

R &amp; R BIBLE STUDY 2019-20



# *breath-taking grace*

THE BOOK OF ROMANS

## LESSON 9

Today will be a fun day! We finally get to explore the great truths found in Romans 8, which, in my opinion, is a pivotal chapter. I'm still not sure how we'll squeeze all the good stuff into one week, but we'll see how far we get. There are many verses that I'd call "key" in our understanding of the benefits of our salvation, justification, and sanctification. The whole chapter shows us how we fight sin with the power of the Spirit. Verse 5 summarizes how we are changed from the inside out; verse 28 is a verse many of us cling to through our daily lives; and what can surpass the wondrous truths of verses 37-39? Hold on, ladies! Get ready for your mind to be blown! ☺ John Stott wrote, "In chapter 7 Paul has been preoccupied with the place of the Law, and in chapter 8 his preoccupation is with the work of the Spirit." In this chapter we find Paul's most complete discussion of the new life of the Spirit.

Timothy Keller wrote, "In chapters 8 to 16, Paul is going to continue to answer a question he began to ask in chapters 5 to 7: 'How does faith in the Gospel of Christ actually lead to change in real life?' For me, perhaps the most wonderful part of the book of Romans is 8:5, where Paul summarizes how you change from the inside out; how you change deeply. To grow in Christ and be changed into people like Christ, we need to set our minds on spiritual things, on things above. We need to learn how to meditate and think about the Gospel until it becomes real to our hearts and the foundations of everything we do. I have always believed that at the heart of Romans 8 you have the secret to really using the Gospel in your heart to change yourself in a profound way; and that the rest of Romans will show you what the change will look like in a practical way. My prayer is that as you read the second half of this wonderful letter, you will find your heart thrilled by the Gospel, your mind shaped by the Gospel, and your life changed by the Gospel." I concur!!!

### First Day

1. Read Romans 8:1-39 again to refresh your memory from last week. We have already done the repeated words, etc., so can you simply sum up the chapter in a paragraph, just to get your head around it again?

2. Let's read verses 1-11 again. How would you title this section? How many times does Paul refer to the "Spirit" in this section? In this entire chapter?
  
3. What two laws does Paul refer to in verses 1-2? How would you define them?
  
4. In verse 3, Paul tells us how we have been freed from the first law. How does he explain it?
  
5. In verse 1, Paul says there is "no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus." What do you think that means?
  
6. Notice that the chapter begins in verse 1 with "no condemnation" and ends with "no separation from the love of God" in verse 39. What great truth do you think these are teaching?

It's interesting that the Greek word for "Spirit" is used 21 times in Romans 8. At least 18 of them are references to the Holy Spirit. There are more references to the Holy Spirit in chapter 8 than in any other chapter of Paul's letters. I also find the phrase "no condemnation" fascinating. These two words refer to our position as believers. It's a legal term meaning to be free from debt or penalty. No one has any charge against you. It means God has nothing against us! He finds no fault in us; He has nothing to punish us for. I think this concept is often misunderstood. I love what Ash wrote about it: "This means for Christians there is no condemnation at all. It doesn't exist for us. It's not that we've moved out from under it for a while, but that it could return. No, there is no condemnation for us

at all – it doesn't exist anymore. Many think that a Christian is only temporarily out from under condemnation. Many want to limit the meaning of this phrase to our past, or to our past and present. But Paul is saying categorically that condemnation no longer exists at all for a believer. It's not waiting in the wings to come back and cloud our future. Many believe that Christians who confess sin and then live a good life are forgiven, at that moment, not condemned. But they believe that, should they sin, they are back under condemnation until they confess and repent again. In other words, if a Christian man were to sin, he would again come under condemnation and could be lost if he dies in that state. If this was true, then Christians would be people who are always moving back and forth, in and out of condemnation. But this view doesn't square at all with the comprehensiveness and intensity of Paul's statement. Paul says quite literally that condemnation itself no longer exists for us. Thus, the moment we come into Christ Jesus, condemnation is gone forever."

