grace

SCRIPTURE:
Romans 8:1-17

LESSON:
13



Life Through the Spirit

Lesson 13 Questions

Since you are starting with Lesson 13, you do not need to answer the First Day questions for this week.

First Day: Read the Lesson 12 Notes.

The notes and lecture fortify the truth of the passage for understanding and application to daily life.

1. How did the lecture help you notice God's work in your life this week?
2. What truth from the notes helped you better understand believers' ongoing battle with sin?

Second Day: Read Romans 8:1-4.

Read and answer the questions for the assigned passage each day. You'll discuss these with your group!

Paul proclaimed that believers are free from sin's condemnation.

3. a. How does Paul's heart cry in Romans 7:24-25 lay the groundwork for His triumphant declaration in Romans 8:1?

- b. Define the following words:

Therefore

Now

No

Condemnation

- c. What makes the proclamation of verse 1 especially significant to you?
- 4. a. From verses 2-3, describe the work of the Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) to save sinners. (See also John 14:15-21; 16:8-15.)

b. Because those in Christ are no longer under the law, how and why do they fulfill the law's requirements?
- 5. What powerful truth from this passage impacts your life, and how will you express thanks to God?

Third Day: Read Romans 8:5-11.

Paul described two different mindsets.

- 6. Name the two different groups Paul described and contrast their minds and lives.
- 7. a. How do you recognize a mind set on the Spirit's desires? (See also Galatians 5:22-23; Colossians 3:1-4; and other verses you know.)

b. What desires of your mind and heart demonstrate that the Spirit of God lives in you?
- 8. According to verses 9-11, what things are true of everyone in whom the Spirit of God (also called the Spirit of Christ) lives, and how do these truths encourage you today?

Fourth Day: Read Romans 8:12-13.

Paul exhorted believers regarding a new obligation.

- 9. To what is a believer no longer obligated? What is the believer's new obligation, and why?

10. a. What does the phrase “put to death” teach about the attitude people should have toward sin? (See also 2 Corinthians 7:1; Philippians 3:10-14.)
- b. How is it possible to “put to death the misdeeds of the body”? (See also Romans 6:11-14; Galatians 5:13-21; Colossians 3:5-17.)
11. What challenges do you face living life according to the Spirit? How do you need the Holy Spirit’s help, and how can your group pray for you?

Fifth Day: Read Romans 8:14-17.

Paul explained believers’ new status with God.

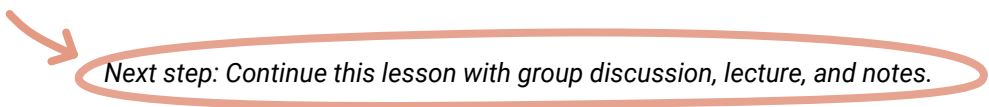
12. What is a believer’s new status with God, and why is this a cause for celebration?
13. a. Read Matthew 6:7-8; 10:29-31; Romans 8:29; Hebrews 12:7-11; and 1 John 3:1-3. What are additional benefits of being God’s child?
- b. If you are a believer, express how you have experienced these benefits.
14. How might these truths help you or others who doubt God’s fatherly love?

Sixth Day: Review Romans 8:1-17.

The Holy Spirit empowers God’s children to live holy lives.

15. What was most meaningful to you in this week’s passage, and why?

Homiletics for Group and Administrative Leaders: Romans 8:1-17



Next step: Continue this lesson with group discussion, lecture, and notes.

Lecture



After completing the daily questions, listen to this week's lecture. Some groups listen together, but you can also access it online by scanning the QR code.

Lecture Notes

[illegible]

Lesson 13 Notes

Romans 8:1-17

Dig deeper into this week's passage by reading the lesson notes with the passage's historical background and life application.

Focus Verse

"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." (Romans 8:1)

Outline

- Freedom in the Spirit – Romans 8:1-11
- Life in the Spirit – Romans 8:12-17

Engage

In the world today, people long for freedom they cannot secure for themselves. Some may suffer as actual prisoners of war or victims of human trafficking. Depression, physical limitations, illness, or emotional struggles hold others hostage. In the end, all people face a common challenge: sin's pull and condemnation. **God's people battle with sin, internally and externally, each day.** Paul lamented this reality in Romans 7:19: "For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing." Do you relate to Paul? As he turned his pen toward the next chapter, Paul celebrated a dramatic truth that radically transformed his struggle.

Paul's first words in Romans 8 proclaim no condemnation, and his final words promise no separation. Between these two life-altering pillars of truth, Paul unfolded a panorama of how the triune God powerfully and permanently works to save and secure His people.

Believers no longer suffer God's wrath because, through Christ, the Holy Spirit frees them from the law of sin and death. God propels His people of faith toward a new obligation—life according to the Spirit. No longer bound by fleshly desires, believers experience a whole new way of life opening before them. **The Holy Spirit empowers God's children to live holy lives.** How will you embrace this truth as God's gracious gift to you?

■ Freedom in the Spirit – Romans 8:1-11

Paul's use of the word "therefore" introduces a pivot within his letter. Up to this point, while introducing grace and salvation since the middle of chapter 3, Paul had stressed in chapter 7 that humanity's sin nature is harbored in every person's heart. How can we move forward in faith, knowing that we deserve God's punishment and wrath? On our own, we can do nothing. *Nothing.* **For those in Christ, the Holy Spirit brings freedom from the grip of sin and the power to live a transformed life.**

A Believer's Reality: No Condemnation – 8:1

Sin twists human lives upside down and inside out. The sin that resulted in Paul's despairing cries in Romans 7:24 could have left us in ruin. **Instead, God's amazing provision leads to a glorious shout: "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."** Paul's exclamation reflects God's gracious heart and grand plan to redeem His people. Four great words in verse 1 proclaim God's gospel of grace to sinners:

- **"Therefore" connects Paul's explosive statement with all his previous teachings in Romans.** At the cross, God's sinless Son took sin's full weight of condemnation, deserved by every person. The Holy Spirit has applied God's work through Jesus Christ to all who believe the gospel. Therefore, Christians already experience the freedom of God's final verdict of no condemnation. Christ bore the full weight of sin's power, guilt, shame, and punishment to save all who would believe.
- **"Now" refers to a point in time and reflects the immediate change in relationship status that occurs upon belief in Christ.** Once, we stood condemned and separated from God. We deserved and awaited the wages our sin had earned: eternal death.¹ But now, because of Christ, God has declared believers righteous in Christ. By God's grace alone, through faith in Christ alone, all who believe enter a new life reconciled to God through Jesus's death and resurrection.
- **"No," translated as a simple negative in English, communicated a stronger exclamation in the Greek used by Paul.** Paul emphasized his point with a powerful "no." His shout of "no condemnation" would read as if bolded, underlined, capitalized, and italicized. No believers are condemned, nor can they ever be; condemnation of a believer is utterly impossible.
- **"Condemnation" is a legal term that can include a judge's verdict and the deserved punishment or sentencing of the person found guilty.** Apart from Christ, all people live under condemnation, unable to save themselves.² Many people suffer under a heavy burden of guilt and shame for past wrongdoings, cut off from God and rejected by those around them. Others believe they do not deserve condemnation, considering themselves basically good. The early chapters of Romans painstakingly proved that all people are guilty of sin, without excuse before God and rightly deserving of His wrath. Paul's declaration of a believer's freedom from deserved condemnation represents a shocking and amazing new reality for the believer. Sin has a powerful presence in this world and our lives, but God's grace has overcome its penalty and power. Believers are released from sin's crushing weight of guilt when they receive God's great gift of grace. With shame permanently removed, they belong to Him forever.

A Believer's Reality: God's Work Within – 8:2-4

Having proven moral standards and God's law are powerless to save, Paul reminded Rome's believers of the source of their true freedom: Only God can free sinners from sin's condemnation. Jesus's work on the cross and His indwelling Spirit within the hearts of His people are God's gracious gifts that transform their lives and eternal destiny.³

1. Wages for sin: John 3:18; Romans 5:12; 6:23

2. Under sin: Romans 3:9-21

3. God's gift: John 3:16-17

The Trinity at Work (8:2-3) – God’s saving work involves each person of the Godhead: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.⁴ God’s triune nature is on full display in verses 2-3. There is “no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus [the Son], because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh.”

God’s triune divine nature is mysterious to us. He is one God in three eternal and equal persons who lovingly share one mind and will in all things, relating to one another in perfect unity and peace. **The Father, Son, and Spirit are distinct yet indivisible, working together to free God’s people from condemnation.** God the Father sent God the Son to save sinners. Jesus was born as a human while remaining fully God and living a sinless life. Jesus’s work on the cross placed the full weight of condemnation on His shoulders, not ours. Resurrected and ascended, Jesus proved His victory over death and sin and justifies all who trust Him for salvation. The Holy Spirit dwells within the hearts of His saved people. The Spirit’s powerful transforming work enables believers to live righteously. All praise, honor, and glory belong to our triune God!

