



Romans 8:18-30 (ESV)

¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. ¹⁹ For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²² For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. ²³ And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴ For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

²⁶ Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. ²⁷ And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. ²⁸ And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. ³⁰ And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

Romans 8:18-30 (HCSB)

¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is going to be revealed to us. ¹⁹ For the creation eagerly waits with anticipation for God's sons to be revealed. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility—not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it—in the hope ²¹ that the creation itself will also be set free from the bondage of corruption into the glorious freedom of God's children. ²² For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together with labor pains until now. ²³ And not only that, but we ourselves who have the Spirit as the firstfruits—we also groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴ Now in this hope we were saved, yet hope that is seen is not hope, because who hopes for what he sees? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with patience.

²⁶ In the same way the Spirit also joins to help in our weakness, because we do not know what to pray for as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with unspoken groanings. ²⁷ And He who searches the hearts knows the Spirit's mind-set, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. ²⁸ We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God: those who are called according to His purpose. ²⁹ For those He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brothers. ³⁰ And those He predestined, He also called; and those He called, He also justified; and those He justified, He also glorified.

English Standard Version Bible - Study Bible¹

Romans 8:18-30

8:18-39 Assurance of Hope. Paul began this major section of the letter ([5:1-8:39](#)) by emphasizing the final hope of believers ([5:1-11](#)), and now he concludes with the same emphasis.

The Trinity in [Romans 8](#)

This chart focuses on statements that have Father, Son, or Spirit as the subject. For additional references to Father, Son, or Spirit in [Romans 8](#), see [vv. 1-2](#), [4-7](#), [13](#), [15](#), [17-23](#), [28](#).

Father	Son	Spirit
sent his Son (v. 3)		
condemned sin (v. 3)		
gives life to mortal bodies of believers by his Spirit in them (v. 11)	in believers (v. 10)	indwells believers (v. 9)
foreknew, predestined, called, justified, glorified (vv. 29-30)	died, raised, interceding at the right hand of the Father for believers (v. 34)	leads believers (v. 14)
is for us (v. 31)		bears witness with the spirit of believers (v. 16)
gave his Son (v. 32)		helps in weakness and intercedes for believers (vv. 26-27)
justifies (v. 33)		
loves (v. 39)	loves (vv. 35, 39)	

8:18 The ultimate glory that Christians will receive is so stupendous that the **sufferings of this present time** are insignificant in comparison (cf. [2 Cor. 4:17](#)). They look forward both to the resurrection of the body ([1 Thess. 4:13-18](#)) and to the new heaven and new earth ([Rev. 21:1-22:5](#); see [Isa. 65:17](#)).

8:19 Creation is personified in this verse and the following verses in order to emphasize the wonder of the future glory of God's **sons** (i.e., believers who have the rights of inheritance of all that God has in store for them; on "sons," see ESV Preface: Translation Style).

8:20-21 When Adam sinned, the created world was also **subjected to futility**. One thinks of the thorns and thistles that were to accompany work in [Gen. 3:17-19](#), the pain in childbirth for the woman ([Gen. 3:16](#)), and the repeated refrain that all is vanity in Ecclesiastes (where the Septuagint uses the same Greek word here used for "futility"). The original **creation** ([Genesis 1-2](#)) did not have these things, and on the last day it also will be transformed and freed from the effects of sin and will instantly become far more beautiful, productive, and easy to live in than one can ever imagine.

1. Lane T. Dennis, ed., ESV Study Bible, The: English Standard Version, (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Bibles, 2008), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, Under: "Romans 8".

8:22 Again **creation** is personified, showing that it also longs for the day when the salvation that has already begun in God's children will be completed.

8:23 God's people also **groan** and long for the completion of his saving work. The tension is seen here between the already and not yet in Paul's theology. Christians already have **the firstfruits of the Spirit**, but they still await the day of their final adoption when their bodies are fully redeemed and they are raised from the dead. Their **adoption** has already occurred in a legal sense ([v. 15](#)), and they already enjoy many of its privileges, but here Paul uses "adoption" to refer to the yet greater privilege of receiving perfect resurrection bodies.

8:26 Although Christians do not always know God's will in prayer, the **Spirit himself intercedes** for them in and through their unspeakable groans (cf. [v. 23](#)). This does not refer to speaking in tongues, since what Paul says here applies to all Christians and, according to [1 Cor. 12:30](#), only some Christians speak in tongues.

8:27 God always answers the requests of the Spirit in the affirmative, since the Spirit always prays in accord with God's will.

