

Information
Victory over Suffering
Romans 8:18-39

Insight: Taking notes and journaling is an essential part of learning and preserving a record of your experience and adventure. You are asked to use the note pages for answering questions, doing exercises and making personal notes. Experience shows that notes kept close to the information make it easier to review, recall and understand. Your interaction with the material is and the Holy Spirit as Teacher is essential to true learning. You are encouraged to process through each exercise and keep a permanent record in personal notes for your own future reference.

Learning Exercises and Activities: This lesson will use two major training exercises with their varied formats.

First, the **Bee Wise exercise** designated with a  honey bee as the symbol. Next, is the **S-M-A exercise** (Say, Mean, Application/s). These two exercises will ask specific questions to be answered by you or by God responding to you as you seek His answers. All exercises and activities are designed for us to personally interact with the material and encounter God (Trinity) as we process through the lesson material.

Getting God's answer to our sincere questions is important to Him and to us. His answers are always correct and may come in some of the following ways.

- He may give an immediate answer. If you are still unclear with the answer it is an invitation from Him for you to ask for further clarification.
- It is possible you may not be ready for the answer at that time. He may tell you the answer will come later.
- He may say, just trust Me!
- He can even tell you it is not for you to know the answer to the question.
- He may give many other answers.
- We may ask the wrong question but He always gives the right answer!

Concluding Questions and/or Requests: These are questions that should arise out of and be based on the lesson you are processing through. There are two specific concluding questions. The first is to ask the Lord if there are any questions He wants you to ask Him about the topic. This question can be expressed by saying, "Lord, do You have a question or questions for me to ask You about this?" Secondly, He may place a thought, question or request in your mind to ask Him. For personal questions and/or requests, you may preface it with, "Lord, if it pleases You, would You tell me what You want me to know about (the question/s you have for Him)." Requests may be expressed by saying, "Lord, my request is for _____. Would you please tell me what you want me to know and how to pray about this request?" (A request could be for grace, understanding, strength, wisdom, endurance and a host of other needs or desires.) It is possible that neither He nor you will always have questions. Still, each exercise will end with concluding questions to assure that no important answers are left out. Concluding questions/requests coming from the lesson will always be #4 and appear like this: What questions does God want you to ask Him? What questions and/or requests do you have for God? What is/are His answer/s?

Explanation of Concluding Questions: (Use dialogue in prayer with God!) 1. Questions from God are questions God wants you to ask Him. 2. Questions to God are questions you want to ask God.

UNFORESEEN FRUIT

(From the book- Fresh Power by Jim Cymbala)

Taken from Aggie Hurst's autobiography by Doug Brendel (Access Publishing)

In 1921, a missionary couple named David and Svea Flood went with their two-year-old son from Sweden to the heart of Africa----to what then was called the Belgian Congo. They met up with another young Scandinavian couple, the Ericksons, and the four of them sought God for direction. In those days of much tenderness, and devotion and sacrifice, they felt led of the Lord to set out from the main mission station and take the gospel to a remote area.

This was a huge step of faith. At the village of N'dolera they were rebuffed by the chief, who would not let them enter his town for fear of alienating the local gods. The two couples opted to go half a mile up the slope and build their own mud huts.

They prayed for a spiritual breakthrough, but there was none. The only contact with the villagers was a young boy, who was allowed to sell chickens and eggs to them twice a week. Svea Flood---a tiny woman only four feet, eight inches tall---decided that if this was the only African she could talk to, she would try to lead the boy to Jesus. And in fact, she succeeded.

But there were no other encouragements. Meanwhile, malaria continued to strike one member of the little band after the other. In time the Ericksons decided they had had enough suffering and left to return to the central mission station. David and Svea Flood remained near N'dolara to go it alone.

Then, of all things, Svea found she was pregnant in the middle of the primitive wilderness. When the time came for her to give birth, the village chief softened enough to allow a midwife to help her. A little girl was born, whom they named Aina. The delivery, however, was exhausting, and Svea Flood was already weak from bouts of malaria. The birth process was a heavy blow to her stamina. She lasted only another seventeen days.

Inside David Flood, something snapped in that moment. He dug a crude grave, buried his twenty - seven year old wife, and then took his children down the mountain to the mission station. Giving his newborn daughter to the Ericksons, he snarled, "I'm going back to Sweden. I've lost my wife, and I obviously can't take care of this baby. God has ruined my life." With that, he headed for the port, rejecting not only his calling, but God Himself.

Within eight months both of the Ericksons were stricken with a mysterious malady and died within days of each other. The baby was then turned over to some American missionaries, who adjusted her Swedish name to "Aggie" and eventually brought her back to the United States at age three.

This family loved the little girl, but was afraid that if they tried to return to Africa, some legal obstacle might separate her from them. So they decided to stay in their home country and switch from missionary work to pastoral ministry. And that is how Aggie grew up in South Dakota. As a young woman, she attended North Central Bible College in Minneapolis. There she met and married a young man named Dewey Hurst.

Years passed. The Hursts enjoyed a fruitful ministry. Aggie gave birth first to a daughter, then a son. In time her husband became the president of a Christian college in the Seattle area, and Aggie was intrigued to find so much Scandinavian heritage there.

One day a Swedish religious magazine appeared in her mailbox. She had no idea who had sent it, and of course, she couldn't read the words. But as she turned the pages, all of a sudden a photo stopped her cold. There in a primitive setting was a grave with a white cross---and on the cross were the words SVEA FLOOD. Aggie jumped into her car and went straight for a college faculty member who, she knew, could translate the article. "What does it say?" she demanded.

The instructor summarized the story. It was about missionaries who came to N'dolera long ago...the birth of a white baby... the death of the young mother...the one little African boy who had been led to Christ...and how, after the whites had all left, the boy had grown up and finally persuaded the chief to let him build a school in the village. The article said that gradually he led all the students to Christ...the children led their parents to Christ...even the Chief became a Christian. Today there were six hundred Christian believers in that one village. This is all because of the sacrifice of David and Svea Flood.

For the Hursts' twenty-fifth wedding anniversary, the college presented them with a gift of a vacation to Sweden. There Aggie sought to find her real father. An old man now, David Flood had remarried, fathered four more children, and generally dissipated his life with alcohol. He had recently suffered a stroke. Still bitter, he had one rule in his family: "never mention the name of God---because He took everything from me."

After an emotional reunion with her half brothers and sisters, Aggie brought up the subject of seeing her father. The others hesitated. "You can talk to him," they replied, "even though he is very ill now. But you need to know whenever he hears the name of God he flies into a rage." Aggie was not to be deterred. She walked into the squalid apartment, with liquor bottles everywhere, and approached the seventy-three-year-old man lying on a rumpled bed.

"Papa?" she said tentatively. He turned and began to cry. "Aina," he said, "I never meant to give you away." "It's all right, Papa," she replied, taking him gently into her arms. "God took care of me." The man instantly stiffened. The tears stopped. "God forgot all of us. Our lives have been like this because of Him." He turned his face back to the wall.

Aggie stroked his face and then continued, undaunted. "Papa, I've got a little story to tell you, and it's a true one. You didn't go to Africa in vain. Mama didn't die in vain. The little boy you won to the Lord grew up to win that whole village to Jesus Christ. The one seed you planted just kept growing and growing. Today there are six hundred African people serving the Lord because you were faithful to the call of God in your life..... "Papa, Jesus loves you. He has never hated you."

The old man turned back to look into his daughter's eyes. His body relaxed. He began to talk; and by the end of the afternoon, he had come back to the God he had resented for so many decades.

Over the next few days, father and daughter enjoyed warm moments together. Aggie and her husband soon returned to America---and within a few weeks, David Flood had gone into eternity.

A few years later, the Hursts were attending a high-level evangelism conference in London, England, when a report was given from the nation of Zaire (the former Belgian Congo and currently Democratic Republic of the Congo). The superintendent of the national church, representing 110,000 baptized believers, spoke eloquently of the gospel's spread in his nation. Aggie could not help going to ask him afterward if he had heard of David and Svea Flood.

"Yes, madam," the man replied in French, his words then being translated into English. "It was Svea Flood who led me to Jesus Christ. I was the boy who brought food to your parents before you were born. In fact, to this day your mother's grave and memory are honored by all of us." He embraced her in a long, sobbing hug. Then he continued, "You must come to Africa to see, because your mother is the most famous person in our history."