God not only declares believers without condemnation, He also enables them to live as new creations in Christ.

Righteous Requirements Met (8:3-4) – Only Jesus’s substitutionary work can save sinners. Jesus fully met the law’s righteous requirements on behalf of every sinner, and God transfers His perfect righteousness to everyone who comes to Him in faith. With believers declared righteous by faith, God works within His people to set them free from sin’s power. God sets believers apart to worship and serve Him and grow in holiness. God not only declares believers without condemnation, He also enables them to live as new creations in Christ.⁵ As Paul taught in Chapter 7, sanctification is the process by which the Holy Spirit makes a believer more like Christ. **Through the Holy Spirit, believers can exercise their freedom not to sin.**

Holiness: Justification’s Goal – Justification by grace through faith upholds the law’s demands for justice. According to the law, sin’s penalty is death. Jesus died not to leave us in our sin but to save us from our sins,⁶ lift our shame, free us from fear, and enable us to live holy lives.⁷ Paul explained God’s saving work in verses 3-4, noting Jesus’s full but sinless humanity.⁸ God sent “his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh.” Jesus stepped into death, becoming sin’s offering on our behalf.⁹ He made justification possible for believers. **God justifies believers so holiness can permeate their daily reality.**¹⁰

Holiness: The Law’s Demands Satisfied – The English phrase translated “live according to the Spirit” is more literally “walk according to the Spirit” in the original Greek. **God’s Spirit directs the Christian on a path to increasingly reflect God’s character.**¹¹ God’s commands set the path’s boundaries. Jesus freed believers from sin’s curse to follow Him on this path. God condemned sin in the flesh “in order that the righteous requirements of the law might fully be met in us.”

4. **The Trinity:** 1 Peter 1:2

5. **New life:** John 3:5-8; 2 Corinthians 5:17

6. **Saved from sin:** Matthew 1:21

7. **Holy lives:** 1 Thessalonians 4:7-8

8. **Jesus’s sinless humanity:** John 1:14; Hebrews 4:15

9. **Sin offering:** Romans 3:24-26

10. **Righteous requirements upheld:** Romans 3:31

11. **Reflect God’s character:** Leviticus 19:2; Ephesians 4:24; 1 Peter 1:15-16

A Spirit-Led Life

The Doctrine of God the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit makes a believer's sanctification possible. Before his conversion, Paul thought himself fully capable of keeping God's law. Following his conversion, Paul realized God's standards reached higher and his own sinfulness extended further than he ever imagined. In despair over his sin, Paul learned that he could only overcome sin through God's grace in Jesus¹ and the Holy Spirit's power.² **Only the Holy Spirit empowers believers to break free from sin's allure.**

The Holy Spirit's presence abounds wherever the Lord Jesus Christ is preached and glorified and when people come to Him in true faith.³ The Holy Spirit immediately indwells every Christian when they receive salvation in Jesus.⁴ In fact, the Holy Spirit's conviction and regenerating work makes belief possible. This true baptism with the Holy Spirit occurs only once and is permanent. The New Testament, especially the book of Acts, also speaks of a "filling" of the Holy Spirit, which may occur repeatedly after the indwelling.⁵ Increased spiritual power in ministry and faithful verbal witness to Jesus as the Savior characterize the Spirit's "filling." The Holy Spirit constantly works to draw people to Christ.

To deny the Holy Spirit's presence is to deny the triune nature of God Himself. A life void of the Holy Spirit is a life without God and His presence. Common blessings from God exist, such as sunshine and nature's beauty, but living apart from God's indwelling presence leaves lingering emptiness that only He can fill. Seeking only this world's pleasures brings a deadly void, leading downward into sin's unsatisfying spiral. **Disregarding the Holy Spirit and His work ultimately brings tragic results because life in the flesh is death itself.**

The Holy Spirit dwells within everyone who truly believes in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Unseen by the human eye, the Holy Spirit is believers' counselor, comforter, and advocate, who regenerates and transforms, grants assurance of salvation, and empowers them to serve and witness. Those who walk according to the Spirit experience life and peace. The Holy Spirit empowers God's people to resist sin's temptations. When their sin quenches or grieves the Holy Spirit, Christ offers forgiveness.⁶ The Holy Spirit works to produce abundant life in believers through times of worship, prayer, and conviction of sin. The Holy Spirit grows Christ's followers in faith and deepens their love for God.⁷

1. **God's grace:** Romans 5:20-21; 7:25

2. **Power over sin:** Romans 8:13; Galatians 5:16

3. **Holy Spirit at work:** John 15:26; 16:7-15

4. **Indwelling Holy Spirit:** 1 Corinthians 6:19; 12:13

5. **Filling of the Holy Spirit:** Acts 2:4; 4:8, 31; Ephesians 5:18

6. **Sin grieves the Spirit:** Ephesians 4:30; 1 Thessalonians 5:19; 1 John 1:9

7. **Growth through the Spirit:** John 14:15-21; Romans 8:10-11, 14-16; 2 Corinthians 3:17-18; Galatians 5:16-25; Ephesians 3:16-19; 5:18-21

How can the law's righteous requirements be met in any person? The Holy Spirit makes this possible. Jesus's death meets the law's demands for justice, and the Spirit directs a believer's life to meet the law's demands for righteousness. **By the Spirit's liberating power, believers experience freedom from sin's captivity with changed lives that honor Christ.**

A Believer's Mindset – 8:5-11

What differentiates God's people from the unsaved? In Romans 5, Paul explained death through Adam and life through Christ. **Romans 8 contrasts life in the flesh with life in the Spirit.** Paul began his explanation by addressing the mindset of unbelievers and believers.

Flesh Versus Spirit (8:5-8) – Paul stated that those who live according to the flesh have minds “set on what the flesh desires.” Flesh, in this case, means more than simply the sins of the body. Given over to every sinful whim, minds set on the flesh oppose and rebel against God.

On the other hand, a true believer's mind is “set on what the Spirit desires.” While God's standards remain unattainable through human effort, God's people desire and pursue Christlike living. God sent His Son to the cross and gave His Spirit to His people so they might meet the law's demands through union with Christ and grow in righteous living. This is God's desire for every believer.¹²

In verses 6-8, Paul further defined what controls people's minds. The mind governed by the flesh is death itself. Hostile to God, this mind does not and cannot submit to God's law nor please God in any way. **The mind governed by the Spirit, however, gains life and peace.** People with this mindset humbly seek to follow God and please Him in all they say and do.

The Realm of the Spirit (8:9-11) – Paul moved from the mind set on the Spirit to living in the realm of the Spirit: “You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you.” Those who do not have the Spirit of God do not belong to Christ. Those who live in the Spirit's realm experience unity with Christ. For believers, the time when sin and the flesh exerted unopposed dominion has ended. God alone accomplishes this through Jesus.

Because of sin's lingering presence in the world, every believer remains subject to physical death. Sickness, scars, and physical ailments reveal the seeds of death remaining in our bodies. But “if Christ is in you ... the Spirit gives life because of righteousness.” **Not only does the Holy Spirit make believers alive to God, but they also find life in God's Word and through the Spirit's work in their lives.**

Each Christian's life points forward to physical resurrection and eternal life. Although physical death looms, believers will rise again: “If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.” **Because salvation is God's work and not our own, the new life a believer experiences now assures the resurrection life God has promised.**

12. God's desire for believers: Philippians 3:7-14

■ Life in the Spirit – Romans 8:12-17

Paul moved forward with another “therefore” that shifts toward a new responsibility for believers. The Holy Spirit joins God’s people to Christ. They are delivered from God’s condemnation and wrath. Believers now live in the realm of the Spirit with a new nature. Because of their new life, they have a new obligation and a new family.

A Believer’s Obligation – 8:12-13

Paul taught that believers’ former obligation to sin has been abolished; they should not go back to their sinful lifestyles. No longer living according to the flesh, they are called to put the body’s misdeeds to death and live by the Spirit. **The Holy Spirit saves, empowers, and unites believers to Christ.** A believer owes nothing to sin and the flesh. Instead, our obligation is to God in Christ—to live in the Holy Spirit’s power.¹³

A Believer’s Family – 8:14-17

Paul added depth and richness to a believer’s identity when he stated that only “those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God.” Before, believers were “in Adam”; now, they are “in Christ.”¹⁴ Before, they were under condemnation; now, they are no longer condemned. Yet much more than a change of state, God considers every believer a part of His family—His own children. What an incomprehensible gift! How amazing that God would choose to call us His children! Being God’s child involves living in dynamic relationship with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit lives within every true child of God, leading them to be more like Christ.

