

Session 1 Life to the Full: Filled

Romans 8:1-4

Leader notes:

- Romans was written by the Apostle Paul between 55-58 AD from the town of Corinth (Acts 20:2-3)
- A key verse for the whole letter is Romans 1:16-17
- An aim of the letter is to unify the church in Rome. It was made up of both Jews and Gentiles. In 49 AD, Jewish Christians were expelled from Rome and returned in 54 AD. Paul met Priscilla and Aquila in Corinth after they had been expelled from Rome by Claudius (Acts 18:1-2 & Romans 16).
- Romans 8 provides us with words of assurance through the work of the Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Our future is assured based on the work of Christ, revealed to us by the Spirit. The chapter finishes with the beautiful and powerful declaration that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

Open:

- As a kid, what's the biggest thing your parents found you "guilty" of doing?
- Have you ever broken the law? If so, what did you do?

Dig:

- Read Romans 8:1-4
- Why do you think it is important that "there is now no condemnation"?
- How does this help us in the battle against sin?
- What do you think it means in these verses to be "in Christ"? In this context "in Christ" is in direct contrast to "in Adam"?
- How does the Spirit give us life?
- What is the difference between legalism and spirituality?

Reflect:

- How is your worship influenced by the fact that you are "in Christ"?
- What can make it hard for you to continue to believe that "There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus"?
- What could you say to someone who is struggling with guilt or a sense of shame?
- What difference does the Spirit make in your life?

Session 2 Life to the Full: Focused Romans 8:5-13

Leader notes:

- There are two meanings in the New Testament for the word “flesh”. One is that it refers to the physical aspect of a person’s existence. The second is the tendency within fallen people to disobey God in every area of life. In our passage, the second definition is being followed.
- It is thought that this tendency to disobey God stems from who we are and not merely the decisions we make & subsequently do. These decisions are based on who we are. We are in Christ and there in the Spirit OR we are in the flesh.
- The flesh is something created by God. Like many other things, it has been corrupted. The desires though of our flesh will no longer be at odds with the desires of the Spirit on the final day. In fact, we will be complete in our worship of God and our minds will become free from the battle with sin.

Open:

- List some ways you feel controlled (taxes, voting, laws, etc.). Why do you feel “controlled”?

Dig:

- Read Romans 8:5-13
- From these verses, what is the mark of a true Christian?
- How does begin in Christ and valuing him above all else help us live according to the Spirit?
- In verses 7-8, what does Paul say about a person’s ability to please God or to keep God’s law? What does this tell us about Jesus’ sacrifice?
- Based on verses 9-13, how can we know that we are in the realm of the Spirit?
- Living according to the flesh means we will die. If we have faith in Jesus, we will live. In verse 13, why do you think Paul uses the language of death?
- What would it look like for you to “declare war” on the deeds of the body? How would life be different?

Reflect:

- What stands in the way of us giving ourselves fully to Jesus?
- When do you notice that your mind is governed by the flesh? What do you need to do to change this?
- What Spirit-empowered initiatives can you embark on to kill sin?
- How can we encourage others to remain faithful to Jesus?

Session 3 Life to the Full: Focused Romans 8:14-17

Leader notes:

- In verses 14-17, Paul introduces a further benefit of there now being no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus. We are adopted as children of God. Adoption in the first century carried with it all the privileges of the biological child. You would be included in the inheritance and any other benefits. For Paul's readers, this idea would carry some astounding implications and a further view of God's grace to those who are saved. This is a display of assurance to whom we belong and one we ought to take with relief and gratitude.

Open:

- List some ways you feel controlled (taxes, voting, laws, etc.). Why do you feel "controlled"?

Dig:

- Read Romans 8:14-17
- What is the transition between 8:13 and 8:14?
- Paul is saying that the Spirit is working in us to change to be children of God. What are some reasons we can get bogged down from this growth? Why is it that we accept a mediocre relationship with Jesus?
- What do you think it means that the Spirit testifies with our spirit that we are God's children?
- Why is it important for us to have such a close relationship with our Maker?
- What does it mean that we share in his sufferings in order that we share in his glory?

Reflect:

- Can you think of a time when you did not feel close to God? Why?
- Can you think of a time when you felt close to God or you knew you were close? What did that feel like?
- How can we show that we are children of God?