In time that is exactly what Aggie Hurst and her husband did. They were welcomed by cheering throngs of villagers. She even met the man who had been hired by her father to carry her back down the mountain in a hammock-cradle. The most dramatic moment, of course, was when the pastor escorted Aggie to see her mother's white cross for herself. She knelt in the soil to pray and give thanks. Later that day, in the church, the pastor read from John 12: 24 *"I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds."* He then followed with Psalm 126:5 *"Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy."*

Introduction

Suffering: To suffer is to undergo [go through, experience] and keenly feel pain or distress. Suffering is introduced in verse 17 with these words, *"...if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him."* All believers are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus. During our time on earth, we are the recipients of *"every spiritual blessing"* (Ephesians 1:3). In heaven, as joint-heirs, we will participate in and partake of all the riches of God's kingdom (John 14:2-3; 1 Corinthians 3:21-23). Sharing as co-heirs with Jesus includes more than just spiritual blessings now and the joyful reality of being God's family and His heirs for eternity. Jesus earthly journey included suffering, and the same is true with us. Being *"one spirit"* or being in union with *"the Lord"* encompasses blessings, inheritance, suffering and glory (1 Corinthians 6:17; Romans 8:17).

Trials of Faith: The end result of our suffering is spiritual maturity on earth and honor in heaven (James 1:2-4; 2 Corinthians 4:17)! Jesus says, that *"in the world"* we will have trouble, but to *"take courage"* because He has *"overcome [has victory over] the world"* (John 16:33). We are told to, *"Consider it all joy"* when experiencing the pain of trials (James 1:2). Many of us *"consider it all joy"* to escape trouble! Trials themselves are not joyful! Joy is experienced by embracing God's purpose of trials and by maturing spiritually (James 1:3, 4). An obstetrician or mid-wife may tell a mother in delivery to cooperate with the pain of her contractions. The mom is instructed to push during these times. She is not to waste the pain, but let the pain of the contractions work for her! Just as a mother pushes with the pain, believers should also press into the Lord during their time of suffering. Jesus speaks of the disciples' grief, as the pain of childbirth being turned into joy (John 16:20-22). Dr. Warren Weirby illustrates this Biblical Truth with a true story; the husband of one of the church secretaries' was in hospital blind and terminally ill. This lady had also suffered a stroke. That very day their home was being sold to pay medical bills. On his way into the church office, Pastor Wiersby met her. He said something like this, "Mrs. the church family and I are praying for you." This lady replied, "Pastor, May I ask you what you are praying for?" His answer was, "grace, strength, provision, wisdom and other provisions." She responded, "Pastor, May I ask you to pray for one more thing?" Wiersby replied, "Of course, what can we pray for?" The lady said, "Would you pray that I will have the wisdom to not waste this trial?"

In Truth, all believers do share in Christ's sufferings in this present world (John 15:20; Philippians 1:29). When correctly understood, suffering can be accepted as a blessing and a part of the process of sanctification. God uses this process to conform and transform us in order for us to experience and manifest Christ's life (Romans 8:28, 12:1, 2). We are creatures of comfort and many of us resist and/or reject suffering. Our view is that all mental or emotional pain is to always be avoided! Those of us with such an outlook are not considering the end result of the pain process (Hebrews 12:2). Neither are we embracing trials with thanksgiving or considering them *"all joy"* (1 Thessalonians 5:18; James 1:2). Nevertheless, all believers will experience some suffering in this present and fallen world, whether we consider suffering to be a blessing or not. The school of suffering is a real part of the process of spiritual growth and maturity, as preparation for an eternity of dignity and honor with Jesus.

Dr. John Best observes that believers do share in Christ's suffering. This scholar says the words, *"if indeed"* actually means *"if, as is the fact."* So, Romans 8:17b could read, *"If, [as is the fact], we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him."* Suffering is what prepares us to be *"glorified with"* Jesus. Glorified means to be exalted to dignity with Him! In heaven all of God's children and the bride of Christ, will be exalted with Jesus to the very degree He is now exalted! As with our Savior, there is earthly suffering and then heavenly glory. Jesus experienced dishonor before dignity, grief before glory, humiliation before honor, pain before praise and rejection before reigning. In like manner, all believers will experience trials and tears before the triumph of being elevated to dignity and honor [glorified] with our Redeemer!

Sufferings

The Sufferings of Christ: *“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.”* (Romans 8:18) There are at least five types of suffering that Jesus experienced. Believers will also undergo these types of suffering.

- **Spiritual:** On the cross, Jesus experienced separation from God on our behalf (Mark 15:34). By our not *“abiding”* [living dependently] in the true vine [Jesus], we will experience a being *“apart”* from Him (John 15:1, 5). This is not the same separation that Jesus experienced on the cross or the separation from God that lost people experience. Aloneness is living outside an awareness of God’s presence and love. This condition is the consequences of living according to our self-life/flesh (John 12:24, 15: 4, 5).
- **Mental & Emotional:** Jesus was distressed, troubled and grieved. This was both mental and emotional suffering (Mark 14:33-35). Believers do experience mental and emotional stress and/or pain.
- **Physical:** (Crucified – Matthew 27:35) We experience some physical suffering in this earthly journey.
- **Material:** (Poverty – Luke 9:58) There is also suffering when experiencing material poverty.

The Sufferings of the Apostle Paul: Please read the summary of Paul’s life of suffering *“with”* and *“for”* Christ (2 Corinthians 11:23-28). He refers to his sufferings and points out some individually. These include such experiences as imprisonments, beatings [lashes with whips and rods], dangers of death, stoning, shipwrecks, journeys, labors and hardship, sleeplessness, hunger, thirst, cold, exposure, and the daily pressure of concern for all the churches! What was Paul’s response? Seeing suffering from God’s eternal perspective enabled Paul and will enable us to understand that on God’s weight scales our earthly suffering is *“momentary”* and *“light.”* This is a comparison to the eternal weight [heavy] of glory for us (2 Corinthians 4:17, 18). The eternal weight of glory indicates the importance, value, blessedness, authority and influence that will be our experience for eternity! Can you imagine the *“glory”* [honor] that the wife of Jesus will be given in heaven (Revelation 21:9)?

The Sufferings of Believers: Sufferings include such things as hardship, persecution, afflictions [pressure], rejection and many others! God’s children encounter similar suffering to those Jesus experienced during His own journey to the Cross. Our suffering can take the form of injustice, false accusations, betrayal, being forsaken or alone, stripped naked [unmasking for us] and many others. These trials of faith mirror some of or a combination of the same areas of suffering that Jesus experienced. Scripture says there are *“various [kinds, sorts, colors of] trials”* (James 1:2) and there is *“manifold [many kinds, colors] grace”* to face them (1 Peter 4:10). This means that God has a matching color of grace for the each color [kind, sort] of our trials!

“... that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I might attain to the resurrection from the dead” (Philippians 3:10-11). A believer’s experience is one of *“daily”* dying to the self-life in order to experience Christ’s resurrection life (Luke 9:23; 2 Corinthians 1:8, 9)! God uses our sufferings that we may cease to live as if we are our own source and supply of life. Only as we die to our self-life [flesh], will we embrace Christ and His resurrection life as our true source for living! Jesus alone in our only source and supply of LIFE (John 11:25; Colossians 3:4). During the times we are experiencing Christ’s sufferings there is also available to us the abundance of comfort through Christ (2 Corinthians 1:5). The *“God of all comfort”* will comfort us during these times of pain, and afterward He will also use us to bring His comfort to others in their times of affliction (2 Corinthians 1:3-4).

Unnecessary Suffering

Inevitable Suffering: Trouble does come into our lives because we live in a fallen world. Jesus words are, *“These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation [crushing pressure], but take courage; I have overcome the world.”* (John 16:33). Real peace during the times of trouble, affliction and pressure is available to all believers. We will never be exempt from the pressure of living in this sinful world. Hence, believers should appropriate who Christ is at all times, but especially, in times of trouble. Jesus is the Prince of Peace and He is our peace (Isaiah 9:6; Ephesians 2:14). Wisdom requires us to remember the Truth, *“That God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.”* (Romans 8:28). The words *“all things”* actually mean all things! This realism is very easy to quote to others who are experiencing the pain of trials but difficult to embrace when we encounter them. God does use *“all things”* whether positive or negative. He will even use our not coming to Him or participating with Him to work *“good”* into our lives!