The Holy Spirit brings about our adoption to sonship: God’s children are those who love Him and listen to His Word. Jesus spoke clearly to His unbelieving opponents, saying, “The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God.”¹⁵ He clearly stated that not everyone is a member of God’s family. No one inherits godliness from their parents.¹⁶ But through His Spirit, God adopts everyone who believes in Jesus into His family. Paul said, “The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship.” Women and enslaved people in Rome had many reasons to fear neglect, abandonment, or mistreatment. Paul’s use of “sonship” proclaims that all God’s children can live without fear because they possess full rights and status as sons. Even more, believers become co-heirs with Christ and receive every good and perfect heavenly gift, including eternal life!¹⁷

The Holy Spirit grants assurance that God is our “Abba, Father.” The ability to call God our Father goes back to Jesus’s teachings. When His disciples prayed, Jesus taught them to call on God as their Father.¹⁸ The night before the cross, Jesus prayed, “Abba, Father ... take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.”¹⁹ God’s people can expect an intimate relationship with God and His comforting care even in hardships and suffering.²⁰

13. Live for God: Romans 6:12-14

14. In Adam, in Christ: Romans 5:12-21

15. Jesus’s words to unbelievers: John 8:47

16. No godliness: John 1:12-13

17. Spiritual blessings: Ephesians 1:3-14

18. God our Father: Matthew 6:8-15

19. Take this cup: Mark 14:36

20. Hardship and suffering: Matthew 10:29-31; Hebrews 12:3-11

The Holy Spirit testifies with our Spirit that we belong to God's family. The Holy Spirit taught believers in Rome and teaches God's children across the globe today. God not only adopts all believers as His children, He also takes an unimaginable next step to make us His heirs—co-heirs with Christ. Though this life overflows with God's many blessings, adoption does not promise believers earthly riches or freedom from suffering. Life's many challenges lead God's children to persevere as His heirs. We grow to be like Christ as we share in His sufferings. Christlikeness comes not through the suffering itself but as the Holy Spirit sanctifies us and leads us to trust God. All God's children will share Christ's glory and live as His holy people forever.²¹ The Holy Spirit empowers God's children to live holy lives.

Take to Heart

Hold Fast

Paul's despairing wail in Chapter 7 bursts into his glorious declaration of complete freedom in Chapter 8: "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." **Jesus took our condemnation to the cross and buried it in the tomb forever.** He rose in victory so that by His Spirit we might live free from sin's condemnation of death and experience life and peace. Jesus took on sinful flesh, lived without sin, and fulfilled the law's requirement on our behalf. As a result, all who believe in Christ find God's righteous requirements of the law fully satisfied and move forward living according to the Spirit, not in the deadness of sin. We celebrate Easter once a year, yet believers live in the freedom won by Jesus's resurrection each day.

An obligation comes with believers' newfound freedom: "Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation—but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it." A believer's obligation is to turn from the flesh and choose to live according to the Spirit. This obligation grows out of gratitude for what God's amazing grace has accomplished for us. It is not a response to the law but to a relationship that is rooted in appreciation for God's love toward us. Fleshly desires are put to death because Christ defeated sin on the cross. Any who choose to live by the flesh will die, but those who choose life in the Spirit will live. Not only do believers experience victory over sin and death, but they also receive an unimaginable gift. Those led by the Spirit become God's children—adopted into His family as co-heirs with Christ. Sharing in Christ's suffering means believers share in His glory for all eternity. What a gift indeed!

Apply It

How deeply have you pondered Paul's breathtaking exclamation of "no condemnation"? These two words communicate gifts we can scarcely describe. Your past and present sins bring no accusation, verdict of guilt, or sentence of shame. Instead, Christ sets believers free from condemnation, free from sin's captivity, and free from God's wrath that leads to death. **In Christ, believers are freed to live for God and empowered by His Spirit to do so.** What emotions stir in your heart as you meditate on Romans 8:1? Freely express your gratitude to Christ Jesus and embrace His Holy Spirit's transformational power. Have you taken the pivotal first step—faith in Jesus? If not, today is that day for you. Choose life in the Spirit!

21. Christ's glory: Romans 8:29; 1 John 3:1-3

Once captive to sin and death, those who believe are slaves no more; they carry no obligation whatsoever to sin or their fleshly desires. Sin's appeal no longer controls us. Instead, our new obligation and devotion are to live according to the Spirit, who gives strength to say no to sin's deceit and manipulation. In God's strength, we can stand against sin's relentless beckoning. We can walk away from gossip. We can turn from anger or angry words. We can cry for help when temptation lures us. What sin still has a hold on your life? When will you take hold of the Holy Spirit's gift and fully embrace your freedom from condemnation, living a life of peace that God intends for you?

The Holy Spirit empowers believers to follow Christ and be led by Him.²² We cannot do this in our own strength. The Holy Spirit creates godly desires within us and teaches us to rely on God's enabling, not our own fortitude.²³ For God's people, holiness is far more than a good idea or reasonable goal. If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, holiness is your destiny.²⁴ God created you to live with Christ forever, indwelt by His Spirit. He set you apart and placed you on the path of holiness to glorify Him and enjoy His presence. As you grasp God's grace that has set you free from sin's power, He will multiply your joy as He works out His salvation in you. How will you respond to the Spirit's transforming work?

This passage describes God's beautiful path for His children that incorporates His gift of adoption. God welcomes believers as His children. Rather than a license to sin, freedom from condemnation extends God's open call to repentance. He longs for His children to turn to Him and receive forgiveness. He invites us to step into His family as His adopted heirs. Our Father welcomes us as we eagerly approach Him. Picture the reality of your holy Father looking upon you from heaven and declaring, "That's my child!" In what ways will you express your love to God, who lavishes His love upon you as your Father?²⁵ How can we adequately thank our God? All praise be to God our Father, Jesus our Savior, and the Holy Spirit our guide! May praise to Him ring out today and throughout all eternity!

22. **Follow Jesus:** Hebrews 12:1-3

23. **Seeking God's will:** Philippians 2:13

24. **Holiness:** Romans 8:29

25. **God our Father:** Matthew 6:8-15

ROMANS:
From Guilt to Grace

SCRIPTURE:
Romans 8:18-27

LESSON:
14



Suffering and Glory

Lesson 14 Questions

First Day: Read the Lesson 13 Notes.

The notes and lecture fortify the truth of the passage for understanding and application to daily life.

1. What truth from the lecture did you find most encouraging or uplifting?
2. Which application from the notes stood out to you, and why?

Second Day: Read Romans 8:18.

Paul compared suffering with glory.

3. What was Paul's experience with and attitude toward suffering, and how does this affect your understanding of suffering? (See also Romans 5:3-5; 2 Corinthians 4:7-18; 6:4-10; 11:23-28.)
4.
 - a. To what did Paul compare our suffering, and what was his conclusion?
 - b. In your own words, define glory. Give various aspects of a believer's glory from the following verses: 2 Corinthians 3:18; Philippians 3:20-21; Colossians 1:27; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; Hebrews 2:10-14; Revelation 19:1-8; 22:3.

5. Describe the relationship between suffering and glory. (See also Romans 8:17.) What hope does this bring to you, your church, and God's people worldwide?

Third Day: Read Romans 8:19-22.

Creation groans in frustration and bondage.

6. To what did Paul refer when he spoke of creation? Who subjected creation to frustration, and how? (See also Genesis 3:17-19.)
7. How do you see creation frustrated and in decay today? (See also Genesis 1:27–2:3.)
8. When and how will creation be fully restored, and what longings does this stir up in you? (See also 2 Peter 3:10-13; Revelation 20:11–21:1; and other verses you may know.)
9. According to Paul, how does creation groan? Why do you think he used this illustration?

Fourth Day: Read Romans 8:23-25.

God's people groan.

10. a. For what do God's people groan, and why?
- b. How are God's people to wait, and what might this groaning and waiting look like in a believer's life?
- c. For what do you wait and hope, and why?

11. When you groan in waiting, what biblical attitudes and actions might strengthen you and encourage other believers? (See also 2 Corinthians 4:16-18; James 1:2-4; 1 Peter 1:6-7; Revelation 21:1-5; and other Scriptures you may know.)

Fifth Day: Read Romans 8:26-27.

The Holy Spirit groans.

12. How are the Holy Spirit's groans different from the groans of creation and God's people? How are they similar?
13. a. What is meant by "the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God"?
- b. How does the Holy Spirit work in a believer's life? (See also Luke 12:11-12; Acts 1:8; 16:6-10; 20:22; Ephesians 4:3-4; 6:17; 1 Corinthians 2:12; and other Scriptures you may know.)
14. What does it mean to you that the Holy Spirit intercedes on your behalf, and how have you seen Him at work in your life?

Sixth Day: Review Romans 8:18-27.

Believers eagerly await God's promised eternal glory.

15. As you consider the groans of suffering and God's revealed glory, what hope do these verses offer that you can carry with you?

Homiletics for Group and Administrative Leaders: Romans 8:18-27

Next step: Continue this lesson with group discussion, lecture, and notes.

Lecture



After completing the daily questions, listen to this week's lecture. Some groups listen together, but you can also access it online by scanning the QR code.