Martin Lloyd-Jones wrote, "The difference between an unbelieving sinner and a Christian sinning is the difference between a man transgressing the laws of the State, and a husband who has done something he should not do in his relationship with his wife. He is not breaking the Law, he is wounding the heart of his wife. That is the difference. It is no longer a legal matter, it is a matter of personal relationship and love. The man does not cease to be the husband legally. Law does not come into the matter at all. In a sense it is now something much worse than a legal condemnation. I would rather offend against a Law of the land objectively outside of me, than hurt someone whom I love. You have sinned, of course, but you have sinned against love. You may, and should, feel ashamed, but you should not feel condemnation, because to do so is to put yourself back 'under the law.'"

7. Have you ever wondered what that concept really meant? Did the paragraphs above help to clear it up at all? Any thoughts on it? What can happen if we fail to grasp the true meaning of what it means that we are no longer condemned?
  
8. Do you ever struggle with the concept of living under grace? Do you struggle with feeling safe as you entrust yourself to the free grace of God in Jesus? Ash wrote, "It can feel like falling backwards into the arms of a friend who may or may not be there." What do you think he means?

**Let's end here for today. I pray you are rejoicing that you no longer live under condemnation!  
Thank God for His amazing and breathtaking grace!**

**Memory Verse of the Week:** “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.” Romans 8:28

### **Second Day**

**Review your memory verse.**

1. Read Romans 8 again, focusing once more on verses 1-11. Fill in the blank. Verse 4 shows us that the purpose of Christ’s death was not just to save sinners from the penalty of sin, but that we may \_\_\_\_\_.
  
2. From verses 5-8, how is a mind that is “set on the things of the flesh” different from a mind that is “set on the things of the Spirit”? (How do they lead to two patterns of conduct and result in two spiritual states?)
  
3. How do we “practically” set our mind on things above or things of the Spirit?
  
4. Since what we “set” our mind on is so important, let me ask you this question. Where do you typically “set” your mind? Do you struggle with “setting” your mind on where it should be? What preoccupies your mind at times?

I love how Swindoll sums it. He said, “Unbelievers are characterized by a fleshly mind-set, a deadly future, a Godward hostility, and an inability to obey or please God. They have no power to change their sinful orientation, and as a result, they lack the ability to please God. Life in God’s Spirit, however, stands in stark contrast. They have a spiritual orientation, a peaceful existence, and a Spirit-powered life.”

5. So ... where does the POWER come from that empowers and enables us to live lives pleasing to God? What amazing truth is found in verse 11? (How does that encourage you today?)
  
6. Verse 13 talks about “putting to death” the deeds of the body. The word can also mean “mortification.” Is there a sin you’re playing with instead of trying to “mortify”?
  
7. Keller says we should “preach grace” to ourselves. What do you think that means? (Hint: As opposed to law-centered mini-sermons.)
  
8. Read Romans 8:12-17. Paul moves to the theme of “sonship.” What’s the test of sonship, the privilege of sonship, and the assurance of sonship?
  
9. Explain the image of “adoption” and what that tells us regarding our relationship with God.

The word “Abba” in verse 15 would be equivalent for our word “Daddy.” It’s an endearing term that implies a close, loving relationship in which the child feels totally comfortable in the presence of his or her father. The term is found only three times in the New Testament: Galatians 4:6, Mark 14:36, and here. In Mark 14, Jesus used it as He called upon God in Gethsemane.

10. The fact that we can call God “Abba” speaks of the intimacy we can have with the Father. Do you have this kind of intimacy with Him? Knowing that we can, what difference should it make in your thoughts, priorities or actions?
  
11. When we are children of God, according to verse 17, we are “heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ” What does that mean? What do we share with Him? (You can also read Hebrews 1:2; John 3:35, 13:3, 16:5; Ephesians 1:20-23; Romans 4:13; Phil. 1:29; 3:10; Colossians 1:24 to understand the wealth we have in Him!)
  
