

LIFE MADE NEW

*A Self Study on Excerpts from
the Book of Romans*

LESSON 7

*"We Won! I Read the Rest of the
Story!"*

This Bible Study Series Provided By:

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Lesson 7
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“New Testament Christianity is a religion of hope, a faith that looks forward. For the Christian, the best is always yet to be.”

- J.I. Packer

Warm Up

Comedian Woody Allen once made this comment about death: “It’s not that I’m afraid to die. I just don’t want to be there when it happens.” In his humor, he attempts to take the sting out of the greatest enemy man has ever faced - being extinguished from this earth. Allen’s jab at death reflects the thoughts of modern man - the inability to face one’s mortality.

In this section of Romans 8, the apostle Paul brilliantly lays out the glorious hope we have through faith in Jesus Christ. Death is no longer an enemy because of what Jesus has done for us. The end of our lives will merely open a door to an even greater glory. And God, in His outrageous grace, gives us a taste of heaven through the Holy Spirit living in us and ministering to our spirits. With this wonderful hope, a Christian can reframe the hopeless words of Woody Allen by declaring: “I’m not afraid to die. I know someone who will be there with me when it happens.”

Getting Into the Word

Read Romans 8:18-39.

A main theme of this section is the contrast of suffering and glory - both in the creation (19-22) and among God’s children (23-27). You will observe some parallels of this theme of suffering and glory with the experience of our Lord. He suffered for us on the cross and then was glorified. As Christ-followers, we are called to imitate Christ by sacrificing our lives on His behalf. And we, too, will receive a glorious reward. God has promised!

Digging Deeper

If at all possible, buy or borrow a copy of J.I. Packer’s modern classic, *Knowing God*. Read chapter 19, entitled “Sons of God.” It is one of the most profound and encouraging descriptions of what it means to be a son or daughter of God through faith in Jesus. Taste a morsel of this spiritual feast in a quote from that chapter:

“To those who are Christ’s, the holy God is a loving Father; they belong to His family; they may approach Him without fear, and always be sure of His fatherly concern and care. This is the heart of the New Testament message” (p. 184).

Further Thoughts

Write down any questions you have regarding this lesson.

Prayer Corner

If you have specific prayer concerns, please feel free to list them. Our staff will pray for you and the matters you mention at our weekly prayer meeting.

Discussion Questions

1. Read Romans 8:26-27 again. How can the promise of the Spirit's presence help you deal with this week's difficulties?

2. According to Romans 8:28, how can we see our suffering in a different light, understanding that God has our eternal good in mind, and not just our life here on earth?

3. If Christians would be honest with themselves and others, they would admit at least occasional periods of doubt - wondering whether God truly loves them and whether they are His secure children. Using Romans 8:28, 31-39, how does the truth of this passage help us resist these doubts and claim the security we have in Jesus?

The Groaning of Creation (Romans 8:18-25)

You do not have to live long to realize that we are in a decaying world. Cars that were once shiny showroom vehicles are now rusting in a junkyard. Houses need new roofs and neighborhoods become run down. No matter how much we exercise or how healthy our diet may be, we will eventually wear out and die. Decay is woven into the fabric of this world. Romans 8:21 says that creation is in "bondage to decay." Because our world is tainted with sin, it is a very imperfect place to live.

Yet the hope we have in Jesus is that something better awaits us on the other side of the grave. The Spirit within our hearts reminds us of this great hope and gives us this longing to go home.

Going Home

The groaning of the Holy Spirit within believers reminds me of a story a friend once told me. An elderly Christian from his church was on his deathbed. He had been brought from the hospital to die at home. One evening he woke up his family crying, "I want to go home." The children tried to comfort him with the words, "Dad, you are home." But what he meant was his true home - he longed to be in his eternal dwelling.

God With Us

The anguish of personal suffering is always magnified if we have to suffer alone. If nobody knows that we are hurting, or no one seems to care, the pain can almost be unbearable.

Another blessing of being in union with Jesus Christ is that we never have to hurt alone. Certainly one way that Christ ministers to us when we suffer is through other Christians. However, we can see in Romans 8:26-27 that there is an additional manner in which God helps us in our struggles. As believers we are not left to our own resources in dealing with problems. God promises us His Holy Spirit to help us in our weakness and guide us according to His Will. This passage even says that the Spirit will help us know what we should pray for - to be aligned with the Father's Will.

“God embraced suffering as a reality of human existence. On the cross, rejection, loneliness, anguish, failure, pain, betrayal, and dashed dreams are all taken up by the suffering God...Christianity affirms that suffering is a reality within the human condition. The cross reminds us of another reality within this sacred story, God with us. God is present with us in our deepest suffering, understanding and sharing our pain.”

- Andrew Lester

Super Conquerors

You will notice in Romans 8:37 that God does not promise us that He will deliver us from persecution and hardship. But He does deliver us within these struggles of the kingdom. Therefore, through Christ we are more than conquerors, or as the Greek implies, “super conquerors.”

Five Unshakable Convictions from Romans 8:28

1. God works in our lives.
2. God is at work for the good of His people.
3. God works for our good in all things.
4. God works in all things for the good of those who love Him.
5. Those who love God are...those who have been called according to His purpose.

- John R.W. Stott

Wise Reflections

“The Gospel’s power today lies in its resources to help us overcome a demanding spirit and to replace it with trust as we await the full revelation of its power, the day when sinful people will enter Heaven as loving worshippers of God, when further sin will be unthinkable and pain will be unknown.”

- Larry Crabb

Reflection Questions

1. Paul says in Romans 8:18 that the suffering we experience on this earth will pale in comparison to the _____ that will be revealed _____.
2. A key word used repeatedly in Romans 8:24-25: _____.
3. List three ways that the Holy Spirit helps us as Christians (Romans 8:26-27).
 1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
4. What does Paul say that Christians are predestined to become? _____ to the _____ of _____ (Romans 8:29).
5. Even when we find that others are against us, we can be comforted to know that as Christians:
 1. God is _____.
 2. God will _____ us _____ (Romans 8:31-32).
6. What does Scripture promise that Christ does for us as we trust in Him? He _____ for us (Romans 8:34).
7. Verse 38 says that there are only a few things that can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.
_____ True _____ False