Lecture Notes

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Lesson 14 Notes

Romans 8:18-27

Focus Verse

"I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us." (Romans 8:18)

Outline

- Creation Groans – Romans 8:18-22
- Believers Groan – Romans 8:23-25
- The Spirit Groans – Romans 8:26-27

Engage

When was the last time you experienced the truth of Jesus's words, "In this world you will have trouble"?¹ Everyone suffers. People disappoint us, illness strikes, and jobs are lost. Prejudice and injustice leave deep wounds. Not only do God's children experience physical pain, emotional heartache, and mental anguish, but persecution and spiritual attacks continually disrupt their lives. We groan under pain, poverty, and temptation. **Suffering is something we try to avoid but cannot escape.**

Paul's pastoral concern for God's people compelled him to explain the glorious future believers await, even while they suffer. Pain on this earth does not threaten a believer's secure salvation and position as God's child. Paul now deepened the assurances he had just proclaimed in Romans 8:14-17. This world's trouble cannot compare with something that remains unseen yet certain: God's glory revealed in His children. God's promise to believers of a glorious future brings resilient hope that steadies them through life's challenges. While creation groans in fervent expectancy, God's children inwardly groan as they anticipate God fulfilling His promises—their future adoption into God's family and the redemption of their bodies. **Believers eagerly await God's promised eternal glory.** Certain hope in what remains unseen propels God's children forward as they patiently wait for God to do what only He can.

1. World's trouble: John 16:33

Creation Groans – Romans 8:18-22

Paul continued from verse 17, where he stated the incredible reality for all believers: **"We are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in His sufferings in order that we might also share in His glory."** Paul reminded his readers that sharing God's glory requires sharing Christ's suffering. Suffering afflicts not just people but all of creation. Nature also suffers the effects of sin: decay and death. Even so, creation's groans do not merely express a painful struggle but also anticipate future glory.

Glory Beyond Compare – 8:18

In verse 18, Paul compared believers' present sufferings with the glory they anticipate. The two do not come remotely close. **Paul explained that "our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us."** This promise of future glory includes the following:

- Experiencing Jesus's glory and reflecting His image with increasing glory¹
- Heavenly citizenship and bodies transformed to be like Jesus's glorified body²
- Being called through the gospel to share in Jesus's glory³
- Confidence that Christ's life and atoning death on the cross make us holy and part of His family⁴
- Joyous worship, union with Christ, and service to God for all eternity⁵

Every believer will know the joy of standing before God clothed in Christ, accepted as His child and welcomed into His presence. **As Christ's co-heirs, all who believe and receive His salvation by grace through faith will share in the splendor and radiance of His eternal glory.**⁶ That God would choose to honor sinful people this way should bring us to our knees in gratitude

The weight of future glory in Christ surpasses the burden of current suffering in every possible way, making it light by comparison.

While Paul endured severe suffering,⁷ he also glimpsed heaven's glory.⁸ **Reflecting on all he had suffered, Paul concluded that "our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all."**⁹ Our troubles seldom feel either light or momentary! Paul's perspective on suffering collides with the seemingly endless agony all around us. The perpetual weightiness of life's challenges feels heavy.

However, the intense suffering Paul experienced invites us to lean in and learn from him. Steeped in the Old Testament, Paul knew that "glory" in Hebrew denotes something weighty: the totality of God's perfect honor, beauty, and goodness. The weight of future glory in Christ surpasses the burden of current suffering in every possible way, making it light by comparison. Paul probably used the word "momentary" to underscore that believers' suffering belongs only to this present age—our time on earth. **While God does not insulate believers from suffering, He works through it to reveal His glory and will one day end suffering forever.**¹⁰

Creation's Hope – 8:19

Paul simultaneously linked God's children to and set them apart from creation in verse 19. He wrote: "For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed." Creation often refers to all God has made in the heavens and on the earth. Here, Paul likely

1. **God's glory:** 2 Corinthians 3:18
2. **Heavenly citizenship:** Philippians 3:20-21
3. **Sharing in Jesus's glory:** 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14
4. **Christ's family:** Hebrews 2:10-14
5. **Eternal worship:** Revelation 19:1-8; 22:3
6. **Grace through faith:** Romans 5:1-2
7. **Paul's hardships:** 2 Corinthians 11:23-28
8. **Heaven's glory:** 2 Corinthians 12:2-4
9. **Momentary troubles:** 2 Corinthians 4:16-17
10. **God's work in our suffering:** James 1:2-4

means nature—the world of animals, plants, and inanimate matter. Paul did not include God’s angels in creation’s anticipation. They already understand the future heavenly glory that believers await. Paul also did not speak of fallen angels—Satan and demons. They shrink from the future because God’s children’s glorious victory will bring their judgment and ruin.¹¹

Though imperfect, fallen creation reveals visible evidence of God’s eternal power and divine character.¹² All creation belongs to God, the Creator. Creation’s beauty stuns us as we view towering mountains or magnificent oceans. Yet creation eagerly awaits a glorious fulfillment to come. “Waits in eager expectation” reminds us of a child anticipating their birthday. Paul speaks as if the entire universe stretches to see the “freedom and glory of the children of God.” Why would the universe go through such lengths? Because creation will participate in the victory of the saints as it is redeemed to unspoiled perfection.

Creation’s Awaited Fulfillment – 8:20-21

God’s judgment on humanity impacted the perfect world He created for people.¹³ Adam, not nature, had sinned. Even so, creation suffered under God’s curse. Not by its own choice, creation was subjected to frustration—always striving but never able to reach its ultimate purpose. Creation exists in bondage to decay. Flowers bloom and wither. Fish lay eggs and die. Physical death comes to everything that has physical life.¹⁴ Even mighty mountains erode.

Yet creation will not remain in bondage forever. **God’s plan to redeem His people includes the glorious renewal of all creation.** At Jesus’s return, believers will receive perfect, imperishable bodies. Like plants and the seeds from which they grow, our new, glorious bodies will be linked somehow with our present, imperfect bodies, yet will be so much better.¹⁵ Creation will enjoy a similar experience—in continuity with what came before but altogether different and gloriously new.¹⁶

Creation’s Pain – 8:22

Like an infant child groans and cries to communicate discomfort, creation expresses suffering through groans. Paul revealed that “the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.” Paul’s image of childbirth points to joyful fulfillment beyond the cause of grief. Birth pains are real but not endless; they last only for a time. A woman groaning in labor endures great pain but looks forward in hope, knowing her struggles will fade once her child is born. **Creation groans in suffering now but looks forward in hope to the day of God’s fulfilled promise.**

Believers Groan – Romans 8:23-25

God’s judgment of Adam and Eve’s sin brought unavoidable consequences to all humanity today. No one is exempt. **Along with creation, God’s people groan—but not without hope.**¹⁷ Scripture promises renewed life in Christ that continues and gains momentum for all eternity.

11. **Fallen angels and judgment:** Matthew 8:28-29; Revelation 12:12; 20:7-10

12. **Visible evidence:** Romans 1:20

13. **Creation cursed:** Genesis 3:17-19; Isaiah 24:4-6

14. **Physical death:** Genesis 3:19; Psalms 102:25-26; 104:27-30; Hebrews 9:27

15. **New bodies:** 1 Corinthians 15:42-54

16. **New creation:** Revelation 21:1-5; 22:1-5

17. **Not without hope:** 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14

Hope in Adoption – 8:23

Those “who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies.” Just as farmers eagerly distribute the first produce from the crops they planted and stewarded, the Holy Spirit produces spiritual fruit within believers¹⁸ as they await their future glory. God’s tangible, transformative work offers a foretaste of the full glory His people anticipate in eternity. The Holy Spirit indwells believers,¹⁹ producing God-honoring righteousness in their daily lives. As God’s children experience the Spirit’s redemptive work in practical ways, they inwardly groan for the full glorification God has promised.

Daily struggles can cause excruciating pain. A believer’s ongoing battle with personal sin causes confusion and angst.²⁰ Outside forces beyond our control trigger anguish. Real suffering creates heartache. Though we groan in pain, we have a helper. The Holy Spirit works within believers and walks alongside them. He brings needed hope as He guarantees God’s promised inheritance of redemption.²¹ **In life’s darkest moments, believers can look ahead to a joy-filled eternity in God’s glorious presence forever.**

Earlier in this chapter, Paul proclaimed God’s great promise of adoption.²² Here, he reveals that adoption’s full experience is yet to come—an event believers eagerly await. Adoption has both a present and future reality. In the present, believers live as God’s adopted children—a part of His family. God immediately moves believers from Adam’s family²³ into His own family when they are saved. He is their Father. Nothing and no one can ever change this relationship. At the same time, believers await a future adoption that comes with “the redemption of our bodies,” which has not yet happened. **Believers anticipate the day they exchange their sin-tainted human bodies for new, glorified, heavenly bodies like Jesus’s body.**²⁴

Hope in the Unseen – 8:24-25

Paul continued his point regarding believers’ hope for adoption and redemption, saying, “In this hope we were saved.” Christian hope is not merely wishful thinking. **A believer’s hope in Jesus and His return is sure and certain.** God keeps His promises, assuring our present hope and future expectations. Paul expressed his hopeful attitude this way: “If we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.” Believers patiently await their bodily resurrection and their fulfilled adoption as God’s children.