Needless Suffering: At times we suffer needlessly. There is enough pain and pressure for God to use in our lives without needless suffering! Do you remember the line from the old hymn that says, *“O what needless pain we bear?”* Needless pain falls into two categories. The first, is simply because we do not go to Jesus to receive His peace in the storms of life. Next, there are places in our lives that Satan can get hold of to use in tormenting us. God wants to remove these triggers/opportunities from us. Jesus spoke of Himself before His arrest and crucifixion. He said, *“... the ruler of the world is coming and he has nothing in Me.”* (John 14:30b). There was nothing in Jesus that Satan could get hold of to use against Him! Jesus did not have a fallen human nature. Neither did He have sin [principle] or flesh [coping mechanisms] in His body or being. He lived in total dependence on the Father. Every word He spoke and work He did was the Father speaking and working through Him (John 14:10). We all have sin, [a power] abiding in our body and coping mechanisms [flesh] (Romans 7:23, 25). Because our mind needs renewing, our emotions need healing and need His will to become ours, there is plenty of the SOMETHING in us for Satan to get hold of to defeat us!

List of Needless Sufferings: Here are a number of the SOMETHINGS used by Satan to bring needless pressure, pain, devastation and defeat into our lives. Please process each reference with the Holy Spirit. Ask Him the meaning of each verse and for Him to *“guide you into all the truth”* of each.

1. **Rights:** Jesus gave up the right to function as God but lived dependently on God Philippians 2:7, 8.
2. **Un-forgiveness:** Jesus forgave Luke 23:34; Matthew 18:34, 35.
3. **Bitterness:** Anger, un-forgiveness, bitterness Hebrews 12:15.
4. **Wounds:** *“a hurtful way”* = a way of pain Psalm 139:23, 24.
5. **Lies:** *“know the truth”* and The Truth Himself John 8:32; 14:6.
6. **An un-renewed mind:** Transformed through a renewed mind Romans 12:1, 2.
7. **Mental Strongholds:** Weapons to destroy fortresses 2 Corinthians 10:3-5.
8. **Law mentality:** The flesh striving for perfection Romans 7:23, 24.
9. **Generational iniquities:** Generational consequences Exodus 34:7.
10. **Curses:** Calling upon the demonic to trouble you or someone else Mark 14:71; James 3:8-10.
11. **Grief and Sorrow:** Our holding onto *“griefs”* [sickness] and *“sorrows”* [pains] that Jesus has already carried for us Isaiah 53:4.

PROCESSING NOTES

Unnecessary Suffering

S-M-A: Unnecessary Suffering:

1. Please state what these paragraphs **SAY** to you about needless suffering? Please also give a personal example of needless suffering that you have experienced.
2. Please share what you believe about David Flood suffering needlessly. Ask the Holy Spirit to teach you His **MEANING** of at least one Scripture reference in the list of needless sufferings that applies to you. Are you suffering unnecessarily? If so, ask Jesus what is His path out of this way of pain and "*pit.*"
3. What is/are the **APPLICATION/S** the Holy Spirit has for you about suffering? Ask Him to make the Truth of God's purposes of suffering real through an ongoing process and life experiences. Choose to cooperate and participate with God as He works His "*good*" into your life through these painful occurrences. What Truth/s have you understood and what choices have you made?
4. What questions does God want you to ask Him? What questions and/or requests do you have for God? What is/are His answer/s? (Please do not dismiss doing this exercise.)

I. God's Perspective on Our Suffering

The Believer's Suffering and Glory

Romans 8:18

"For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us." (Romans 8:18) "... to us and in us and for us and conferred on us! (8:18 Amplified Bible).

Information:

1. To give glory to is giving praise to God or man.
2. To glorify means for Christ to be seen living in and through us. When others see Jesus living through us they see who Jesus and the Father are (John 14:8, 9). Christ in us is the only hope we have of God showing Himself through us. Scripture says, this is a divine *"mystery [secret] which has been hidden from the past ages and generations but has now been manifested to His saints," ... , "which is Christ in you, the hope of glory"* (Colossians 1:26, 27).
3. Here in Romans 8:18 glory means there will be dignity, honor and praise, in heaven, from God to us!

The Believers' Suffering and Glory (8:18) Man's act of sin, threw all creation and his own relationship with God out of order. All people live in a fallen world of pain and suffering. This verse compares the present suffering of believers to the future and eternal glory that will be given to us by God. Glory is dignity, honor and praise. In reality, it is only God's favorable opinion of us that actually counts. Just as Mary, who gave physical birth to Jesus, was *"highly favored,"* so are all of God's children *"highly favored?"* Our present suffering is in no way equal in intensity or to the value of the future glory to be *"revealed to us by God!"* In heaven we will be completely restored to the state of glory [dignity/honor] that was lost by the first Adam. We will be elevated to share in the same state of glory [dignity and honor] that Jesus has.

- **There will be glory to us:** We can understand His glory to us as we look at these two realities. The first is shown in (Psalm 16:5). It says, *"The Lord [Yahweh/I AM] is the portion of my inheritance and my cup."* Since the Trinity is our inheritance we will receive His glory [dignity, honor and praise] as well. Presently, Jesus is the *"cup"* of *"living water"* that is continually available for our thirsty lives Psalm (23:5; John 4:10, 7:38). Next, God's children will be greatly elevated to the level of Jesus, since we will be married to the Lamb who is our bridegroom. We will be elevated and share in the same glory as the Son of God, just as a bride/wife shares the dignity and honor of her husband (Revelation 19:7, 8)!
- **There will be glory in us:** *"the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints"* Ephesians 1:18. We are God's inheritance! We are not yet all we will be, but we are His inheritance. There is dignity, honor and praise ahead for God's heirs and for us who will then be His spotless inheritance (Ephesians 5:27).
- **Angels long to understand this glory for us:** *"in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things into which angels long to look [gain a clear glimpse]* (1 Peter 1:12b). Their question may be, "How can God lift up believers to such an eminent position of being above angels, to be His family and Jesus bride?"
- **Glory conferred on us:** *"revealed with Him in glory"* (Colossians 3:4). This means that same glory [honor] that is now conferred on Jesus will be conferred on God's children/sons and Christ's bride!

PROCESSING NOTES

Romans 8:18



Wise Exercise: The Believer's Suffering and Glory:

1. Please state your understanding of the Truth/s that is/are disclosed in Romans 8:18 about "*sufferings*" and "*glory*."
2. (See Information # 2) Please ask the Holy Spirit to "*guide you into all the truth*" about "*Christ in you*" being your only "*hope of glory*" in this world (Colossians 1:26, 27). What do you now understand about Jesus living through you as the only way He will or can be seen in your life? How will you respond to this Truth?
3. (See information #3) Again, ask the Teacher [Holy Spirit] to show you another Truth and meaning of the word "*glory*" that believers will experience in heaven (Romans 8:18). How will you, by God's grace, respond to this Truth as you face suffering in this world?
4. What questions does God want you to ask Him? What questions and/or requests do you have for God? What is/are His answer/s? (Please do not exclude doing this exercise.)

The Elevation of the Father's Family and Christ's Bride

Romans 8:18

"For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us." (Romans 8:18)

The Father's Family: We *"born again"* believers will experience the fullness of God's glory. This glory includes dignity, honor and radiant splendor. The dictionary says dignity and honor is to be elevated in character to worthiness, nobility, position, and respect. It is to have high respect, honor and regard manifested to us. According to Romans 8:18 this *"glory"* will be experienced by every child of God when they are in heaven. In God's paradise our earthly dishonor and sufferings will be turned into honor and eternal peace. This Truth is shown by Jesus in the example and experience of Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31).

There will be a specific event in heaven when the glory of God will become the experience of all the sons and daughters of Abba, Father. Each member of His family has experienced *"the sufferings of Christ"* while on earth and in this fallen world. While here we are on the turf of the *"god of this world."* The *"evil one"* is the arch enemy of our Heavenly Father and His family. However, in heaven, we will experience the dignity and honor that is given to the Father and Son! What an elevation this will be for all the children of *"I Am!"* While on earth *"we were considered as sheep to be slaughtered"* by Satan and his own (Romans 8:36c). Nevertheless, God Almighty considers us worthy to be *"glorified with"* Jesus, and to partake of Christ's *"glory"* that is to be *"revealed to us"* (Romans 8:17b, 18)!

Why will God share His dignity, honor and radiant splendor with us? The reason is because we *"born again,"* believers are the children and heirs of God (1 Peter 1:23; Romans 8:17). All believers have been freed from being *"slaves to sin"* [*"sin,"* the *"principle"* or *"law of sin"*], and are now the *"salves of righteousness"* (Romans 6:6, 18). God has elevated us from a condition of being totally depraved or corrupted on earth, to the state of total perfection in spirit, soul, and body in heaven. We have been elevated from being children of the devil to being sons and daughters of *"The Living God"* (John 8:59, 1:12, 13).