Session 4 Life to the Full: Hopeful

Romans 8:18-27

Leader notes:

- In verses 18-27, Paul is addressing suffering. It is not limited to the suffering we endure as humans in this world but suffering for the sake of Jesus.
- It begs the question, "how big is the glory that God is promising?" Paul explains here that it extends to the whole creation. God's redemptive plan leaves no stone unturned so that our joy is complete and his promises fulfilled.
- As a follower, the future is not merely about avoiding hell but being with our Maker. It will mean full adoption as children of God.
- But just as we do not see what we hope for, we do not always know what to pray. God, by his Spirit, intercedes for us. God has not abandoned us while we wait for the blessed hope, but walks with us, preparing us to meet him.

Open:

- As a kid, list some ways you felt you "suffered" (road trips, type of clothes to wear, moving, discipline, etc.).

Dig:

- Read Romans 8:18-27
- Suffering can be a stumbling block to Christianity for many. Why is suffering only seen as a bad thing? What will be the alternative to suffering?
- What kind of suffering do you think Paul is talking about? How can suffering motivate those who believe?
- What does the description tell us about our world?
- How does the restoration of the whole cosmos impact the way you think of the Gospel?
- What comes to mind when you think of the final home with God?
- How do you balance loving this life as a gift from God, while remaining free from slavery to this world?
- In what ways does the Spirit stir and prompt you to see Jesus as your treasure?
- When do you find it hard to pray? How does the Spirit help us with this?

Reflect:

- How does knowing that we will be glorified affect the way we live, work, & play?
- Do you think it is important that we look after the planet? Why or why not?
- How do we live as people who have a sure future?
- What do you do to have a consistent, rich prayer life?

Session 5 Life to the Full: Confident

Romans 8:28-30

Leader notes:

- In verses 28-30, Paul writes a condensed a reminder that we have been chosen by God and through Christ, our good standing with our Creator is assured. In Christ, we can be confident that our salvation is guaranteed.

Open:

- In your own words, how would you describe “the good life” (not working, fishing every weekend, hanging with the grandkids every day, no taxes...)? What would define a good life for you?

Dig:

- Read Romans 8:28-30
- When you read, “all things”, what things are you tempted to leave out? What things in your life seem to be outside God’s plan for your good?
- How does verse 28 help us with our view of hardship and our response to it?
- God finishes what he starts. What is the link between verse 28 and 29-30?
- Looking at verses 29-30, how would you describe the connection between each part of “foreknew, predestined, called, justified, & glorified”?

Reflect:

- It is God’s message; it is God’s work to convert. I am free to share, but I need to trust that God will do the work to change people. How do verses 28-30 motivate us to share Jesus with others?
- What does glorification look like for you?

Session 6 Life to the Full: Protected

Romans 8:31-34

Leader notes:

- In verses 31-34, Paul is using rhetorical questions to help believers remember that God has a plan. He is so powerful that there is nothing that anything can do above the earth, on earth or under the earth that can remove us from his protection and the salvation we have in Jesus.

Open:

- Describe a time when you felt someone was against you (in school, at home, in the neighborhood). Did they have reason to be against you? How did that make you feel?

Dig:

- Read Romans 8:31-34
- How do these verses help us with our assurance and our affection for Jesus?
- What do you think Paul means when he says in verse 32, "...graciously give us all things"?
- Paul mentions an accusation in verse 33. What would others be accusing us of doing?
- In verse 34, Paul states that Jesus is in heaven, "pleading for us". What do you believe that is about and why?
- Read the second sentence in verse 31. How does that make you feel?

Reflect:

- What can we do to keep the love of God and our love for him at the center of our lives?
- How do these questions Paul gives in these verses set you up for success in your Christian walk?

Session 7 Life to the Full: Victorious

Romans 8:35-39

Leader notes:

- In verses 35-39, Paul using crescendo language to remind followers of the incredible life we have in Christ. He's reminding us that no matter what is going on in your life, Jesus reigns supreme and we can be confident of the victory each of us will have in this life and the next because of Jesus Christ.

Open:

- Describe a time when you got separated from your parents as a kid. What did that feel like? How did your parents feel about the event?

Dig:

- Read Romans 8:35-39
- How do these verses help us with our assurance and our affection for Jesus?
- When Satan tempts us to despair by condemning us, how do verses 34-35 help us?
- What is different about God's love compared to love as defined by the world?
- What does the second half of verse 35 remind you of as we live in this world? How do the words of Jesus in John 16:33 help you work through issues that may arise as a follower of Jesus?
- Are you confident that nothing can separate you from the love of God in Christ Jesus? Why or why not?

Reflect:

- What can we do to keep the love of God and our love for him at the center of our lives?
- How do these questions Paul gives in these verses set you up for success in your Christian Walk?
- Right now, take time to reread all of Romans 8 in its entirety with the group. Ask the group to reflect on key verses that encourage you in your walk with Jesus.