God, who cannot lie, promised great, yet future, realities.²⁵ Because hope rests on the sure Word of God, Paul encouraged believers to reject confidence in personal strength, emotional stability, or spiritual accomplishments. Instead, God provides a reasonable and safe place for His people’s hope to rest—through faith in His Word and trust in His promises.

18. The fruit of the Spirit: Galatians 5:22-23

19. Indwelt by the Spirit: Romans 8:9

20. Ongoing battle with sin: Romans 7:15-20

21. Spirit’s guarantee: Ephesians 1:13-14; Philippians 1:6

22. Promised adoption: Romans 8:14-17

23. Adam’s family: Romans 5:12-21

24. Living in glory: Philippians 3:20-21; 1 John 3:2

25. God’s truthfulness: Titus 1:2

A Believer's Path to Glory

The Doctrine of Suffering

Paul knew suffering well. He had been shipwrecked, nearly beaten to death, imprisoned, and flogged, and lived in constant danger.¹ **Suffering is inevitable for all people, including Christians.** Jesus said that whoever wants to be His disciple “must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.”² Jesus suffered intense temptation and endured the cross.³ Paul recognized that God powerfully uses suffering to shape a believer's character. Suffering invites believers to know Christ, their suffering Savior, and the power of His resurrection through experience rather than only intellectual knowledge.⁴

Suffering entered the world through Adam and Eve's first sin. Sin opened the door to physical sickness, decay, and death. Directly or indirectly, sin causes pain through mental, emotional, and spiritual suffering. Some people suffer as a natural consequence of their own sins or those committed against them. Others suffer harmful persecution for their faith in Christ. In some circumstances, we can offer no visible or overt reason or explanation for the suffering we see or experience—famine, natural disasters, and accidents. **Regardless, we can be certain that no suffering is outside God's sovereign and protective rule.** In Isaiah 45:7, God says, “I form the light and create darkness, I bring prosperity and create disaster; I, the LORD, do all these things.” God uses suffering for good in the lives of His people.⁵

To suffer apart from Christ is to suffer without enduring hope. Despite our every effort to avoid suffering, looming burdens and troubles come crashing in. We seek mere human solutions that provide momentary control but never really offer escape; struggles continually arise. When people refuse to turn to Christ in suffering, brokenness, and weakness, despair or empty resignation can set in. The world's disappointing solutions and suggestions leave us empty, bitter, fearful, and frustrated.

Christ's followers can expect to suffer as a part of life on earth. God provides a path to glory when hardships enter believers' lives. The Holy Spirit's comforting presence within the hearts of God's children helps them endure in ways they simply could not on their own. God's living Word proclaims His great and abiding love, reminding us we are not alone. He sees us and loves us with an everlasting love. Jesus reminds us to take heart because He has overcome this world.⁶ Paul proclaimed something amazing—God's glory will be revealed in us! How can this be? Our God never ceases to do greater work than we can imagine—even in times of great suffering.

1. **Paul's suffering:** Acts 14:19-20; 16:22-24; 21:30-32; 22:24-28; 2 Corinthians 11:23-28

2. **Take up cross:** Matthew 16:24

3. **Jesus suffered temptation:** Matthew 4:1-11; Hebrews 4:15

4. **Knowing Christ:** Philippians 3:10-11

5. **God's goodness:** Genesis 50:18-21; Romans 8:28

6. **Overcomer:** John 16:33

Eagerly awaiting Christ's return requires patience. Though eagerness and patience do not seem to pair well, patience grows as we share God's priorities and care for others. Believers receive the privilege of working with God to reach the lost and serve His people.²⁶ What a grand picture of what this waiting looks like! In his other letters, Paul wrote about our proper perspective as we live on earth. In Colossians 3:2, he said, "Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things." Second Corinthians 4:17-18 encourages us: "We fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal." Filled with thanksgiving for God's deliverance from hell and sin's punishment, we face the future focused on life's next steps and opportunities. **This future focus enables heavenly minded people to make a real and lasting difference in the present world.**

■ The Spirit Groans – Romans 8:26-27

Suffering brings weariness. **While creation and believers groan in their sufferings, God does not leave them stranded or alone.** Instead, He comes alongside them through His Holy Spirit. God's abiding Holy Spirit not only groans with us, He also groans for us in prayer when we are not sure how to pray.

Help in Weakness – 8:26a

The Holy Spirit comes alongside believers in many ways. In addition to the Holy Spirit's powerful work we witnessed in Lesson 13,²⁷ Scripture shows us that He teaches God's people in challenging situations²⁸ and gives power to those who witness on Jesus's behalf.²⁹ Through the Holy Spirit, God's people grow in unity with one another.³⁰ God's Spirit speaks through God's Word and helps people understand truth.³¹ In fact, Paul refers to God's Word as the "sword of the Spirit" in His letter to the Ephesians.³²

Every person lives in a perpetual state of weakness—physically, spiritually, and emotionally—as we await glory. The Spirit's continual indwelling presence provides believers with ongoing help. **Paul taught that the Holy Spirit helps believers by joining in bearing our burdens.** Jesus taught this when He promised to ask His Father to send the Spirit to live within His people.³³ The Greek word *parakletos* means helper, counselor, advocate, or comforter. The Holy Spirit comes alongside God's children to offer exactly these functions and bring about an increasingly abundant life even while suffering remains.

According to God's Will – 8:26b-27

Prayer offers believers a ready channel to communicate with God. However, life's difficulties can make words of prayer challenging to voice. Our weakness often causes us to wrestle so deeply that we cannot begin to pray. Sometimes our limited insight skews our prayers toward our very narrow, time-oriented perspective. The Holy Spirit comes alongside believers to help shoulder

26. **Good works:** Romans 12:1; Ephesians 2:10

27. **Holy Spirit's work:** Romans 8:1-17

28. **Holy Spirit teaches:** Luke 12:11-12

29. **Holy Spirit's power:** Acts 1:8

30. **Unity in the Spirit:** Ephesians 4:3-4

31. **Holy Spirit's help:** 1 Corinthians 2:12

32. **Spirit's sword:** Ephesians 6:17

33. **Spirit lives within:** John 14:16-17, 25-26

the load that can seem crushing. The Holy Spirit groans as a real burden-bearer who stands with and for God's children. What does God's Spirit do on behalf of His beloved children? **The Holy Spirit intercedes for us in lockstep with God's will, which we struggle to discern in seasons of suffering.** He needs no words to express our earthly burdens perfectly to our heavenly Father.

Our Father understands the Spirit's wordless groans. Our triune, omniscient God tenderly works with intimate understanding of our plight. **Being one with the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit knows God's will and our hearts and intercedes accordingly with divine perfection.**³⁴ The Spirit's intercession on the Christian's behalf points to a day in eternity when there will be no barrier between God and believers. Uninterrupted fellowship awaits anyone who puts their faith in Jesus Christ. Positioned at God's right hand, Jesus also continually intercedes for believers.³⁵

The realities of life on earth present ongoing challenges for God's children. **Saved by God's grace, steadied by God's promises, and sustained by the Holy Spirit's help, we can face our daily struggles with a long-term perspective.** Temporary travail exists while certain triumph awaits. Believers eagerly await God's promised eternal glory.

■ Take to Heart

Hold Fast

Suffering and glory are major themes in this section of Romans 8. **From experience, Paul knew a believer's suffering can never outweigh the future glory God promises.** Yet for now, the two—suffering and glory—coexist. For now, creation groans, we groan, and the Holy Spirit groans. Creation's groans of frustration expectantly long for God's glory to be revealed in His people. Creation groans as in childbirth even today, while God's children groan inwardly. Pressed under the weight of this world's momentary sufferings, believers eagerly and patiently await the fullness of glory to be revealed through their eternal adoption and redemption. God's yet unseen fulfillment creates anticipation in creation and provides eager hope to His longing people.

The Holy Spirit helps God's people in their weakness. In our weakened state, there are times we cannot form words of prayer. The Holy Spirit intervenes with wordless groans and actively intercedes on behalf of God's people. One with God, the Spirit knows and prays in unity with the Father's wisdom and will. At the very same moment, His inexpressible intercession for those He indwells brings them immeasurable, needed, precisely aimed comfort. Paul spoke incomprehensible truth to Rome's believers that rings true today. **God chooses to reveal His glory through His people, and His indwelling Spirit continually groans in prayer on their behalf.**

Apply It

Though suffering's weight can feel unbearable, we can find comfort in our God, who understands suffering. He gave His one and only Son to die for us.³⁶ How comforting to know that the God who collects our tears is the same God who will permanently wipe all tears from our eyes.³⁷ Suffering, sometimes deep or severe, attacks our mortal bodies along our unavoidable

34. **Spirit intercedes:** Philippians 2:13

35. **Jesus intercedes:** Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25

36. **God gave His only Son:** John 3:16

37. **Our tears:** Psalm 56:8; Revelation 21:4

trek toward physical death. However, this sobering reality does not need to dictate how we view life. All suffering and pain will cease when God fulfills His eternal plan. His glory will be fully revealed in the everlasting age to come. And while we wait for that day, we cannot rightly compare eternity's glory with today's suffering. Even if suffering endures for a lifetime, God's purposes will prevail forever. What past or present suffering causes you pain? How is suffering's burden overwhelming you today? Cry out to the God who sees you. He knows you by name. He is near and ready to help. Will you seek God and receive His comfort?