The Bride of Christ: Christ's bride is actually His sister! The Song of Solomon 5:1a presents the king and bridegroom calling his bride *"my sister, my bride."* Scripture declares that Christ's brothers, the church [*"congregation"*] and God's children are, in fact, Jesus' bride (Hebrews 2:12, 13b). We are now, at this very moment, God's children and the bride of Christ! Will you receive this unfathomable Truth of your relationship to Jesus and your elevation with Him to His level of glory? God has brought us from the depths of depravity to the very level of His own perfection! As Christ's bride we are now *"betrothed"* to Him which is similar to engagement but far more binding (John 3:29). In heaven Christ will marry His bride that He has *"sanctified"* and made completely *"holy and blameless"* (Ephesians 5:25-27; Colossians 1:26, 27).

The bride [church] at her wedding will be clothed in *"fine linen"* that is *"bright and clean."* This figuratively represents the *"righteous acts"* that Christ has done through the *"saints"* or holy ones (Revelation 19:7, 8). At the wedding in heaven, we will experience the change from being betrothed to Jesus to being His eternal wife. In doing so, we will also receive and retain the unspeakable joy of this intimate relationship forever (Revelation 21:9b). There will be no divorce from this perfect and eternal relationship. We have been and will be elevated to the two most intimate and fulfilling family relationships that can ever be. We are God's children and the bride/wife of Christ! All of God's children will have experienced some of the sufferings of Christ. Many have experienced great sufferings while others have been martyred for Jesus sake! Truly, there is dignity, honor and splendor ahead for each of God's children that is beyond our full comprehension!

PROCESSING NOTES

Romans 8:18

S-M-A: The Elevation of the Father's Family and Christ's Bride:

1. What does Scripture **SAY** your future dignity and honor will look like in heaven? There you will experience the full reality of being sons/daughters of God and the bride/wife of Christ (Romans 8:17; Revelation 21:9b). Please describe what you understand this experience to be for eternity?
2. What does it **MEAN** that you are considered to be a "*sheep to be slaughtered*" by the evil one. Nevertheless, God considers you worthy to be "*glorified with Jesus.*" Ask the Holy Spirit and record your understanding of why God allows suffering during this earthly journey. Please also contrast what a temporal focus or an eternal focus may look like during the time of suffering.
3. What are God's **APPLICATION/S** of Christ's "*righteous acts*" through you in making up your wedding attire of "*fine linen*" that is "*bright and clean*" (Revelation 19:7, 8). In view of this, how frequent should you choose, surrender to and trust Christ to live His life through you?
4. What questions does God want you to ask Him? What questions and/or requests do you have for God? What is/are His answer/s? (Please do not ignore doing this exercise.)

The Suffering of All Creation

Romans 8:19-22

¹⁹For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope²¹ that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²²For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. (Romans 8:19-22).

God's Curse: Mankind sinned and became separated from God. Then God pronounced a curse upon the ground, and this affected all mankind, animals, vegetation and the atmosphere (Genesis 2:16, 17, 3:17). Some animals became vicious and thorns and thistles grew from the ground (Genesis 3:17b, 18). Animals were "*subjected to futility*," which is a nothingness of purpose or a vanity. None of creation is capable of redeeming itself. Animal creation, came into the bondage of "*slavery to corruption*" [decay, ruin] (Romans 8:20, 21). From creation to the flood God had watered the earth with a mist from the ground and mankind ate the fruit of the ground (Genesis 2:6; 3:19). During the flood God opened all the "*fountains*" underneath the earth and the "*floodgates*" [windows] of the sky above the earth for forty days and nights (Genesis 7:11,14). After the flood the relationship between man and animals and between the animals was changed. From that time onward, mankind could eat meat and the animals would feed on each other (Genesis 9:1-3). Many creatures became dangerous to mankind. Isaiah 11:6-9 shows what the animal world was like in the Garden of Eden before the fall of mankind. In this present world there are climatic changes such as, hurricanes, tornadoes, droughts, floods, blizzards, earthquakes, tsunamis and other disasters of nature that are a result of a cursed creation. All animal creation suffers an excruciating "*childbirth*" like pain until "*the revealing of the sons of God*" (Romans 8:19). Scripture shows this "*revealing*" happens when the "*saints*" receive a glorified body like Jesus' own body (1 Corinthians 15:53 and 1 John 3:2). Then we will share in His glory [honor] (Romans 8:17; Colossians 3:4).

Creation's Pain: Animals which are a lesser creation than mankind, are suffering, groaning and longing for the freedom that will come to them when God's children are glorified with Christ. God's original creation was designed, by Him, to live in harmony with the rest of creation and be a blessing to mankind. Nevertheless, at mankind's fall, all creation fell into a much lower state. This fallen condition for creation and the animal world will be completely reversed during the millennial [1000 year] reign of Christ (Isaiah 11:6, 65:25). These verses reveal there will no longer be any hostility between animals and humans, and all creation will live in harmony. "*The little boy will lead*" the wild and domestic animals together. In those days "*The nursing child will play by the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child will put his hand on the viper's den.*" Neither will there be any more "*hurt*" and destruction nor any "*evil*" or "*harm*" (Isaiah 11:8, 9a, 65:24b). The animal food chain will be abolished. "*The wolf and lamb will graze together*" and "*the lion will eat straw like the ox*" (Isaiah 65:25)!

The Revealing: This state of pain experienced by all animal creation will remain until the redeemed return with Christ to reign with Him on the earth (2 Timothy 2:12a). Jesus will be revealed and will reign on this earth, for one thousand years [Millennial reign]. God's children who are also the bride of Christ will experience their own "*revealing*" with Him and will reign with Him (Romans 8:19; Revelation 20:4b-6).

The Curse Removed: During this period of Christ's reign on earth, the curse is removed from creation. Again, Isaiah 11:6-9 shows what lesser creation will look like during Christ's reign. As God's children, heirs, and in being Christ's bride, we will share in His dignity, honor and praise. All creation will experience the freedom of that glory. After Christ's 1000 year reign on earth, God will provide a new heaven and earth. The eternal home of all believers will be in New Jerusalem which is the capital city of that new world (Revelation 21:1-7)

PROCESSING NOTES

Romans 8:19-22



Wise Exercise: The Sufferings of Creation:

1. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you what the future freedom may look like for all lower creation, when the curse is removed (Isaiah 11:6-9). Now ask Him to teach you what your freedom may look like when you have a perfect spirit, soul and body (Romans 8:18, 21; 1 John 3:2). Explain what you understand.

2. *"The creation [animal] was subjected to futility,"* but *"in hope."* This hope is God's own anticipation with pleasure, expectation, and confidence of the glorious freedom that will be experienced by His children and all creation. Do you choose to receive and experience God's anticipation for your freedom?

3. Please read 2 Corinthians 4:17, 18 and then state where your focus usually is during a season of suffering. Is your focus on the *"temporal"* and *"light afflictions"* or is it on sharing in the *"eternal weight"* of Christ's *"glory"* and reigning with Him (Romans 8:21b; Revelation 20:6)?

4. What questions does God want you to ask Him? What questions and/or requests do you have for God? What is/are His answer/s? (Please do not rule out doing this exercise.)

The Groaning of God's New Creatures

Romans 8:23-25

²³ *And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.* ²⁴ *For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees?* ²⁵ *But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.* (Romans 8:23-25)

Believers Groan: The moment Christ is received as Savior, a believer also receives the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, in their new human spirit. He brings with Him the “*first fruits*” of Salvation. These “*first fruits*” are such blessings and benefits as total forgiveness, being a new creation, being made and declared righteous [Justification], having a divine nature and other blessings that are too numerous to name. Not only does the indwelling Holy Spirit bring the “*first fruits*” but He, Himself, is “*the guarantee*” of a full harvest of freedom and blessings to come. Scripture states that, “*In Him [Jesus], you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him [Christ Jesus] with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge [“guarantee”] of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God’s own possession, to the praise of His glory.*” (Ephesians 1:13, 14). The Person of the Holy Spirit is “*a pledge*” or “*the guarantee*” there is an even greater and full harvest of blessings in our future. We have been justified [made and declared righteous] in our spirit [past], we are now [presently] being sanctified [set apart to God] in our soul and in the future we will receive a glorified [resurrection] body. The still greater harvest includes such blessings as having an “*immortal*” body like Jesus, glory, inheritance, eternal home and much more!