8:28 God weaves everything **together for good** for his children. The "good" in this context does not refer to earthly comfort but conformity to Christ ([v. 29](#)), closer fellowship with God, bearing good fruit for the kingdom, and final glorification ([v. 30](#)).

8:29 [Verses 29-30](#) explain why those who believe in Christ can be assured that all things work together for good: God has always been doing good for them, starting before creation (the distant past), continuing in their conversion (the recent past), and then on to the day of Christ's return (the future). **Foreknew** reaches back to the OT, where the word "know" emphasizes God's special choice of, or covenantal affection for, his people (e.g., [Gen. 18:19](#); [Jer. 1:5](#); [Amos 3:2](#)). See [Rom. 11:2](#), where "foreknew" functions as the contrast to "rejected," showing that it emphasizes God's choosing his people (see also [1 Pet. 1:2](#), [20](#)). God also **predestined** (i.e., predetermined) that those whom he chose beforehand would become like Christ.

8:30 The chain that begins with the word "foreknew" in [v. 29](#) cannot be broken. Those who are **predestined** by God are also **called** effectively to faith through the gospel (see [2 Thess. 2:14](#)). And all those who are called are also **justified** (declared to be right in God's sight). Because not all who are invited to believe are actually justified, the "calling" here cannot refer to merely a general invitation but must refer to an effective call that creates the faith necessary for justification ([Rom. 5:1](#)). All those who are justified will also be **glorified** (receive resurrection bodies) on the last day. Paul speaks of glorification as if it were already completed, since God will certainly finish the good work he started (cf. [Phil. 1:6](#)).

Holman Christian Standard Bible - Study Bible²

Romans 8:18-30

8:18 Paul stated the truth of this verse like this: "Our momentary light affliction is producing for us an absolutely incomparable eternal weight of glory" ([2Co 4:17](#)).

8:19-21 The created order of this earth was cursed at the fall ([Gen 3:17-19](#)), and it will be restored in the regeneration. When we receive our freedom, the entire world will be changed ([Isa 2:2-4](#); [11:6-9](#); [Rev 21-22](#)).

8:22-23 Paul describes the **groaning of creation**, the groaning of believers, and the groaning of the Holy Spirit ([v. 26](#)). Travail gives birth to a new creation. Christians have only the **firstfruits**—the pledge of more to come in our salvation. We groan because of our fallen nature. Our new resurrection bodies will conform us to Jesus' glorified body.

8:24-25 Our salvation is secure, but it is as yet unseen and thus a matter of **hope**. We wait in faith and patience.

8:26-27 In our **weakness** we have the help of the **Spirit**. Jesus is our intercessor in heaven ([Heb 7:25](#)), and the Spirit is our intercessor on earth within our hearts. We are limited and ignorant, but the Spirit uses **unspoken groanings** to communicate our needs. This is not "speaking in tongues or languages" (Gk *glossolalia*). It is instead wordless. Our heavenly Father knows what is happening in our lives and within the deep recesses of our personalities ([1Sam 16:7](#); [Pr 15:11](#); [Jer 17:10](#)). The Spirit's requests are always **according to the will of God** and are always answered.

8:28 Who are those who **love God**? Paul defines them as **those who are called according to His purpose**. The "called" are all Christians ([vv. 29-30](#)). The promise of this verse is that God orders everything for believers so that all of life's experiences **work together** for our ultimate **good**. Not everything is good in and of itself, but God uses everything for our good ([vv. 35-36](#)). Jesus taught us that God's sovereign care for and guidance of creation covers even the death of a sparrow and the hairs of our head ([Lk 12:6-7,22-34](#)).

8:29-30 God has a plan that spans from eternity past to eternity future. **Those He foreknew** refers to those whom God set His electing love upon in eternity past. **Predestined** means that God planned from eternity that "those [whom] He foreknew" would become like Christ through spiritual rebirth. **Called** is the "effectual" call in which God opens our heart so we can hear His voice (cp. [Ac 16:14](#)). "Calling" in Paul's writing never means just an invitation. It is a sovereign summons that draws the sinner from death to life. **Justified** is God's act of declaration that we are "right" in His sight because Jesus paid our penalty and we received His righteousness ([2Co 5:21](#)). **Glorified** is the final stage of our salvation. Notice that our future glorification is so certain that it is spoken of in the past tense.

2. Jeremy Royal Howard, ed., HCSB Study Bible, (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2010), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, Under: "Romans 8".

NLT Life Application Study Bible³

Romans 8:18-30

8:19-22 Sin has caused all creation to fall from the perfect state in which God created it. The world is in bondage to death and decay so that it cannot fulfill its intended purpose. One day all creation will be liberated and transformed. Until that time it waits in eager expectation for the resurrection of God's children.

