

BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, June 16, 2013

Passage: Romans 8:17-25

Memory Passage: Romans 5:1-2

DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Romans 8:17-25.** Verse 17 is transitional. How does it function both to close vs. 12-17 and open vs. 18ff? What is the connection between heirs, suffering, and future glorification?

(b) How is it that believers “suffer with” Christ? How does the context of Rom. 8:17-25 help us answer this question? What other passages come to mind that help us answer this question? According to v. 18, when do these sufferings occur? Give some examples of what this suffering includes.

(c) **Read 2 Cor. 4:7-18.** How does this passage help you understand Rom. 8:17-18? Of what does *your* “light momentary affliction” consist? In what ways are you tempted to despair during these sufferings? Keep this list for use later in the week.

(d) *Family: Read Romans 8:17-18.* Explain that v. 17 transitions us from 12-17 to 18ff by telling us that if we are controlled by the Holy Spirit we are sons of God, and heirs who receive a future inheritance, and that this inheritance will be complete after we suffer the trials of this fallen world and enter into glory with Jesus. And that this glory that we will both see and experience is of such beauty, such power, such weightiness, and will provide such satisfaction, that it allows us to live joyfully during this life with its suffering in the sure hope of our future glory. Explain that Paul calls this suffering “light momentary affliction” in 2 Cor. 4:17 and that it is “preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond comparison,” so we can rest assured that any suffering we experience in this life is preparing us for something much more valuable and wonderful in the next. Also explain that “suffering” refers to all of the effects of the fall, and ask them to begin a list of what these sufferings include (sickness, death, poverty, persecution, sin with all its effects, hunger, sorrow, drought, etc.). Tell them that this week you will learn how to navigate these sufferings in light of an eternity spent experiencing our inheritance, the glory of God Himself.

DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Rom. 8:17-18.** Paul speaks of the glory that is to be revealed “to” us. This word is somewhat difficult to translate fully into English, but it includes both of these ideas: God’s glory will both apprehend/overtake us and be placed upon us. We are participants in the glory of God as our inheritance.

(b) **Read Ex. 24:15-18, 40:34-38, 1 Sam. 4:21-22, Is. 6:1-3, Ps. 97:1-6, and John 1:14.** Write down what you learn from these passages about God’s glory (NB: The word “glory” appears 358 times in the ESV, so there are many more passages which we could observe, but these few accomplish our purpose).

(c) Now apply what you have learned: What, exactly, *is* God’s glory and how will it be revealed to us? To what does the phrase, “the revealing of the sons of God” (v. 19) refer?

(d) *Family:* Have some sort of creative tools available for this lesson (paper & crayons/pencils/paint, clay/Play Dough, Legos, etc.). As you **Read Ex. 24:15-18 & 40:34-38** have your family create images of what they hear. You will need to read each one several times, and you might also consider giving them time to read each passage on their own as they create. Stress that there are many verses that talk about God’s glory, and in these we see that His glory represented His presence with His people. It was what they saw when He presented Himself to them in all of His weighty and perfect character.

DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Rom. 8:17-25 & Gen. 3:17-19.** In what ways is creation personified in Rom. 8 (personified means that something not human is described with human characteristics)? Why do you think Paul chooses this type of language to make his point?

(b) Since vs. 20-22 answer the “why” questions we might ask of v. 19 (i.e. why does the creation wait eagerly for this revelation of the sons of God?), we will start in v. 22 and work our way back to v. 19. Explain what truths Paul wants us to know about the status of the non-human creation by his use of the phrase, “groaning together in pains of childbirth.”

(c) Verse 21: Why is creation groaning? Explain what Paul means by “bondage of corruption.” How will creation be set free from this bondage, and how will this freedom look?

(d) Verse 20: In what way was creation “subjected to futility” and who subjected it? What does “hope” have to do with this subjection?

