

BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, June 30, 2013

Passage: Romans 8:26-27

Memory Passage: John 16:13-14

DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Romans 8:1-25.** We are spending 10 weeks in Romans 8, so in an effort to not lose sight of Paul's progression of thought as he leads us from "no condemnation" to "no separation," spend today reviewing what we have learned by reading the passage through 2xs and then answering the following questions: (1) What is the main idea of each section (1-4, 5-11, 12-17, & 18-25)? (2) How does each section relate to the sections that come before & after? (3) Write down at least 3 ways the study of these passages over the last 5 weeks has deepened your worship and love for Jesus, and be ready to share these with your class on Sunday. (4) Write down at least 3 ways you have applied these passages to your life as a result of your study, and be ready to share these with your class. (5) If you can't give answers to 3 & 4, please spend some time in prayer asking God to reveal to you how you can better engage the text and apply it through the power of His Holy Spirit in the coming days.

(b) *Family: Read Romans 8:1-25.* Lead your family through (a) above, using your own life as an example to answer 3-5 in an effort to help everyone understand what it looks like to read, study, and apply the Scriptures to life.

DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Rom. 8:26-27.** To what does Paul refer with the word "likewise?" In other words, how do vs. 26-27 connect with what precedes? What 2 words/ideas in vs. 26-27 are repeated from earlier in chapter 8? Do these grammatical connections have theological connections as well, and if so, what are they?

(b) (For most questions this week you will need to make observations from both vs. 27 & 28 in order to come to a complete answer.) To what "weakness" does Paul refer, and how does the Holy Spirit "help" with our weakness? What, specifically, is our weakness with regard to prayer? How "ought" we to pray?

(c) What are your weaknesses, both specifically in prayer and generally? Why are they weaknesses, and how do you usually assess them? How do you regularly attempt to overcome these weaknesses? What good comes from these weaknesses?

(d) *Family: Read Rom. 8:26-27.* Explain that the word "likewise" with which verse 26 begins ties these 2 verses to what has preceded. Paul has just told us that we can endure the sufferings of this age because of the strong & sure hope brought about because of our future glory, and now he tells us that the Holy Spirit also helps us endure the weakness we have in this age as we await the age to come by interceding on behalf of God's people in prayer. Ask, "What does the word 'intercede' mean?" (to act or intervene on behalf of another person). Then ask, "Can you give me examples of times when you either interceded for someone or needed someone to intercede for you?" Every member has probably been involved in both, so help them think about this by giving an example or 2 if needed: They needed help lifting or moving something that was too heavy for them to lift or move by themselves; they gave help to someone who was trying to understand a math problem that they already understood; they needed or gave someone directions; they were in a verbal argument in which someone else intervened, etc. Now **Reread Rom. 8:26-27** and have them find both instances of the word intercede, and discuss who is interceding for whom and what intercession is being accomplished. Then tell them they will investigate this interceding by the Holy Spirit in detail during the next few lessons.

DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Rom. 8:26-27.** How does the Holy Spirit intercede for believers? Why do believers need this interceding? What does the phrase, "groanings too deep for words" mean?

(b) Who is "he who searches hearts" (cf. Jer. 17:10, Acts 15:8, et. al.)? What is "the mind of the Spirit?" Why is it important that "he who searches hearts" "knows what is the mind of the Spirit?"

(c) Explain what function the word "because" has in v. 27 (i.e. explain the connection between the first and second halves of this verse). What does the phrase, "according to the will of God" reveal to us about the Spirit's ministry, and what does it reveal to us about the content of our prayers (cf. 1 John 5:14-15)?

(d) Consider for a moment the phrase, "He who searches hearts." How does this knowledge about God's character & power affect your life on a minute-by-minute basis? If it does not, how *should* it affect your life? Apply this to the things you do (or don't do), prayers you pray (or don't pray), forgiveness you extend (or don't extend) to others, sin you mortify (or don't mortify), words you speak (or don't, or shouldn't, speak) to others, etc., etc., etc.

(e) *Family:* Ask, "What did we learn about 'groaning' last week?" Jog their memories if you need to by reminding them of times when *they* groan and when people in Scripture groaned. **Read Rom. 8:26-27** and ask, "When the Holy Spirit groans, is the groaning different than the creation's (v. 22) or than our's (v. 23)?" Lead them in a discussion in which you teach them that the Spirit groans in us without words, interceding for us by echoing our deepest groanings (desires) to know the will of

God with His. God searches our hearts and knows the mind of the Spirit because the part of the Spirit's role is knowing the will of God and bringing glory to Christ, and so when the Holy Spirit takes these deep yearnings and lifts them to the throne, the Father hears them even when we can't pray them or don't know what to pray. Help them to understand the encouragement this is: When we are weak and do not know what to pray (i.e. when we are hurt, angry, confused, tired, etc.) we can & must pray anyway because the Spirit in us will find our deep-seated desires to glorify God and to know and do His will and pray them on our behalf (just like when someone comes alongside us and helps us lift something we can't lift on our own)!

DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Cor. 2:1-16.** What things “things” (v.10) have been revealed to believers (see vs. 1-9)? How has this revelation been “through the Spirit?” What does the Spirit “search” (v. 10) & “know” (v. 11)? What is the benefit to believers of this ministry of the Holy Spirit (v. 12)?
- (b) What similarities are there between this passage and Rom. 8:26-27? What differences are there? How does this passage help us better understand Rom. 8:26-27? What new information does it give us about the ministry of the Spirit and how it affects and benefits believers?
- (c) How do you know if your prayers have been in accordance with God's will? How often are you sure that your prayers are in accordance with God's will? What are some ways that you can be surer that you are praying according to His will? What do you do if you find out they are not (cf. Paul in 2 Cor. 7-10)?
- (d) How do the truths found in Rom. 8:26-27 & 1 Cor. 1:1-16 bring you encouragement in your prayer life (think deeply and be specific here; you should be able to write more than “I'm thankful the Spirit knows God's will when I don't”)?
- (e) *Family:* Ask, “How do we know if our prayers will be answered?” (answers may vary, but some correct answers are: if we are not regarding sin in our hearts [Ps. 66:11], if husbands are loving, caring for, and honoring their wives [1 Pet. 3:7], if we pray according to God's will [Rom. 8:26-27, 1 John 5:14-15]). Then **turn and Read Rom. 8:26-27, 1 John 5:14-15, & John 15:16**, teaching that our prayers will be answered when we ask for things that God has already willed, that one aspect of praying “in Jesus' name” is that we are praying according to His perfect character which is always submitted to His Father, and that the Holy Spirit intercedes for us even when we don't know what to pray or pray wrongly.

DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Rom. 8:26-27.** Four application questions (adapted from *Supernatural Living for Natural People: The Life-Giving Message of Romans 8* by Raymond C. Ortlund Jr., p. 113): (1) Think of a time when you felt like you had come to the end of yourself and had no words to pray. What did you do? How did you pray? (2) How should what you learned this week about the intimate personal reality of the Spirit's involvement in your prayers change the way you pray? (3) What are the ways the Spirit stirs and prompts you toward God? (4) What fears might be alleviated by the knowledge that lack of understanding of God's will is not ultimately a barrier to God's help?
- (b) *Family:* Lead your family through any/all of the questions found in (a) above, or spend time memorizing John 16:13-14.

DATE: June 30, 2013

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Weakness Overcome

In Romans 8:26-27 Paul continues to encourage us that we can indeed have hope in this age even while we long for the next age by teaching us 3 truths about the process of prayer.