8:19-22 Christians see the world as it is—physically decaying and spiritually infected with sin. But Christians do not need to be pessimistic, because they have hope for future glory. They look forward to the new heaven and new earth that God has promised, and they wait for God's new order that will free the world from sin, sickness, and evil. In the meantime, Christians go with Christ into the world where they heal people's bodies and souls and fight the evil effects of sin in the world.

8:23 We will be resurrected with glorified bodies like the body Christ now has in heaven (see [1 Corinthians 15:25-58](#)). We have the "foretaste," the first installment or down payment of future glory—the Holy Spirit—as a guarantee of our resurrection life (see [2 Corinthians 1:22](#); [5:5](#); [Ephesians 1:14](#)).

8:24, 25 It is natural for children to trust their parents, even though parents sometimes fail to keep their promises. Our heavenly Father, however, never makes promises he won't keep. Nevertheless his plan may take more time than we expect. What are we waiting for? New bodies, a new heaven and new earth, rest and rewards, our eternal family and home, the absence of sin and suffering, and being face to face with Jesus! Rather than acting like impatient children as we wait for God's will to unfold, we need to have confidence in God's perfect timing and wisdom.

8:24, 25 In Romans, Paul presents the idea that salvation is past, present, and future. It is past because we were saved the moment we believed in Jesus Christ as Savior ([3:21-26](#); [5:1-11](#); [6:1-11](#), [22](#), [23](#)); our new life (eternal life) begins at that moment. And it is present because we *are being* saved; this is the process of sanctification (see the note on [6:1-8:39](#)). But at the same time, we have not fully received all the benefits and blessings of salvation that will be ours when Christ's new Kingdom is completely established. That's our future salvation. While we can be confident of our salvation, we still look ahead with hope and trust toward that complete change of body and personality that lies beyond this life, when we will be like Christ ([1 John 3:2](#)).

8:26, 27 As a believer, you are not left to your own resources to cope with problems. Even when you don't know the right words to pray, the Holy Spirit prays with and for you, and God answers. With God helping you pray, you don't need to be afraid to come before him. Ask the Holy Spirit to intercede for you "in harmony with God's own will." Then, when you bring your requests to God, trust that he will always do what is best.

3. *Life Application Study Bible*, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1988), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 1908-1909.

8:28 God works in "everything"—not just isolated incidents—for our good. This does not mean that all that happens to us is good. Evil is prevalent in our fallen world, but God is able to turn every circumstance around for our long-range good. Note that God is not working to make us happy but to fulfill his purpose. Note also that this promise is not for everybody. It can be claimed only by those who love God and are called by him, that is, those whom the Holy Spirit convinces to receive Christ. Such people have a new perspective, a new mind-set. They trust in God, not in worldly treasures; their security is in heaven, not on earth. Their faith in God does not waver in pain and persecution because they know God is with them.

8:29 God's ultimate goal for us is to make us like Christ ([1 John 3:2](#)). As we become more and more like him, we discover our true selves, the persons we were created to be. How can we become like Christ? By reading and heeding the Word, by studying his life on earth through the Gospels, by spending time in prayer, by being filled with his Spirit, and by doing his work in the world.

8:29, 30 Some believe these verses mean that before the beginning of the world, God chose certain people to receive his gift of salvation. They point to verses such as [Ephesians 1:11](#), which says that God "chose us in advance, and he makes everything work out according to his plan." Others believe that God knew in advance who would respond to him, and upon those he set his mark (he chose them). What is clear is that God's *purpose for* people was not an afterthought; it was settled before the foundation of the world. People are to serve and honor God. If you believe in Christ, you can rejoice in the fact that God has always known you. God's love is eternal. His wisdom and power are supreme. He will guide and protect you until you one day stand in his presence.

8:30 *Called* means "summoned or invited." For more on "right standing" (also called justification) and receiving his glory, see the chart in [chapter 3, p. 1899](#).

Life Application Concise New Testament Commentary⁴

Romans 8:18-30

The Future Glory / [8:18-30](#)

The preceding paragraph ended with the shared connection between suffering and glory. Sharing in the glory of Christ will come only after sharing in his sufferings ([8:17](#)). For Paul, this matter of glory has cosmic proportions, for the glorious destiny of believers will signal a new day for all of creation. He wants his readers to realize that sin has imprisoned all people and the entire environment. We must wait for God's timing to be free, depending on the Spirit, who helps us in ways we can hardly describe.