Why do we “*groan*?” We do not groan as the animal “*creation groans*” because of its bondage to “*futility*” and suffering as “*the pains of childbirth.*” We do not even groan because of “*the sufferings of this present time*” which we are experiencing. No, we groan because we have tasted [a foretaste] the blessings of heaven through the ministry of the indwelling Holy Spirit (Hebrews 6:4, 5). This foretaste of heavens reality causes us to have an insatiable longing to see Jesus and be with Him forever (Philippians 1:23). Our heart cry is much like the Psalmist when he said, “*My soul longs for You, as a parched land*” (Psalm 143:6).

Hope: Creation suffers since they have no awareness of God’s hope [His own eager anticipation and confidence] of the wonderful freedom He has for all creation. Nevertheless, they too, will be set free when we believers experience our “*freedom of the glory the children of God.*” Only believers are made aware of this blessed “*hope*” for us by the indwelling Holy Spirit. Verse 24 says we have “*in hope been saved.*” God’s children have been saved from the hopelessness that is experienced by the animal creation. At present, their experience is one of ongoing frustration and pain. We however, eagerly wait “*for our adoption as sons,*” which is “*the redemption of our body*” (Philippians 3:20, 21). We will live eternally as God’s heirs, fellow heirs with Jesus and being Christ’s completely perfected wife (Romans 8:17; 1 John 3:2)!

Perseverance: It is because of our eager anticipation and expectation of the blessedness of eternity that we choose to not focus on the “*light afflictions*” of time. We however, choose to follow Christ’s example of focusing on the sure and pure joy that is in our future. When Jesus did so, He was enabled to endure the sufferings of the cross! Jesus persevered to victory and so will we by embracing this “*blessed hope*” that is before us (Titus 2:13). God wants us to know that He uses trouble to transform our soul [Sanctification] into the image of His Son. Through Jesus and the grace of God we persevere and grow spiritually as we experience the sufferings of Jesus (Romans 5:3, 4). God, like a master sculptor, uses suffering as a chisel to chip away anything in our lives that does not look like Jesus!

God's Partnership in Praying **Romans 8:26, 27,**

²⁶ *In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words;* ²⁷ *and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.* (Romans 8:26, 27).

Weakness in Praying: As humans and believers, we have many weaknesses. In these verses, God's focus is on our weaknesses in prayer. Weakness is understood by words relating to the physical, such as feeble, powerless, impotent, infirm or to stumble. This is God's description of believer's praying from the basis of their own abilities, wisdom and strategies. As a result, there is silence from heaven and a lack of answered prayers! None of us actually know how to approach God with a petition or even what to ask for. Fleshly praying is asking God for what we want while living independently of Him (Romans 8:4). Scripture says, *"With all prayer and petition pray at all times in [controlled by] the Holy Spirit,"* (Ephesians 6:18a). Jesus is the example of such praying and having all His prayers answered! When raising Lazarus from the dead He prayed, *"Father, I thank you that you have heard Me, I knew that You always hear me;"* John 11: 41c, 42a). Living by grace, is Christ living His life through us. Likewise, praying by grace is the Holy Spirit praying with, through and as us. God cannot and will not receive our fleshly prayers. His purpose and plan is to transform our not knowing *"how to pray as we should"* into the Holy Spirit praying through us *"according to the will of God."* It is only as we ask according to His will that we receive the requests [petitions] we ask for (1 John 5:14, 15).

The Spirit's Interceding: How are we to pray? God's way is that we *"pray in the Spirit"* (Ephesians 6:18; Jude 20b). To pray as we *"should"* is to pray what is right, proper or necessary. *"In the Spirit"* praying is by grace. This is the Holy Spirit praying through us by making specific requests *"according to the will of God."*

- **General Prayer:** 1 John 5: 14, 15 says, *"This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us."* By asking *"according to His will"* we receive God's answer/s. This crystal clear teaching is that it is essential to hear from God about His will and then pray accordingly. In doing so, we are to ask God, what His specific will is for each need. When we hear what He says, we pray back to Him what He has directed us to pray for. Prayer originates with the Father, and then comes to us through our High Priest [Jesus] and the Holy Spirit. We respond back to the Father via the Holy Spirit and Jesus who is our *"Advocate."* The essential aspect is for the Trinity to have this vital involvement with us in prayer. This is grace praying!
- **Specific Prayer in Our Suffering:** Creation groans with pain and believers groan in their longing to be with Jesus. Especially, during times of suffering, we do not know what or how to pray. Neither do we have adequate words to describe our broken heart. In grace praying, the *"Spirit of truth"* *"helps our weakness"* as He *"intercedes for us."* He comes to our side to assist us and prays with, for and as us. The *"Spirit of life"* does not do our praying apart from us or without our participation! He meets with the Jesus and pleads our cause with urgency and intensity. He *"intercedes"* for us by expressing our deepest felt needs through us to God with *"groanings"* [sighing/s or silent groans] which are inexpressible in human language! His groaning language expresses to God our heartbreak and the needs we have in our suffering. It is God who searches our heart [soul] and knows the mind [thinking or purpose] of the Spirit. The *"Helper"* continually intercedes according to God's will and that kind of praying always gets heaven's attention and answer!

PROCESSING NOTES

Romans 8:26, 27,



Wise Exercise: God's Partnership in Praying:

1. Praying "*in the Spirit*" is the Holy Spirit praying back to God, through a believer, a specific request that is "*according to His [God's] will.*" The result is the petitioner receives "*the requests [answers] which we have asked from Him*" [God]. Please ask the Holy Spirit to show you what praying according to our "*fleshly*" [self-life] desires would look like and what would be the results.
2. In general and specific praying, the essential aspect is asking and ascertaining God's will about the situation. Prayerfully choose a situation, in your own life, that needs prayer. Ask the Lord how to pray His will about this specific situation. Then pray back to Him what you hear (1 John 5:14, 15). What has been your experience?
3. This world is filled with suffering and believers do at times experience "*the suffering of Christ*" and "*for His sake.*" Please read 1 Peter 4:16, 19 and ask the Lord what Truths He wants to teach you about rejection and persecution. What enlightenment have you received about suffering?
4. What questions does God want you to ask Him? What questions and/or requests do you have for God? What is/are His answer/s? (Please do not rule out doing this exercise.)

God's Purposes in Our Sufferings

Romans 8:28-30

²⁸ And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. ²⁹ For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; ³⁰ and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified. (Romans 8:28-30)

Working together for Good: "All things" is the totality of every kind, variety or sort of things. It is not too difficult to recognize and accept that God uses good. In these verses, we are confronted with the Truth that God can and does use the bad as well! In fact, since God is "good," He can only bring "good" out of anything and everything that touches the lives of His children. He always brings good out of evil! In looking at the cross, we see the very evil of Satan directly and/or indirectly through mankind. There was hatred, cruelty, rejection, sin and many other evil attitudes and actions manifested in accomplishing the crucifixion. Nevertheless, God used the crucifixion of Christ and its results to accomplish incalculable "good." Nothing can ever be compared to the "good" that God achieved through the cross! God does use "all" of our experiences, even the negative ones, to bring His purpose of "good" into our lives. This may be compared to baking a cake. We probably would not choose to eat any one of the cake ingredients alone. Nevertheless, when the proper proportions are mixed together, baked and icing applied, many of us would gladly eat a piece of the cake. That is similar to what God does in the lives of His children. He uses "for good" the negative and positive, our walking according to the flesh or Spirit, and our tribulations and blessings. Even the sins we commit or sins committed against us are used by God to shape our lives "according to His purpose" and into the "image of His Son."

Conformed: Before the foundation of the world God "foreknew" [perceived or recognized beforehand] those who would accept Christ as Savior and become His family. Therefore, He "predestined" [predetermined] that those who did so would "become [a process] conformed to the image of His Son." Being "conformed" into Christ's "image" [character] in this world is becoming like Jesus in our soul, as all saved people became in their spirit at the moment of salvation. No believer ever becomes a little Jesus or deity, even though their spirit was instantly "made perfect" when they received Christ as Savior (Hebrews 12:23). Now, it is our soul that is "being saved" and restored to God's standard of perfection (1 Corinthians 1:18). For believers, there will be a total perfection of our soul and body when we see Jesus in the future. This transformation to perfection will happen when we meet Jesus whether through death or by Him coming for the church (2 Corinthians 5:6, 8; 1 Corinthians 15:51, 52). God's word says, "Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is (1 John 3:2). When we see Jesus, at His coming, "we will be like Him" in our soul and body! God's reality for His children is, that at the return of Christ our human body will become immortal and glorified just like His own glorified body (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18; 1 Corinthians 15:52c). This is part of the "freedom of the glory the children of God." Christ, Himself, is the "firstborn among" the family of God. He has and will hold this position of preeminence and glory for eternity!

