

Study 8

ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE

Romans 8

In The Group

- ◆ How do you cultivate your friendships with those who do not yet know Christ?
- ◆ What can you thank God for that has happened in the past two weeks?
- ◆ How has God used you to bless someone in the past two weeks?

Romans chapter 8 is the “Golden chapter of the Bible”. Due to the grandeur of this chapter, this will be our longest study in this series. In Romans 7 the Apostle has shown that despite our best efforts, no one is able to live righteously (‘right before God’). Since the only way a person can enter into eternal life is to be righteous, all people thus stand guilty before the Judgment Seat of God with the penalty of eternal condemnation (‘death’) having been passed. Hence, Paul asks the question on Romans 7:24- “*Who will deliver me from this body of death?*”

1. Paul answers his own question in Romans 7:25a. What answer does he provide, and how does this provide hope for us?

Because of this hope, all people now have the option to be found “in Christ”. It is imperative that people turn to Christ so that they can be forgiven of their sins and receive eternal peace with God (‘salvation’). Paul has already shown that no matter how hard people try to be *righteous* they can never be righteous enough to satisfy God’s demand for *righteous perfection*.

2. According to Romans 8:1, how can someone avoid divine condemnation for their sins?
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It is a common thing for followers of Christ to doubt their salvation. After all, we are thoroughly conditioned to believe that “there’s no such thing as a *free* lunch”. Grace is an alien concept to us. But because we are deeply aware of our own inadequacy we are forever subject to wondering whether we have done enough to satisfy God’s demands for righteousness. This is why understanding the grace of Christ is so liberating.

3. In Romans 8:2, the grace of Christ is referred to as a “law”. What kind of law is it called and what has it done for believers?
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4. How might appreciating Romans 8:3 free us from the burden of trying to earn our own salvation?
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The death of Christ demonstrates two great truths about God. Firstly, He is God of *love* and secondly, He is a God of holiness and *justice*. God demonstrates His great love for us by having sent His Son, Jesus, to die in our place. Since Jesus has borne God’s wrath for *our* sins, God’s standards of justice have also been satisfied (Rom. 8:4).

5. Since Paul has already made a case for being saved by grace, is he contradicting himself in Romans 8:4-5? Explain.
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Grace is often misunderstood to mean that no “work” is involved. But God’s grace is only possible because the work has been done by God. Once someone has been reconciled to God by the grace of God it is the same grace of God that enables the believer to do good works (note the flow of thought in Ephesians 2:8-10 which makes these two points). ‘Fruit’ should not be confused with ‘root’. The root of our salvation is the work of Christ while the fruit of our salvation is our good works.

6. According to Romans 8:5-7, in order to ‘live in the Spirit’ what is required of the believer?
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Those who receive the grace of God are transformed by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit puts a desire in those who have been born-again to obey God (Philippians 2:13). To live in the Spirit is to live in fellowship and peace with God through prayer and devotion to His Word and commitment to the community of the redeemed (church). This is contrasted by those who rebel against God and His Word, His ways and His will - referred to as *living according to the flesh*.

7. In what way does Romans 8:8 stand as a warning against lukewarm Christianity?
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Those who are followers of Christ exhibit the kind of fruit that the Spirit produces. Those who claim to be Christians yet do not produce the kind of fruit that proves this, cannot be truly following Christ (Romans 8:9). It seems that it is possible for someone to claim to be a follower of Christ yet their prayerlessness, lack of devotion to God’s Word and neglect for their local church tells a different story! (Romans 8:9)

8. How does Romans 8:11 give the believer confidence that living the Christian life is not merely by self-effort?
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9. How can the believer truly *live* according to Romans 8:13?
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In this context, the Romans 8:14 statement, ‘*led by the Spirit*’ does not mean tuning into the whispers of the Holy Spirit and receiving detailed directions - rather it simply means that a believer is in prayerful fellowship with God, devoted to His Word, and committed to supporting the Body of Christ.

10. The believer is not just saved from eternal condemnation. What other benefit does God graciously bestow upon those who receive His grace based on Romans 8:15-17?
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Paul is writing to Roman believers who risked their lives to follow Christ. Many of these believers were already experiencing persecution. These believers did not convert to Christ so that their lives could become easier, healthier or more prosperous!

11. How might Paul's statement in Romans 8:18 have been a comfort to such original believers? How might this verse also change the way we view life's difficulties and God's love for us?

Paul is emphasizing in Romans 8 that God's plan for the believer begins in *this* life but will reach a glorious fulfilment in the next. Romans 8:19 poetically describes all of the creation longing for the day when salvation will reach its glorious culmination in God's redeemed children.

12. Romans 8:20 is one of my most favourite verses in the Bible. It has deeply shaped my life. Please note what creation was to subjected because of the Fall. Who subjected it to this? What does this verse reveal about God especially when we are under trial?

In some way, when mankind fell, it affected all of creation (at least because mankind was created to be at peace with all of creation). There will come a day when this world will end and a new world will begin. Perhaps Romans 8:21 gives an insight into what this new order might look like when it says *creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption*.

13. How does our hope of the Resurrection comfort us in the midst of the challenges of this life? (Romans 8:23)

14. What does Romans 8:24-25 instruct the believer to do? When is this the most difficult to do?

There is link between (i) adversity, (ii) the summons to patiently keep hoping, and (iii) prayer.

15. Based on Romans 8:26, how does God help us when we feel the most helpless?

Some regard Romans 8:27 to be revealing how the Holy Spirit prays *through* God's people. When the Spirit prays through a believer, it may manifest as *praying in tongues* (refer to 1Corinthians 12, 14). Others understand Romans 8:27 as teaching that the Holy Spirit intercedes before the Father on behalf of believers.

16. In what ways is Romans 8:28 one of the most comforting verses in the Bible?

17. Romans 8:29 reveals God's ultimate purpose for every believer. What is this purpose?

18. We have already seen that God does more than simply *save* people who receive His grace, He *adopts* them as His children! What are some of the other benefits bestowed upon believers by God? (Romans 8:30)

19. Read Romans 8:31-39. What does this passage tell us about the love of God and the believer's occasional struggles to understand this love?

In just a few years from the time the Roman Christians received this epistle, in what turned out to be prophetic, they were experiencing the things described in Romans 8:35. Caesar Nero would commence a bloody and violent war against the Church from 64AD which only ended with his sudden death in 68AD (1260 days, that is, three and half years. Note Revelation 12:6).

20. What does Romans 8 teach us about the Gospel?

21. Who can you share with this week, what you have now just learned?

22. In which part of this study did you sense God was speaking to *you*? How and why?

23. Write out your prayerful response to God -