12. We usually like to think of the blessings that Peter refers to in 1 Peter 1:4 that he calls “an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you” when we talk about being co-heirs. What are your thoughts on being co-heirs in His suffering?

We’ll talk more about suffering tomorrow. (Yippee, right?) But for today, bask in the glory of being adopted into God’s family and being His daughter. That truth thrills me, does it you? He chose you. He adopted you. You. Are. His.

### **Third Day**

#### **Work on your memory verse.**

1. Please read Romans 8 again, concentrating on verses 18-27. In context, Paul begins to discuss being joint-heirs with Christ in His suffering in verse 17. Now he talks about the assurance of future glory. What does he say about that in relation to our suffering, in verse 18?

“Suffering and glory” is the theme throughout this section. First, the suffering and glory of God’s creation (vs 19-22), and then the suffering and glory of God’s children (vs 23-27). I love what Swindoll wrote about suffering, “It has been said that life has two guarantees – death and taxes. The spiritual life also has its certainties. One of those is suffering, and Paul doesn’t skirt the issue.”

2. What examples does Paul give of present suffering in 18-27?
  
3. How is the “future glory” described?
  
4. According to verse 17b, what does suffering lead to? Also read 2 Corinthians 4:17.
  
5. According to verse 19, is suffering and dying permanent or temporary?

We know that the “groaning” is a consequence of the Fall recorded in Genesis 3:17. The “groaning” is a means to an end. Creation is suffering due to man’s sin because God had an end in mind: our deliverance from sin’s slavery. Swindoll again wrote, “Have you ever wondered about what creation’s cycle of decay-death-birth-growth-decay-death-and-so-on is here for? Not only does it remind us of the transient, fleeting nature of life in general, but it is constantly in our faces about our own brief time on this earth. Also, it keeps us uncomfortable. We’re a stubborn race. Without pain we would never feel the need to be saved. Without a judgement against us, we’d never know we had transgressed God’s standard. In this sense, we’re like sheep—we need to be prodded by pain for our own safety. The pain of living in a cursed world pushes us toward Christ. And our hope of ultimate redemption and a renewed world helps us endure.” We also know that suffering is universal and no one and nothing is exempt.

6. Can you explain his analogy between our suffering and the pain of childbirth?
  
7. Bottom line ... remembering that suffering is temporary, universal, and draws us closer to Christ can help us have a Godly perspective on suffering. Are you suffering in some way right now? How do these truths encourage you?

8. According to verse 23, how is our response to suffering similar to that of creation?
9. Paul describes the tension between our present existence and our future reality in 2 Cor. 5:1-4. What does he say?
10. I love verses 24-25. From where do we draw our strength? What does Paul say about hope?
11. Why is it so easy to lose hope? Have you lost some hope lately? What encouragement do you draw from these verses regarding hope?
12. How does the Holy Spirit help us in our suffering according to verses 26-27? (Are we alone in our suffering?)

I think Paul's analogy of our suffering with that of a pregnant woman is spot on. I don't know about you, but I groaned a lot! It was almost unbearable, yet as soon as the baby was birthed, sheer joy! Paul is saying that suffering is painful in the present but with the hope of a glorious outcome. The pregnant lady receives her baby, and we, as well, will receive our Heavenly inheritance!

#### **Fourth Day**

**Work on your memory verse.**

1. Read Romans 8 once more. Spend some time focusing on verses 28-30. What promises are found in these verses? Who are the promises for? (Is it limited?)
2. Does the verse say that all things will “feel” good” or “seem” good” or even “are” good? What does it say? Can you explain?
3. How is this verse taken out of context at times or twisted in some way? (Have you ever been guilty of claiming that promise out of context?)
4. If we doubt God’s love or His providence, etc., how can suspicion creep in every time we face hardship?
5. Look over your definition sheet to refresh your memory on the meaning of “foreknew” and “predestined.” According to verse 29, what were we predestined “for”? What is God’s eternal purpose for believers?
6. What does it mean to be “conformed into the image of His Son” in a practical sense?