The Predestined: God predetermined that those who would accept Christ would be like Him in spirit, soul and body. After making this predetermination in eternity past, His call came to us in time. The call was to come to Jesus and be justification, then to go on to sanctification and glorification. We that responded to His call are now on a journey to experience the glory of God in Heaven. We have already been justified [made and declared righteous like Jesus] in our spirit (2 Corinthians 5:21). Presently, God uses our suffering "for good" in the sanctification process of our soul. In eternity, our soul and body will be like Christ's as our spirit is now!

PROCESSING NOTES

Romans 8:28-30

S-M-A: God's Purposes in Our Suffering:

1. Please sum up the Truth/s of what Romans 8:28-30 **SAYS** to you about God causing everything to work "*for good*" in your life. What is your understanding of His "*purpose*" for you both in time and eternity?
2. What is the **MEANING** the Holy Spirit has for you relating to being "*conformed*" to the "*image*" [character] of Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18)? Please describe what you have understood.
3. What **APPLCAITONS** does the Lord have for you in the areas of Him working "*good*" into your life through the path of pain? What specific area/s of your life are you aware of that He wants to conform to His likeness?
4. What questions does God want you to ask Him? What questions and/or requests do you have for God? What is/are His answer/s? (Please do not fail to do this exercise.)

God's View of the School of Suffering (an overview)

God allowed and/or sent suffering into the life of Jesus and He does the same with all His children. He chose to use suffering as a way to work deeply in the life of Jesus and He does the same with us. God causes all suffering to “work” “for good” and for “His purpose” in our lives (Romans 8:28). Let’s look at some of the “good” that He works into our life through His school of suffering. Please read all the scripture references.

1. **Perfected Savoir:** The Father “*perfected*” Jesus, our Savior and sanctifier through suffering. He also uses suffering in the process of sanctification, which is setting the believers’ soul apart to Himself and making their soul holy (Hebrews 2:10, 11). Jesus, our perfect Savior, saves all believes perfectly in our human spirit the moment of salvation. Presently, He is sanctifying our soul to a perfect restoration, and in the future, He will transform our body into a perfect and immortal one.
2. **Suffering and Glories:** The prophets were “*seeking to know*” the Person and time the Savior would suffer and of the glories that would follow (1 Peter 1:11). These glories are about the majesty, magnificence, excellence, preeminence and dignity that would and did come to Him through suffering.
3. **Suffer for Jesus sake:** God granted that we should believe in Jesus and to suffer for His sake (Philippians 1:29). Believing in Him and suffering for His sake brings great benefit to us! Believing brings salvation while suffering that is accepted, will bring glory [dignity, honor and praise from God] to us.
4. **Blessing in suffering:** By suffering for “*the sake of righteousness, you are blessed.*” (1 Peter 3:14a). Why and how are we blessed? Because God works suffering and “*all things*” for our “*good!*”
5. **Suffering according to God’s will:** While suffering for doing right, we are to “*entrust*” our souls to the “*faithful creator*” (1Peter 4:19); and God’s “*peace*” “*will guard*” our minds and souls (Philippians 4:7).
6. **Resurrection and sufferings:** Through suffering Paul experienced great blessing. He experienced a “*fellowship*” of Jesus “*sufferings,*” dying to his self-life [flesh life], and the “*resurrection*” “*power*” being unleashed in him. He also came to “*know*” Jesus intimately in his experience (Philippians 3:10).
7. **Sufferings and Comfort:** We have abundant “*comfort*” to exactly match the “*sufferings*” we experience (2 Corinthians 1:5)! The Comforter comes to help us with divine grace and encouragement during these times of trial.
8. **Testing and Rejoicing:** We experience sufferings similar to those Jesus did. God uses ours trials to remove impurities from our faith (1 Peter 1:6, 7)! At Jesus return, we will see His glory [How wonderful, magnificent and great He is]. Then we will rejoice greatly, and share in that glory (1Peter 4:12, 13)! So, in heaven we will experience all the “*for good*” that God has for His children.
9. **Affliction and Resurrection:** In this earthly life the Apostle experienced the blessing that came though affliction [pressure]. This suffering was beyond his strength to bear and he thought that he may even die. Why would a “*good*” God allow this to happen to him? So he would not trust in his self-life [flesh] but in God for the resurrection life of Jesus (2 Corinthians 1:8, 9). The “*good*” that God works through suffering is for Christ to live the Christian life in and through His [God’s] children!
10. **Filling Up Christ’s Afflictions:** Paul *rejoiced* in his “*sufferings*” on behalf of the church (Colossians 1:24). His sufferings were similar to those Jesus experienced on His journey to the cross. However, Paul’s suffering or our own have no redemptive value. His sufferings was for “*Christ’s*” and “*righteousness sake,*” that engendered a confidence and boldness in the lives of other believers (Philippians 1:13, 14).

II. God's Provision for His Suffering Saints

God Gave His Son

Romans 8: 31, 32,

³¹ *What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?* ³² *He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?* (Romans 8:31, 32)

God gave His Son: God “*delivered*” His Son “*over*” to death “*for us.*” 1 John 4:16 says that, “*God is love*” and His sacrificial love always seeks the best for mankind. During our times of suffering, Satan will consistently accuse God to us. He will say such things as, God doesn’t love you, has abandoned you, is punishing you or other accusations. Jesus says the purpose of “*the thief*” [Satan] is “*to steal and kill and destroy.*” Jesus purpose is that we have His “*life*” and have “*it abundantly*” (John 10:10)! Satan’s purpose is that we experience ruin in our soul but Jesus purpose is that we experience His well-being [abundant life]! The devil’s desire and goal is to deceive us, and to tempt us to turn away from God. Believing his lies results in discouragement which is the basis of a life of ongoing depression, disaster and ruin! Living life from the foundation of Satan’s lies and our skewed thinking has the consequences of fearful living! When God’s children believe and receive the lies of the evil one, they are defeated and experience a life of misery! Responding to Satan’s tactics brings wretchedness to us, pain to the heart of God and delight to the devil! Receiving and believing God’s Truth about life and abundant life brings rest to us, Joy to the Lord and defeat to the devil!

These Things: In verse 31 Paul says, “*What then shall we say to these things?*” He is speaking of the upcoming “*things*” not those spoken of in the past verses. Some “*things*” spoken of previously are, God causing all things “*to work*” for our “*good*” and our being “*conformed to*” Christ’s image and others. “*These things*” refer to times when saints believe that God doesn’t love us or is powerless to protect us. The answer is, “*If [since] God is for us who is against us.*” God is for us or on our side. He protects, and grants us His grace! Our greatest enemies are Satan, sin and death. Christ has already conquered these. (Hebrews 2:14, 15; Revelation 1:5, 18). Through Christ and His cross all our enemies have been vanquished for time and eternity! The question still is, “*who is against us?*” The answer? No one that is against us can be compared to God who is “*for us!*”

All Things: Verse 32 says, that God “*did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?*” Here, we are confronted with a profound statement and a penetrating question. First, God gave the greatest sacrificial gift that could ever be given. He gave His only Son for us! God did this when we were dead in sin and helpless (Ephesians 2:1, 2, 5; Romans 5:6). Since the Father has already given the greatest gift that is possible to give, the question now is, “*How will He not also with Him [Jesus] freely give us all things?*” This means, if He has already given the greatest gift, will He not also give all lesser gifts? Freely means to give gratuitously, generously, or graciously. God gives by grace or He gives out of grace. What are these “*all things?*” Obviously, God is not speaking of a life without pressure or pain. He is speaking of causing “*all things to work together for good*” in the lives of His children. Christ is God’s grace gift to us. This includes all He is and has. As God’s heirs, we will experience some of these “*all things*” in time and others of them in eternity. Some of these blessings for time are sanctification, grace, joy, peace, rest, and love. These “*things*” also include God making us His dwelling place and the privilege of having an intimacy with the Trinity. Other blessings are in store for us in eternity. They are “*things*” as being with Jesus in heaven, immortal body, rewards, marriage, honor, tree and water of life and countless others. All of these “*things*” are God given. Some of these riches are for us in time, while the greater harvest of blessings is for us in eternity!