8:18 In [verse 17](#), Paul stated that believers will share in Christ's sufferings. He completes that thought with this verse, concluding that the sufferings we now face are **nothing compared to the glory he will give us later**. The present suffering is temporary, while the future glory is eternal. Paul had written to the Corinthians, "For our present troubles are quite small and won't last very long. Yet they produce for us an immeasurably great glory that will last forever!" ([2 Corinthians 4:17](#)). Suffering is part of the process of sharing in Christ's death; it will culminate in sharing his glory.

8:19 Human beings and the rest of creation presently face suffering, and both will be glorified in the future. When Adam sinned, God sentenced all of creation ([Genesis 3:17](#)). Since then, the world has suffered decay and pollution, largely because people have forgotten or ignored their responsibilities as stewards of the earth. The created order functions in spite of its flaws. But diseases, deformities, and suffering constantly remind us that all is not right with us or with the world. **All creation is waiting eagerly for that future day when God will reveal who his children really are**. This will occur at the second coming of Christ when he returns for his people. The entire universe is looking forward to the conclusion of God's plan.

8:20-21 When Adam sinned, **everything on earth was subjected to God's curse**; that is, to futility, change, and decay. Creation is cursed because it is unable to attain the purposes for which it was made. The perfect order in the world was marred by sin; therefore, fallen people had to live in a fallen world. Yet **all creation anticipates the day when it will join God's children in glorious freedom from death and decay**. [Revelation 22](#) describes the future removal of the curse from the earth.

Adam and Eve were the first polluters of the environment when they sinned. Their act of rebellion affected the entire world. It has taken many centuries to realize the interrelatedness of this global village, but the Bible begins with that assumption. Having the same Creator links us with the rest of the created order. But as much as we do personally and corporately to clean up and care for the environment, we must realize that creation will require the same kind of transformation that we require in order to be set straight again.

8:22-23 Paul pictures the fallen **creation as groaning as in the pains of childbirth**. Consider earthquakes, floods, fire, drought, famine—these are surely not what creation was meant to be, but sin and evil now rule. Just as the pains of childbirth end at the birth of the child, so the groaning and pain of the creation will end at the birth of the new earth. Creation groans and longs for its release and transformation into the new heaven and new earth. We **Christians also groan to be released from pain and suffering**, longing for our own release from the cycle of

4. Barton B. Bruce et al., *Life Application New Testament Commentary*, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 2001), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 608-610.

sin and decay ([8:23](#)). We long for redemption **when God will give us our full rights as his children, including the new bodies he has promised us**. In this process we are not alone, for the **Holy Spirit** groans with us, expressing our unutterable longing to God and giving us a **foretaste of future glory**. But until the time of our release and redemption, we must groan, wait, and hope.

[8:24-25](#) When we put our faith in Christ as Savior, we **are saved** and we can **eagerly look forward to the freedom** we will have at Christ's return. We already have the presence of the Holy Spirit, who is unseen, but we must eagerly wait for our new bodies, which are also unseen. Our full redemption has not yet happened; it will happen when Christ returns. That is why it is still a **hope** for believers. Our salvation is both present and future. It is present because the moment we believe in Jesus Christ as Savior we are saved ([3:21-26](#); [5:1-11](#); [6:1-11](#), [22-23](#)); our new life (eternal life) begins. But at the same time, we have not fully received all the benefits and blessings of salvation that will be ours when Christ's new Kingdom is completely established. While we can be confident of our salvation, we still **look forward** with hope and trust toward that complete change of body and personality that lies beyond this life.

Waiting for things **patiently** is a quality that must be developed in us (see [Romans 5:3-4](#); [James 1:3-4](#); [5:11](#); [Revelation 13:10](#); [14:12](#)). Patience is one of the Spirit's fruit borne in our lives. It includes fortitude, endurance, and the ability to bear up under pressure in order to attain a desired goal.

[8:26](#) In the same way that our "hope" gives us fortitude, the **Holy Spirit helps us in our distress**. At times, our weakness is so intense that **we don't even know what we should pray for, nor how we should pray**. At those times, the Spirit voices our requests for us. He intercedes by appealing to the only one who can help us, God himself. We may not know the right words to say, but the Holy Spirit does. His **groanings** to God become effective intercession on our behalf.

The companionship of the Spirit in prayer is one of the themes of this chapter. Here, the Spirit literally "joins in to help" us, expressing for us what we can't fully express for ourselves. How should we pray?

- Utilize all the forms prayer takes: adoration, confession, petition, thanksgiving, and meditation. As we pray, we should trust the Spirit to make perfect what is imperfect.
- Listen during prayer. We should ask the Spirit to search our hearts and minds, and then we should be silent.
- Practice prayer as a habit.
- Combine prayer with other regular spiritual disciplines (see [Philippians 4:4-8](#)).
- Confess sins that the Spirit points out.