Groaning resonates throughout the passage we have considered. Difficulties can overwhelm us as we process life in a fallen world. Creation groans. Believers groan. The Holy Spirit groans. However, the groans Paul described are not fruitless, hopeless wails of agonizing despair. Creation longs for God's children to be revealed—and they will be revealed. Believers long for the glorification God has promised in their adoption into His family. With absolute certainty, that will indeed happen. And the Spirit groans in wordless cries on our behalf, perfectly harmonizing our pain with God's purposes. God hears the Spirit's powerful prayers and holds our hearts steady when our knees are shaking. **God invites us to rest in hope that cannot and will not bring disappointment.** When groaning escalates within you, how do you respond? How does your trouble draw you to God?

Eternal future glory puts temporary suffering into proper perspective. Every believer will receive a resurrection body, live forever, and see God in His full glory, face-to-face. Paul's explanation does not minimize suffering but instead elevates what lies ahead. The multimedia onslaught of heartbreaking news and empty promises can easily drown out God's certain promises. We can almost hear creation's groans in the ocean's stormy tempest, a tsunami's thundering cascade, and the sweeping devastation of hurricanes, tornadoes, or wildfires. How comforting to know that a time is coming when God will renew all things. What helps you focus on eternity's glories rather than today's grief? How will you allow your most pressing challenge to catapult you into God's presence, where He can expand your longing for Christ's return? God can be trusted even when we cannot fully understand His purposes.

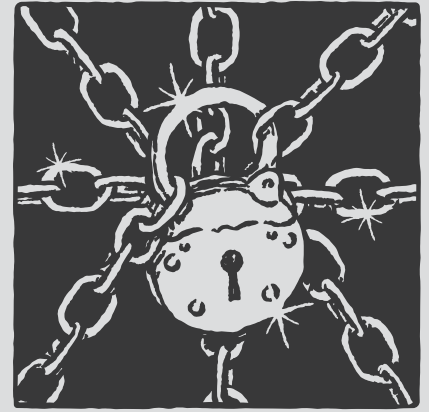
The Holy Spirit actively groans in intercessory prayer for God's people. If you are a believer, God's Spirit is actively praying for you—continuous, deep, abiding prayer in perfect alignment with the Father's will. When you feel too weak or confused to pray, ask for the Spirit's help. He is always with you. Believers are commanded to pray, even continually.³⁸ A great spiritual discipline and privilege, prayer invites believers to experience God's constant attention, availability, and unlimited power. We may not always know what to pray for, but God gives us His Spirit to step in where we come up short. If you are feeling discouraged or empty, recall God's promise and pray a short prayer of thanksgiving for His presence, hope, and care. Our Father hears our prayers and responds to them consistently, perfectly, and wisely out of His inexhaustible abundance. Be encouraged! The Holy Spirit prepares us for the time we will pray in perfect unity with all those gathered around God's throne. As you patiently await the fulfillment of your salvation and God's glory in eternal resurrection, how and for what will you pray?

38. **Pray continually:** 1 Thessalonians 5:17

ROMANS:
From Guilt to Grace

SCRIPTURE:
Romans 8:28-39

LESSON:
15



Secure in God's Love

Lesson 15 Questions

First Day: Read the Lesson 14 Notes.

The notes and lecture fortify the truth of the passage for understanding and application to daily life.

1. How did the lecture impact how you view the suffering you face?

2. What points in the notes offered you hope for today and the future?

Second Day: Read Romans 8:28.

Paul revealed a great promise.

3. What did Paul say believers know, and what did he mean by "all things"?

4.
 - a. Write verse 28 in your own words. Share any assurances that arise within you as you write.

 - b. What attributes of God are revealed in this verse? How does this comfort or challenge you?

5.
 - a. How have you seen God's truth in Romans 8:28 come to pass in life's struggles?

- b. When has God's good been different than the good you hoped for, and how might you pray when God's good feels hard to find?

Third Day: Read Romans 8:29-30.

Paul offered understanding regarding God's sovereign purpose for His people.

- 6. a. Briefly explain the following concepts. (For help, see Matthew 11:28-30; John 6:37, 44; 10:1-5; 11:25-44; Romans 1:6-7; 3:22-26; 8:17-21; Ephesians 1:4-5, 11; or other Bible passages.)

Foreknew

Predestined

Called

Justified

Glorified

- b. What do verses 29-30 reveal about God, and why is this good news?
-
- 7. a. What are some ways God works to conform His people to the image of His Son? (See also Romans 5:3-5; Ephesians 4:22-24; Philippians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:12, 15-17; Hebrews 2:18; 5:7-8; 1 Peter 1:6-7; or other Bible passages.)
-
- b. What might stand in the way of professing believers exhibiting Christlikeness in their daily lives?
-
- 8. How do you know God is at work in your life, making you more like Jesus?

Fourth Day: Read Romans 8:31-35.

Paul offered questions and answers regarding the spiritual benefits God's people experience through faith.

9. a. List the questions and answers given in verses 31-35. (See also verses 36-39.)

b. What conclusions can be made based on what Paul wrote?
10. How do Paul's questions and answers challenge or encourage you?

Fifth Day: Read Romans 8:35-39.

Paul proclaimed nothing could separate God's people from His love.

11. Why might Paul have quoted Psalm 44:22 in answer to the question in verse 35? (See also John 16:33.)
12. a. How do "all these things" listed in verses 35-37 relate to "all things" in verses 28 and 32?

b. In verse 37, what words did Paul use to describe believers, and who makes this possible?
13. Of what was Paul convinced in verses 38-39, and why?
14. List troubles, concerns, opposition, and fears that are present in your life today. Rewrite verses 38-39 as your statement of certain confidence in God's love for you in Christ Jesus your Lord.

Sixth Day: Review Romans 8:28-39.

God's people rest securely in His good purposes, salvation, and love.

15. What have you learned from this passage about your security in Christ, and how will you thank Him?

Homiletics for Group and Administrative Leaders: Romans 8:28-39

Next step: Continue this lesson with group discussion, lecture, and notes.

Lecture



After completing the daily questions, listen to this week's lecture. Some groups listen together, but you can also access it online by scanning the QR code.

Lecture Notes

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Lesson 15 Notes

Romans 8:28-39

Focus Verse

“He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?” (Romans 8:32)

Outline

- God’s Promise – Romans 8:28
- God’s Purpose – Romans 8:29-30
- God’s Protection – Romans 8:31-39

Engage

Life’s troubles can be unsettling. Relational challenges, health concerns, work problems, and financial difficulties surface and create uncertainties that threaten our peace. When life becomes unstable, external stresses and internal struggles can also affect our physical bodies. Where can we find rest and assurance? **Paul invited his readers to consider their ultimate security: God alone offers perfect peace.** His good character accomplishes eternal good in the lives of His people.

As Paul explained the depth and breadth of God’s love, he revealed that God, in His goodness, works all things for the good of His people. God’s grip upon His people is so strong that they cannot be separated from Him. Paul offered tremendous encouragement to believers who experienced life in ancient Rome’s trenches of depravity. Paul’s words pour forth the same encouragement to afflicted believers today. **God’s people rest securely in His good purposes, salvation, and love.**

■ God’s Promise – Romans 8:28

Experiences across generations show that God’s people have never been exempt from life’s difficulties. In Romans 8:18-27, Paul affirmed that believers’ suffering can never outweigh the future glory God promises. Though circumstances often promise the worst, God’s promise in Romans 8:28 offers resounding hope. **Paul declared, “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”** This tremendous truth reaches to all believers in every situation—all for God’s glory.

Pondering the Promise

Paul opened God’s spectacular promise with the words, “And we know.” What believers know and believe fuels how they live. God’s promise remains certain, even when we do not feel or

see the good outcome He promises. God works in all things, even the worst evil, and will bring eternal good to His people through every suffering, tragedy, and joy. Paul suffered greatly,¹ yet his confidence in Scripture and faith in Christ assured him of God's work on his behalf.² The Holy Spirit inspired Paul to write this truth so we too can know God works for the good of His people.