PROCESSING NOTES

ROMANS 8:31, 32,



Wise Exercise: God Gave His Son

1. Please ask the Holy Spirit to guide you into all the Truth about God being *“for”* you [on your side] in whatever He sends or allows to come into your life. Psalms 56:11b says, *“I shall not be afraid. What can man do to me?”* What do you now understand about God being *“for”* you and being your protector and protection?
2. God *“freely gives”* and *“will supply all your needs [every need] according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus”* (Philippians 4:19). Please describe some of the recent gifts or *“things”* of grace He has given you. Explain whether or not these are gifts could ever be earned by your trying to achieve them.
3. God delivered His only Son *“over”* to death on the cross for you. This was when you were at your worst, as well as, being helpless and hopeless. Do you think He would do less for you now than then? Since He gave His very best [Christ] for you, please tell of some of the *“all things”* He will give to you. Does *“all things”* include His character traits of love, joy, peace and others (Galatians 5:22)?
4. What questions does God want you to ask Him? What questions and/or requests do you have for God? What is/are His answer/s? (Please do not avoid doing this exercise.)

God's Justification

Romans 8:33, 34

³³ *Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies;* ³⁴ *who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.* (Romans 8:33, 34)

No Condemnation from God: In times of trouble, stress, and suffering, we believers are inclined to act independently of God and live in defeat. Satan will always heap accusations and condemnation upon us during these trails. The devil uses our stress to tempt us to respond in a fleshly manner. Sometimes people also wrongly accuse us and we may even join in with self-condemnation. In no way does condemnation, from any source, change our status with God or His love for us. Nevertheless, if we receive condemnation regardless of the source, this will cause us to experience great misery. Satan does accuse us to God and to ourselves. However, God alone is our Judge and He has already justified all believers. To be justified is a state of being [present continuing tense] not guilty but righteous (Revelation 12:10; James 4:12). All "*born again*" believers, in their new human spirit have been made and declared as righteous as Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:21)! God now says, "*Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*" (Romans 8:1).

God justifies us: **Verse 33** asks the question that we should ask ourselves. Who can come forward as our accuser to call us into account with a legal charge? All legal charges against us were settled the moment we accepted Christ as Savior and God justified us. The crucial question is, can you or will you, as God's child, ever be condemned and punished by God Himself? Scripture states that all believers are "*God's elect*" or they have been chosen by Him. This does not mean that God chooses some people for heaven and others to go hell. Neither is the Bible saying that those who are His chosen can lose their salvation even if they are defeated by suffering or by sinning. All true believers were chosen "*in Christ before the foundation of the world*" (Ephesians 1:4). Only those who would be in Christ are chosen! Did God know who would accept Christ as Savior and be taken out of Adam and placed into Christ? In fact, He did know since their names were placed into or not placed into the Book of Life from the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8, 17:8). No one can charge true believers of being unrighteous in their new person. Why? God infused Christ's righteousness into the "*new spirit*" of all His children (Ezekiel 36:26, 27; 2 Corinthians 5:17; 2 Corinthians 5:21); He has "*credited*" [*imputed*] Christ's righteousness to our account and justified us by declaring us, [*new man*] not guilty [innocent] but righteous (Romans 4:24; Titus 3:7). This is in no way saying, that we do not commit acts of sin. Nevertheless, the moment we accepted Christ as Savior, we were justified by the "*God of truth.*" "*The Judge of all the earth*" is absolutely truthful and accurate about our being totally righteous in our new identity.

Christ intercedes for us: **Verse 34** asks the question, who can condemn or pass sentence against us. The answer is no one! It was Christ who died for us and was raised from the dead. He ascended back to heaven and is now seated on the throne at God's right hand (Romans 6:1-7). We believers, were also co-crucified [*old man*], co-resurrected [*new man*] and now we are seated "*in*" and "*with Him*" on God's throne (Romans 6:1-6; Ephesians 2:6). As our High Priest, Jesus intercedes or pleads our cause to the Father for us (Romans 8:27; Hebrews 8:1).

High Priest: Christ is our high priest and appears "*in the presence of God for us*" (Hebrews 7:25, 9:24). It was His blood sacrifice that paid for all sin/s and saves us forever (Ephesians 1:7; Hebrews 7:25).

Intercessor: He understands our trials and temptations and intercedes for the way of escape for us (Hebrews 2:18, 4:15, 16; 1 Corinthians 10:13).

PROCESSING NOTES

Romans 8: 33, 34

S-M-A: God's Justification:

1. Please state the Truth/s of what Romans 8:33, 34 **SAY** to you about God justifying you. This is to make and declare you to be not guilty but righteous. Please explain how God has made you righteous in your spirit (Ezekiel 36:26, 2 Peter 1:4). Also, please explain your understanding of whether or not God would make His home in an unclean place of sin.

2. What does it **MEAN** that you are "*the righteousness of God*" in your new human spirit (2 Corinthians 5:21)? Can anyone ever bring a legitimate legal charge that you are not righteous but unrighteous?

3. Please ask the Lord how He wants you to **APPLY** the Truth that, "*there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus*" (Romans 8:1). What **APPLICATION/S** has He given you?

4. What questions does God want you to ask Him? What questions and/or requests do you have for God? What is/are His answer/s? (Please do not avoid doing this exercise.)

Overwhelming Victory through Christ's and His Love

Romans 8:35-37

³⁵ *Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine or nakedness or peril, or sword?* ³⁶ *Just as it is written, "FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG; WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED."* ³⁷ *But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.* (Romans 8:35-37)

Verse 35 asks the questions who or what can separate us from Christ's love. Is there anyone or anything that can put a distance between Christ and us or cause Jesus to cease loving us? Obviously, since no one can charge us or condemn us; neither can anyone or anything separate us from Christ and His love. In this context, the question must be asked; "Can experiencing His *"sufferings"* separate us from His love?" Clearly, the answer is a resounding no! He will always love us whether we are experiencing His sufferings or not. Too, we can never be separated from His love, whether we respond to suffering positively or negatively. We are loved by God with an *"everlasting love"* as seen in Jeremiah 31:3. Look at the sufferings in verse 35. We are to accept the reality that Jesus experienced and understands each type of suffering that we have or will experience. His love is always there for us to experience during any type or time of suffering we may encounter!

Verse 36 is a quote of Psalm 44:22. The Psalmist and Paul, under inspiration, are speaking of being in continual physical danger. It was for God's *"sake"* that they both [the Psalmist and Paul] suffered. It is true that our Lord can and does use suffering to motivate us to *"take up our cross daily and follow Him."* He does so, that we will die to our self-life, which is to become separated from, or to cease walking [living] *"according to"* our *"flesh"* (Luke 9:23). There is suffering for sins, but also suffering for Christ's sake. God uses all kinds [types] of sufferings to draw us into an intimacy with the Trinity. He tells those who are suffering for Christ's sake that:

- *"Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."* (Matthew 5:10).
- *"Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted."* (2 Timothy 3:12).
- *"...; but if anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name."* (1 Peter 4:16).

Verse 37 tells us that *"we overwhelmingly conquer through"* Jesus *"who loved us"* and still loves us. To conquer is to gain a decisive victory. This includes completely defeating all the sufferings and trouble we experience! We overcome by choosing and trusting Christ Jesus to live His victorious, resurrection life, through us in any and all circumstances. An example of sincere people who failed this faith test was Peter and the other Apostles. All of them were serious in declaring that they would die with Jesus (Matthew 26:35). Shortly afterward these same believers fled and Peter denied that he even knew Jesus (Matthew 26:56; John 18:17, 25-27). After the resurrection, Jesus met Peter and drew attention to his boastful words of, *"Even though all may fall away because of You, I will never fall away."* (Matthew 26:34). This statement was based on Peter's prideful belief that he loved Jesus more than any of the other Apostles. Jesus now asks Peter three times if he loves Him with God's love. Peter's response was that he loves him with the highest form of human love (John 21:15-17). Jesus said, there would come a time that Peter would die for Him (John 21:18, 19). This required Peter loving with God's love. Church history records that Peter was martyred for Jesus sake. He asked to be and was crucified upside-down because he considered himself unworthy to be crucified the way Jesus was.