(e) *Family:* Lead your family through a discussion of (a) – (d) above. FYI: The basic thrust of verses 19-23 is to show us that creation was also cursed as a result of the fall and it longs for the day when it will be restored. This day will come when Jesus returns and all believers are revealed as glorified saints experiencing and reflecting God’s glory in their glorified bodies. So just as believers long for their future glory so also does the creation long for its future restoration to its former glory.

DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT**READ THE PASSAGE**

(a) **Read Rom. 8:17-25 & 2 Cor. 5:1-10.** The concept of “groaning” is used several times in Romans 8. Read the following verses and write down what you learn about the reasons that prompt groaning: **Ex. 2:24, 6:5, Judg. 2:18, Ps. 12:5, 38:8, 79:11, 102:20, Prov. 29:2.**

(b) What does it mean that believers have “the firstfruits of the Spirit?” Why do we also groan, and what does it mean to “groan inwardly?” Do we groan *because* we have the firstfruits of the Spirit or *in spite of* the firstfruits of the Spirit?

(c) Rom. 8:14-17 clearly tells us that God has already adopted believers, and yet 8:23 clearly teaches that believers have yet to be adopted. Explain how these seemingly contradictory statements are not contradictory. What new information do we find in v. 23 concerning the benefits of adoption?

(d) Make sure you read both Rom. 8:17-25 & 2 Cor. 5:1-10: In what ways do you sense this inward groaning in your life? What are its causes? How does having the firstfruits of the Spirit enable you to persevere in the midst of such groaning? How does the redemption of your body inspire you to persevere with hope as you suffer the effects of sin and death in this realm?

(e) *Family:* Ask, “What is groaning?” You will probably get vivid descriptions of actual groaning, but ask again, “What is groaning?” (A deep, often non-verbal response to pain and/or suffering). Then ask, “When do *you* feel like groaning?” You will probably receive answers like, “When I am sick/hungry/sad/in physical pain, etc.” Then **Read Judg. 2:18, Ps. 12:5, & Prov. 29:2** and have your family write down the reasons that cause people to groan in these verses (or write them on your white board). Then **Read Rom. 8:19-23** and have your family raise their hand every time they hear the words “groan” or “groaning.” Help them understand that the effects of sin cause the groaning in these verses. Creation longs to be freed from the curse and restored to its former glory and redeemed believers long for the day when all the suffering from sin & death that we experience in this world will be overcome by the return of Christ when they will share in His glory.

DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT**READ THE PASSAGE**

(a) **Read Rom. 5:1-5 & 8:17-25.** Underline every occurrence of the word “hope” in both of these sections of Scripture. What is a Biblical definition of the word “hope” (make sure you don’t just look it up in a dictionary!)? Now write a paragraph explaining what Paul wants us to know about “hope” from these 2 sections.

(b) How does hoping in the unseen (future adoption with the redemption of our bodies) inspire patience (v. 25) and why is this patience needed? Return to the list you made on Day 1 (c): Considering this list, why do *you* need this patience, and how will you apply these truths to your life when you are tempted to not be patient, or to despair, or to succumb to the sorrows that inspire inward groaning? How does the concept of “hope” help in these matters?

(c) Considering the emphasis on creation in these verses, how should creation suffering through the curse and longing for redemption, coupled with the fact that humans have been given dominion (which includes stewardship) over the earth, what should your attitude toward the environment be? How should you, as a believer, respond to those in the extreme environmental movement? Do we as believers have the responsibility to be “environmentalists?” Why or why not?

(d) *Family:* Lead your family through (a) above. Show them that “hope” seems to be the overarching theme of Romans 5-8 and how this hope is produced by the work of Christ on the cross and our salvation, both as it is experienced now in part and as it will be experienced in full at Christ’s return.

DATE: June 16, 2013**PASSAGE: Romans 8:17-25***Groaning for Glory*

In Romans 8:17-25 Paul encourages us with 5 truths concerning the relationship between current suffering and future glory.