7. How do these verses give us assurance of eternal life?

John Witner wrote, “The term “foreknew” conveys love and warmth. It does not mean simply that God foreknows *WHAT* believers will do, but that God foreknows *THEM*. Nor does divine foreknowledge merely mean an awareness of or acquaintance with an individual. Instead it means a meaningful relationship with a person based on God’s choice in eternity before Creation.”

Jensen wrote, “God is controlling all things, even the sufferings and hardships of life, for the development and ultimate good of those who love Him and whom He has called (vs 28). The ‘ones’ referred to in verse 28 as ‘them that love God’ and ‘them who are called’ are those who have responded to the call of God, not merely those who have been invited. God invites all; those who respond to the invitation are the called ones. He has called believers for a purpose, and that purpose is stated in verse 29: that they might be conformed to the image of His Son.”

Jesus is the pattern and “Christlikeness” is the goal. Swindoll wrote, “Everything we go through; the disasters that ravage our lives, the consequences of our choices, the people who impact us for good and bad, are all used by God to shape us into Christ’s image. Then we will be Christ’s brothers and sisters, not just in name, but in actual ‘family resemblance (vs 29).’”

8. Do you trust that God wants what’s *BEST* for you? Are you struggling to believe that in some area of your life?

I’m sorry to quote Swindoll again, but he always says things so well! “Life’s hammers will pound us. Sicknesses will come, and friends will leave. Pressures will build and pain will visit us. The difference between standing strong and falling to pieces lies in how we view those hammers. Will we see them as malevolent enemies who only want to drive us into wooden graves? Or will we remind ourselves that they are tools in God’s hands, designed to conform us to Christ’s image so we can advance His kingdom here on earth?”

9. Are you experiencing the pounding of some “hammer” right now? How does the paragraph above encourage you?

10. John Newton wrote, "Everything is needful that He sends; nothing can be needful that He withholds." Write your thoughts on his statement.

### **Fifth Day**

**Write out your verse from memory.**

1. Let's finish up this week by reading Romans 8:31-39. In verse 31, Paul asks his readers the question, "What shall we say in response to this?" (Referring to the truths found in verses 26-30.) What 5 questions does Paul ask, then answer?

Question 1:

Answer:

Question 2:

Answer:

Question 3:

Answer:

Question 4:

Answer:

Question 5:

Answer:

2. What do you think is the purpose of Paul's questions?
3. Do you ever feel like God is "against" you? When? Why?

4. According to verse 34, what is Christ doing for us right now?
5. Why do you think Paul compares us to sheep in verse 36?

The question asked in verse 35 is really the central question because the others are simply versions of this. *Is there anyone or anything that can separate me from Christ's love for me?* Keller wrote, "The purpose of the questions is to almost beat us out of our disbelief that we are saved totally by grace and are therefore completely safe to face life without fear. It is incredible, relentless, intense logic -- it is what Lloyd-Jones called logic on fire! Paul is saying, Think! Are you afraid (vs 31)? You aren't thinking! Are you worried (vs 32)? You aren't thinking! Are you feeling guilty (vs 33)? You aren't thinking! See the logic of free grace and justification! These aren't dry doctrines; they are life itself! And if you aren't living with overwhelming assurance and power, you haven't really fully understood them!"

6. Paul is convinced (vs 38) that nothing can separate us from God's love. What phrases does he use to describe:
  - a. Nothing in human experience:
  - b. Nothing in the spiritual realm:
  - c. Nothing in time:
  - d. Nothing that opposes God's people:
  - e. Nothing in space:
  - f. Nothing in all creation:
7. How are we "more than conquerors"? What does that mean?
8. How does knowing these truths enable you to live a victorious life? Are you? (Do you believe them? Are you living like you do, or do you more often live in shame or defeat?)
9. What's your biggest take-away from this chapter?