God placed no boundaries on this promise; Paul declared God's work in all things. Sometimes we see God bring obvious victory. God also works through life's darkest moments and seemingly hopeless circumstances to accomplish His ultimate good. Our situation itself may not be good, but God's presence and comfort rise even when relief does not. At Christ's cross and grave, God worked through the worst evil to accomplish the greatest good.³ Times of suffering offer opportunities to glorify God as we trust Him. Even death cannot leave lasting wounds.⁴ God's promise lasts for eternity. In all things, God works for good.

What exactly did Paul mean by the word "good"? God's good does not guarantee health, wealth, or comfortable living. **God's greatest good for His people on earth is to make them more like Jesus Christ in this life⁵ and in heaven's glory.⁶** God promises and secures His good for His children. While on earth, believers experience joy, peace, and the beauties of family and friendships. They also endure sin, sickness, and every other kind of suffering. Life in this world can involve one evil encounter and setback after another. We encounter betrayal, not faithfulness. Hating others is not love. Persecution is not protection. Death is not life. But God brings lasting good even through this world's fallenness. He uses all things to achieve His good for His people.

Paul made it clear Romans 8:28 only applies to those who love God—to believers in Jesus Christ. After all, how can all things work for good for those who reject God, who gives all things?⁷ But for those who live in Christ by grace through faith, God works in every situation for their good. He called them according to His purpose, and His plan will be accomplished through them.

■ God's Purpose – Romans 8:29-30

The certainty of God's promise to make all things good rests with Him. In these verses, Paul spoke exclusively of God and His actions without mentioning human involvement. God Himself accomplishes His good purpose. Paul's continued explanation revealed that God will see each of His people safely through this life and into His presence for all eternity. Not one believer will be lost.⁸

Assurance for God's People – 8:29

In writing about God's secure hold on believers, Paul pointed to five timeless truths about God. God foreknew, predestined, called, justified, and glorified the saved. These truths flow from eternity past to eternity future. The words connect as an unbreakable chain, with five golden links describing God's wonder, beauty, and activity in salvation.

1. **Paul's suffering:** Acts 14:19-20; 16:22-24; 21:30-32; 22:22-28; 2 Corinthians 11:23-28
2. **God's purposes:** Genesis 50:20
3. **Greatest good:** Acts 2:23-24
4. **Beyond death:** Daniel 3:16-18; John 11:25-26; 1 Corinthians 15:54-55; Revelation 21:4
5. **Christlike character:** Galatians 5:22-23; Philippians 2:1-8; Colossians 3:12-17
6. **Glorify:** Philippians 3:20-21; 1 John 3:2-3
7. **Giver of all things:** James 1:17
8. **No believer lost:** John 10:27-30

What did Paul mean when he used the word “foreknew”? Some say that because God knows all things, He knows beforehand what people will do—who will and will not believe. In other words, God looks into the future and sees the eventual faith of those who believe. Others look to the Greek word *proginosko*, which can mean to choose something or someone beforehand. When foreknowledge involves people, the word can mean special favor granted to a special relationship. The Old Testament often speaks of God’s foreknowledge in this intensely personal and loving way.⁹ Recognizing God’s foreknowledge turns our attention from ourselves to Him. Salvation begins with God,¹⁰ who lovingly chose to conform sinful, undeserving people to be like Jesus. **God’s foreknowledge demonstrates that every link in salvation’s chain began by God’s grace in eternity past.**¹¹

The word “predestined” flows from God’s deep and personal love. This differs greatly from fatalism, which is impersonal and excludes God, saying, “What will be, will be.” Fatalism implies no human responsibility or dignity. Paul used the term “predestined” to express that God fixed His love on His people before the world began. Believers’ destinies are wrapped in God’s loving choice to make them like His Son so “that he [Jesus] might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.” God predestines believers to accomplish His purpose.¹²

God’s love in extending His call displays true grace for humanity, which Jesus proved with arms opened wide upon the cross.

Eternity Past, Present, and Future – 8:30

The next link in salvation’s chain is the word “called.” The Bible speaks of two different calls. First, a general call invites everyone everywhere to repent of sin, turn to Jesus, and be saved. Jesus gave this type of call when He said, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest”¹³ and “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink.”¹⁴ This call remains open to all people. But left to themselves, people do not come. Sinful pride and rebellion lead people to prefer their own way. This is why Jesus also said, “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them.”¹⁵

The other type of call is the specific inward call from God, the third link in salvation’s chain. Jesus demonstrated this call when He raised Lazarus.¹⁶ Physically, Lazarus was what all people are spiritually by nature—dead and without the desire or ability to respond. Jesus called Lazarus specifically, by name. No one else in the tomb responded. Lazarus alone heard Jesus’s call and supernaturally obeyed. With the same effective power, God calls people from death to life today.

Not one person deserves God’s amazing grace, but He chose to ground His call in what He foreknew and predestined, which would cost the life of His sinless Son. God’s love in extending His call displays true grace for humanity, which Jesus proved with arms opened wide upon the cross.

9. **God’s foreknowledge:** Genesis 18:19; Jeremiah 1:5; Amos 3:2

10. **Salvation:** John 1:12-13

11. **Eternity past:** 1 Peter 1:20-21; Revelation 13:8

12. **Created for God’s work:** Ephesians 2:10

13. **Rest:** Matthew 11:28

14. **Thirsty:** John 7:37

15. **Drawn by Father:** John 6:44

16. **Lazarus:** John 11:25-26, 38-44

God's calling connects what God determined beforehand with what passes over into time. God exists outside of time. His eternal knowledge and determination intersect with human experience.

God's call is the point where what He decreed in eternity about His loved ones becomes a fact in time-bound lives. At a specific point in time, God personally and individually saves people through His call to faith.

Following "called" on salvation's chain is "justified." God, as judge, declared His people, though sinners, to be in right standing before Him.¹⁷ This declaration cannot be based on human merit, which no one can offer. Rather, God justifies people on Jesus's all-sufficient merit. Jesus took sin's full penalty at the cross, and God credits His Son's perfect righteousness to all who believe in Him.¹⁸

Justification follows calling because God's call is what brings faith into being. Faith rises as the first true evidence of the spiritual life God's call produces. Without faith, there is no justification. God saves people by or through faith, not because of faith. Paul later explained that faith comes by hearing the Word of God.¹⁹ God graciously uses His Word to create faith within believers' hearts to bring His gift of justification to them.

The final link in salvation's chain is "glorified," which means to be made to be like Jesus Christ.²⁰ Surprisingly, Paul referred to "glorified" in the past tense, as already accomplished. Yet we can easily see that glorification remains future. How could Paul refer to glorification as already completed? This is possible only because God's purpose is so certain that believers are already safe and secure for eternity in Him.²¹ When turning our eyes from earthly living to Jesus seated at the Father's right hand, believers see themselves already glorified through identification with Him.²² Paul's words exemplify how prophets spoke about certain future events as if they were already accomplished.²³ Paul deliberately assured his readers that God will glorify even the weakest believer. God never changes His mind. His Word remains certain and true.²⁴

Because God initiated salvation, we can know He will continue His work until the day He makes believers fully like Jesus Christ.²⁵ **Believers can expect that they will be glorified—illuminated with God's glory for God's glory.**

God's Protection – Romans 8:31-39

Romans 8 concludes with words that crest the highest peaks of scriptural truth with breathtaking beauty. The question, "If God is for us, who can be against us?" resonates with strength beyond compare. The truth that nothing can separate us from the love of God emanates enduring hope and hits a forceful crescendo that still rings today. **God's protection of His people on earth and in heaven remains undeniable, unstoppable, and astoundingly unbreakable.**

17. Declared righteous: Romans 3:21-31

18. Perfect righteousness: 2 Corinthians 5:21

19. Faith by hearing: Romans 10:17

20. Made like Christ: Romans 8:18-27; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Philippians 3:20-21

21. Safe in eternity: Ephesians 2:6; Colossians 3:3-4

22. Already glorified: Ephesians 1:3-4

23. Prophetic past: Isaiah 44:28; 52:14; 53:1-6

24. Unchanging and true: Numbers 23:19; Psalm 33:11; Malachi 3:6; Titus 1:2; Hebrews 6:18

25. Completed work: Philippians 1:6

Safe and Secure

The Doctrine of Eternal Security

Believers are promised sure and certain security in Christ. When a person believes in Jesus Christ, condemnation has no hold over them. Paul said, “It is God who justifies. Who then is the one who condemns? No one.” Having accomplished believers’ salvation, Jesus is now at God’s right hand, interceding for believers. **Salvation does not depend on human strength or faithfulness; salvation comes through Christ and His completed work on the cross.** By faith, the Holy Spirit seals and indwells for eternity everyone who believes.¹ Paul wrote, “He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.”² Salvation is God’s work from beginning until glorious, eternal consummation.