[8:27](#) The Father **knows all hearts** and he **knows what the Spirit is saying** (see [8:26](#)). God can look deep, past our inarticulate groanings, to understand the need we face, our hidden feelings. Even when we don't know the right words to pray, the Holy Spirit prays with and for us, always **in harmony with God's own will**. With God helping us pray, we don't need to be afraid to come before him.

[8:28](#) Because the Spirit's efforts on our behalf are carried out in full agreement with God's will, everything that happens to us in this life is directed toward that goal. What happens may not itself be "good," but God will cause **everything to work together for the ultimate good** of his children, to meet his ultimate **purpose** for their maturity. The point is, God works all things for good, not "all things work out." Suffering will still bring pain, loss, and sorrow, and sin will bring shame. But under God's control, the eventual outcome will be for our good.

God works behind the scenes, ensuring that even in the middle of mistakes and tragedies, good will result for those who love him. At times this will happen quickly, often enough to help us trust the principle. But there will also be events whose results for good we will not know until eternity. Our ultimate destiny is to be like Christ. God's design is more than just an invitation; God summons us with a purpose in mind: we are to be like Christ and share his glory.

8:29-30 Believers are those people whom God **knew in advance**. God's foreknowledge refers to his intimate knowledge of us and our relationship with him based on his choosing us. God **chose** believers to reach a particular goal: **to become like his Son**. When all believers are conformed to Christ's likeness, the resurrected Christ will be the **firstborn** of a new race of humans, who are purified from sin. Because we are God's children, we are Christ's **brothers and sisters**.

What does it mean to be chosen? What keeps foreknowledge and predestination from being determinism? How can belief in predestination avoid leading someone to despair over the futility of any human choice? God's foreknowledge does not imply determinism—the idea that all our choices are predetermined. Since God is not limited by time as we are, he “sees” past, present, and future at the same time. Parents sometimes “know” how their children will behave before the fact. We don't conclude from these parents' foreknowledge that they made their children act that way. God's foreknowledge, insofar as we can understand it, means that God knows who will accept the offer of salvation. The plan of predestination begins when we trust Christ and comes to its conclusion when we become fully like him. Receiving an airline ticket to Chicago means we have been predestined to arrive in Chicago.

To explain foreknowledge and predestination in any way that implies that every action and choice we make has been not only preknown, but even predetermined, seems to contradict those Scriptures that declare that our choices are real, that they matter, and that there are consequences to the choices we make. What is clear is that God's purpose for human beings was not an afterthought; it was settled before the foundation of the world. Humankind is to serve and honor God. If we have trusted Christ as Savior, we can rejoice that God has always known us. His love is eternal. His wisdom and power are supreme. He will guide and protect us until we one day stand in his presence.

God's plan for the salvation of those who believe in Christ has three steps: **chosen, called, and glorified**. When we are finally conformed to the image of Christ, we will share his **glory**.

Study and Discussion Questions



Future Glory - [Romans 8:18-27](#)

Topics: [Future](#), [Hope](#), [Prayer](#), [Suffering](#), [Waiting](#), [Weaknesses](#)

Open It

1. *What type of sacrifices do people commonly make for the sake of a future reward?
2. What makes it hard for some people to pray?

Explore It

3. *How did Paul describe the difference between his present and his future? ([8:18](#))
4. What is the world waiting to see? ([8:19](#))
5. For what reason has the world been forced to wait? ([8:20-21](#))
6. To what human experience did Paul compare his waiting? ([8:22-23](#))
7. For what are the children of God waiting? ([8:23](#))
8. *What is and is not genuine hope? ([8:24-25](#))
9. What causes us to wait patiently? ([8:25](#))
10. How does the Spirit help us in our weakness? ([8:26](#))
11. For whom does the Spirit intercede? ([8:27](#))
12. What is the relationship between God and the Spirit? ([8:27](#))

Get It

13. What are some of the sufferings a Christian can experience?
14. *What does God promise to us that can make any suffering bearable?
15. How does suffering affect our relationship with God?
16. What hinders us from being what God intends us to be?
17. In what ways do Christians live in glorious freedom?

18. What frustrations do Christians feel as they wait for Christ to return?
19. What counsel would you give a Christian who has grown weary of waiting for Christ's return?
20. *What is real hope?
21. In what circumstances do Christians find it hard to pray?
22. What do we learn about God's love for us when we realize that the Holy Spirit helps us even when we cannot pray?

Apply It

23. *In what circumstances of your life do you need to wait patiently for God to act?
24. For what can you ask the Spirit's help this week?