PROCESSING NOTES

Romans 8: 35-37



Wise Exercise: Overwhelming Victory through Christ's Love

1. A separation from love is a common experience in this fallen world. Sometimes a spouse, family member, friend or others may withhold their love from you. However, nothing can ever separate you from God or His unfailing love that is in Christ! Please ask the Holy Spirit to illuminate your mind to the unfailing love of God. (See Vs. 35 and Romans 8:38, 39) What is your understanding of this Truth?
2. God uses "*all things*" including suffering "*for good*" in your life. One of God's main purposes is to bring you to a consistent daily-dying the self-life [flesh] in order to experience the resurrection life of Jesus (Luke 9:23; 2 Corinthians 1:8, 9). Please ask the Lord to recall to your memory an experience of which He used suffering to bring you into this "*Christ who is our life*" experience (Colossians 3:3).
3. Scripture says that in all trials, including persecution, there is overwhelming victory for you because God loves you (Romans 8:37)! Even though Satan and sometimes those who belong to him see you as "*a sheep to be slaughtered,*" there is nothing that can separate you from Christ's love (Romans 8:35-37)! Ask the Holy Spirit to teach you what He wants you to know about Christ's love for you. What illumination and/or understanding have you received?
4. What questions does God want you to ask Him? What questions and/or requests do you have for God? What is/are His answer/s? (Please do not flee from doing this exercise.)

No Separation from the Love of God

Romans 8:38, 39

³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38, 39)

Verses 38 and 39a contrasts ten opposites and/or extremes. The Apostle is “*convinced*” that there is nothing good or bad, whether a creation, situation, condition or extreme, that can ever separate believers from God’s love that “*is in Christ Jesus.*” Paul has come to the place that he is absolutely persuaded, certain, trusts in, believes, depends on and has confidence with assurance of this reality. He names nine specific actualities that cannot separate us from God’s love. In conclusion, Scripture says, “*Nor any other created thing.*” These ten realities are:

1. **Death:** Literally or figuratively
2. **Life:** Literally or figuratively
3. **Angels:** God’s messengers
4. **Principalities:** Ranking evil angels (See Colossians 2:15)
5. **Present:** Now
6. **To come:** Future
7. **Powers:** Power of any sort whether miracle power or ruler
8. **Height:** Literal height, stronghold, pride or barrier (see 2 Corinthians 10:5)
9. **Depth:** Whether it is a mystery, inscrutable, deep poverty or Hell (Hades) beneath the earth
10. **Created thing:** God is creator, and nothing He has is created, is able to separate us from His love. We, too, are created by him, and we cannot separate ourselves from Him or His love!

Verse 39b tells us that there is nothing, [not anything] that can ever separate us from the love of God that “*is in Christ Jesus our Lord!*” Love is a verb [action]! God’s love always seeks our very best and nothing, absolutely nothing, can ever separate us from His love!

PROCESSING NOTES

(Romans 8:38, 39)

In this final exercise please share what you now understand about the Truth that nothing can separate you from God's love, His purpose in suffering, and His victory over suffering for you.

Conclusion

Victory Comes by Embracing Heavens View and Giving a Right Response to Suffering

Jesus' Example: Hebrews 12:2 reveals how Jesus faced the greatest suffering of all! His example shows how, we too, can experience personal victory over our own suffering. We are to be, *"fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."* Believers can and should focus on Jesus and His example as He suffered and died for us. The Savior looked beyond the temporal pain and saw the eternal joy in the future. This focus could possibly be described as delayed joy! Christ *"endured"* [persevered] while *"despising"* [holding in low regard or in contempt] *"the shame."* By following the example Christ Jesus gave, we are to keep our eyes off the *"temporal"* and onto the *"eternal."* Our gaze is to be set God-ward and our eyes focused on the Son of God (Colossians 3:2; Hebrews 12:2). By doing so, we will see our suffering on God's weight scales and know that the future glory for us far outweighs our temporary suffering and pain. God's Truth for us is, that our *"momentary," "light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison"* (2 Corinthians 4:17). By following the footsteps of Jesus it may be said of us; *"They too focused on the glory set before them. In doing so they received endurance, while holding in low esteem their own suffering. There certainly is great heavenly honor and dignity [glory] awaiting them in their eternal future!"*

God's Direction and Encouragement: ⁶ *Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time,* ⁷ *casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.* ⁸ *Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.* ⁹ *But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.* ¹⁰ *After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you.* ¹¹ *To Him be dominion forever and ever. Amen.* (1 Peter 5:6-11)

A Believer's Response: Suffering believers are exhorted to *"humble"* themselves *"under the mighty hand of God."* We choose to cooperate and participate in God working these *"all things"* circumstances for our *"good."* God's purpose is that we experience *"good"* in both time and eternity! There is far more *"anxiety"* and pressure in these trials than we can handle by ourselves. Is Jesus able to handle the pressure for us? Yes, of course, He is more than able! God invites and even commands us to cast our *"anxiety on Him, because He cares for"* us. We are to be *"alert"* because the *"devil"* who is *"like a roaring lion"* wants to swallow up our lives. Satan seeks to destroy us especially during our times of suffering. Remember Job? During his sufferings, Satan was trying to demolish his life and testimony. Suffering is a normal happening in the lives of saints. In this 21st Century, more believers are being persecuted, suffering, and dying for Jesus sake than any other time in human history. This is to say nothing of the usual suffering and trials in the lives of God's family that are sourced in the devil's opposition. We resist Satan by submitting to God, and then, in Jesus name, take authority over him. As we verbally command him to depart, he must obey and flee (Philippians 2:10; James 4:7). Please remember that rebuking Satan is God's task, not man's (Jude 9)! God does allow suffering so we will come to the end of our self-life/self-strength. He extends to us His grace and comfort. By receiving His grace, He matures us spiritually and prepares us for life in time and eternity. *"Perfect"* is to restore our soul as restoring a broken net, and is being equipped for service. Confirmed, is to set our face in a certain direction, or to be resolved as was Jesus (Luke 9:51). Strengthened, is to receive strength in the *"inner man"/soul* (Ephesians 3:16). Established, is to be placed on a rock foundation, as the rooting of a tree into the ground, or of a branch abiding in the vine. The *"God of all grace"* has *"called you to His eternal glory"* [honor and dignity] (1 Peter 5:10). By grace, God prepares us for His life in us here and His *"glory"* [honor] in heaven!

ONE SOLITARY LIFE

(Author Unknown)

He was born in an obscure village.

He worked in a Carpenter shop until he was thirty.

He then became an itinerant preacher.

He never held an office.

He never had a family or owned a house.

He didn't go to college.

He had no credentials but **Himself**.

He was only thirty three when the public turned against **Him**.

His friends ran away. **He** was turned over to **His** enemies and went through a mockery of a trial.

He was nailed to a cross between two thieves.

While **He** was dying, **His** executioners gambled for **His** clothing, the only property **He** had on earth.

He was laid in a borrowed grave.

Nineteen centuries have come and gone, and today **He** is the central figure of the human race.

All the armies that ever marched, all the navies that ever sailed, all the parliaments that ever sat, and all the kings that ever reigned have not affected the life of man on this earth as much as that **One Solitary Life**.

Freedom

Romans Chapters 5-8 Outline

Romans chapters 5-8 are chapters about freedom. In reality, all these freedoms release us from fear! Jesus said in Luke 12:32 *do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom.* Romans 8: 31-39 are the concluding verses of this Mount Everest portion of Scripture.

Chapter 5 is Freedom from Performance for Acceptance (We are freed to accept God's acceptance of us)

Chapter 6 is Freedom from Sin (We are freed from the power or principle of sin in our body)

Chapter 7 is Freedom from the Law (We are freed from the external Law)

Chapter 8 is Freedom from Defeat to be Victorious in Christ (We are freed to experience Christ's victory!) This is victory over the power of sin, our flesh, our acts of sinning as well as all types of suffering.

Victory Over Suffering

Romans 8:18-39 Outlines

I. God's Perspective on Our Suffering

- A. **The Believer's Suffering and Glory:** Keeping our focus on the coming glory! (18)
- B. **The Elevation of the Father's Family and Christ's Bride:** Keeping our focus on being elevated to honor and dignity! (18)
- C. **The Suffering of All Creation:** Keeping our focus on the freedom of glory! (19-22)
- D. **The Groaning of God's New Creatures:** Keeping our focus on the redemption of our body! (23-25)
- E. **God's Partnership in Praying:** Keeping our focus on how to pray effectively! (26, 27)
- F. **God's Purposes in our Suffering:** Keeping our focus on being conformed to Christ's image! (28-30)
- G. **God's View of the School of Suffering:** Keeping our focus on God's perspective of suffering (18-30)

II. God's Provision for His Suffering Saints:

- A. **God Gave His Son:** Keeping our focus on Christ and the "*all things!*" (31, 32)
- B. **God's Justification:** Keeping our focus on "*no condemnation!*" (33, 34)
- C. **Overwhelming Victory through Christ's Love:** Keeping our focus on Christ's love that results in personal victory! (35-37)
- D. **No Separation from the Love of God:** Keeping our focus on the reality that nothing can separate us from God's love! (38, 39)