Paul later explained and celebrated that nothing can separate God’s people from Him or His love. No person, principality, supernatural force, personal failure, or anything else can come between God and His people. Moses lacked trust and acted independently. David sinned grievously. Peter denied Jesus. Paul suffered greatly. Scripture includes many examples of human and supernatural forces attempting to separate God from His people. But God’s immovable and unwavering strength means nothing can thwart Him. He keeps His every promise. So when His Word says, “Neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God,” He means it. Believers experience confidence, freedom, joy, and purpose in God’s firm and loving grip—in this life and for eternity.

The supposed protection this world seeks, such as a financial safety net or a home security system, will never provide the eternal security Christ offers. In fact, those who reject faith in Christ will never find the refuge they crave. With their very lives in jeopardy, people are tragically lulled through wrong thinking into considering their sins insignificant and failing to understand they need a Savior. Missing out on God’s great promise of eternal life and eternal security in Jesus, who gave His life on humanity’s behalf, is a loss beyond description.

Those who believe in Christ, their Savior, are truly saved. They are immediately blessed as part of God’s family and rest securely in their eternal salvation; enduring hope is theirs. While people saved from sin’s penalty still struggle with sin, the Holy Spirit gives them a new nature and sanctifies them, leading them to grow to be more like Christ.³ Clinging to God’s Word, believers who realize that nothing and no one can ever snatch them from their Father’s hands overflow with delight. They live freely, loving God, joyfully serving Him, and gladly sharing Christ and His good news with others.

1. **Sealed:** John 10:27-30; Ephesians 1:13-14

2. **God’s work completed:** Philippians 1:6

3. **Growing in Christlikeness:** Romans 5:1-5; 6:1-23; 7:4-6; 8:5-17

Paul's Questions – 8:31-34

Paul presented a series of questions that celebrate God's grand love for His people. Each question argues not only God's love but also His power and certain hold upon His people. Paul's journey of praise in these verses brings sweet assurance to the hearts of all believers.

Paul opened verse 31 with a precursory question, **"What, then, shall we say in response to these things?"** As Paul approached His triumphant exclamations, perhaps he intended to capture all he had written from Chapter 5 forward. Paul continued with, "If God is for us, who can be against us?" This question might at first seem confusing. Many people and things oppose God and His children. The world, our sinful flesh, and God's greatest enemy, Satan, create constant opposition in a believer's life.²⁶ While many are hostile toward God's people, the One who is for them is greater. No person, sin, or supernatural entity can get past the God who is for us.

Paul moved his argument of triumph forward in verse 32 by asking, **"He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?"** God is the good Father of a forever family. God gave His greatest gift—Jesus, His only Son. He did not spare His Son from pain and death. A faithful promise-keeper, God sealed all of His promises in Jesus's blood, which secures every promise He has made. Paul used the Greek verb *paredoken*, translated as "gave over," to point to God's gracious purpose. God lovingly gave His sinless Son over to death to rescue sinners from their deserved judgment. Life and righteousness come to believers through Jesus.

*A faithful
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Paul's third question moved into the legal realm of a court of law. Can believers' struggle with post-conversion sin undo salvation? Does any accusation exist that can cause God to condemn a believer in Christ? Many believers find it hard to understand what justification means to them personally. God has declared every believer eternally righteous in Christ through faith in Christ's once-for-all payment for sin. Believers stand before God not in their imperfect righteousness but as new creations clothed in Christ's righteousness, which never changes, fades, or fails.

The prophet Zechariah saw a vision demonstrating the meaning of standing justified before God.²⁷ Zechariah saw Joshua the high priest appear before the angel of the Lord in filthy clothes, depicting Joshua's sinfulness. Satan eagerly accused Joshua,²⁸ but the Lord rebuked him. He ordered Joshua's filthy clothes to be removed and replaced with fine, clean garments. He took away Joshua's sin. Who could accuse Joshua now? No one! God had already clothed Joshua in righteousness that securely covered his past, present, and future. Joshua's story becomes our story through faith in Christ. **Apart from Christ, many could successfully condemn us. But because believers are in Christ, they cannot²⁹ because "it is God who justifies."** No one can stand against God.

26. Constant opposition: Galatians 5:17; James 4:4; 1 Peter 5:8

27. Justified: Zechariah 3:1-7

28. The accuser: Revelation 12:10

29. Condemnation: 1 John 3:20

Paul's next question logically follows. Because the highest court possible has declared believers righteous in Christ, "Who then is the one who condemns?" **No one can condemn believers because Jesus Himself, who died and was raised to life, sits at God's right hand, interceding on their behalf.** Jesus will judge the world at His return.³⁰ In other words, because the judge Himself intercedes for believers, no accusation will get past Him. Christ freed believers once and for all when He died in their place on the cross.

Paul's Confidence – 8:35-39

Paul expressed great confidence in God and His unbridled love when he asked, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?" Having endured each of these trials, Paul could personally verify that none—not one—separated him from the Savior who loved him. Instead, Paul firmly testified to Jesus's love. In addition to personal experience, Paul offered God's Word as further proof. He quoted Psalm 44:22, which says, "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." The Bible makes it clear that believers face danger and death. They endure great afflictions that sometimes feel impossible to bear. Real suffering causes far-reaching and deeply abiding physical, spiritual, emotional, and mental pain. **How comforting to know that not even this world's worst attempts can separate us from Christ's love.** Paul eloquently argued that in all things "we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us." Jesus is our certain comfort and sure strength in times of deep suffering.

As his personal testimony continued, Paul recorded his convictions with tenacious passion. Considering all creation, he confidently concluded, "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." Paul dismissed every possible source that could separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. Jesus came to earth, lived a perfect life, and died an excruciating death—all on behalf of sinful humanity. Now that He is raised from the dead, we await His promised return. Jesus will never give up on His people. There is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus, and nothing can separate believers from God's love. Everyone who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ remains secure forever in God's love. **God's people rest securely in His good purposes, salvation, and love.**

Take to Heart

Hold Fast

God's great promise to work in all things "for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose" extends from the past to eternity. Our plans may seem good, but God has something even better in mind—making us like Christ.³¹ Nothing can defeat the plans of our sovereign and all-powerful God. He orders absolutely all things, places, and people for the good of those who love Him. God's people live in utmost security because in Him all things are inevitably and completely for their good forever.

30. Judgment: Romans 2:16

31. God's plans: Proverbs 19:21

Paul offered evidence for this extraordinary promise. Paul set forth the great truths about God's work in His unbreakable chain of salvation, proving just how secure God's people are in this world and for all eternity. God's love is unchangeable, personal, purposeful, and all-powerful. **His love is the strongest, steadiest, firmest, most substantial, unbending, constant, steady, and dependable reality.** His love is so sure that nothing in heaven or on earth can separate God's people from His love that is ours in Christ.

Apply It

"We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him." God's promises are easy to trust when work, health, and relationships are steady. But what about when tragedy strikes? We struggle greatly to find God's good in times of deep suffering. Paul knew this firsthand. Much to our surprise, God may exchange the ease we seek for something difficult. Christians must be careful not to wield Romans 8:28 as a quick-fix salve when trying to console someone who is suffering. Anguish should never be easily dismissed. While suffering is woven into God's sovereign plan of salvation, we need gentle care in our suffering and to comfort others likewise in theirs. **God calls His people to give a clear, authentic, and compelling testimony of their faith in Jesus Christ, regardless of circumstances.** Whatever your current situation, God's purposes for you remain unchanged, and His glory is assured. What questions remain in your heart and mind regarding God's promise? Will you ask God to help you trust Him and obediently cling to Him, depending on His strength to get you through?

How willing are you to trust God with words like "foreknew" and "predestined"? God is sovereign, all-knowing, ever-present, and all-powerful. He knew you before you met Him. Maybe reading these notes is your first introduction to God. He knew you before today and planned that you would meet Him in His Word today. Whoever you are, right now, God speaks to you. Do you believe that God has known you from the beginning and predestined you for heaven? If your answer is yes, have you answered His call? If not, God beckons you to come to Him. How will you answer? Salvation's unbreakable chain is but one prayer away.

Who can stand against God? No one! Are you outnumbered by people who mock God's Word or your beliefs? Paul presented great and unwavering confidence in God. Will you pray for opportunities to gently and respectfully display quiet but firm confidence in God?³² Will you work for peace by displaying the fruits of Christ's righteousness?³³ Nothing and no one can defeat believers because God Himself defends them. He reigns in victory over sin, death, and the devil. **God's people remain safe and secure eternally through faith in Christ Jesus.**

How does God's strong salvation chain compare to what you depend upon to secure identity, experiences, and possessions? We must live wisely in the world. The sovereign security God promises in this passage remains firm for all eternity. Paul's words challenge believers to answer God's call to live in confident, obedient faith. God works in our lives for eternal good. This promise frees us to step out in faith and follow Him without reservation. Further, this promise gives great hope: God is for you. God does not condemn you. **Nothing can separate you from the love of God in Christ Jesus.** Nothing now. Nothing ever. The unbreakable chain of salvation links believers forever to God. What praise will you offer to God in return?

32. Confidence: 1 Peter 3:15

33. Fruitfulness: Galatians 5:22-23



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