

S T U D Y G U I D E

Romans 8

Derek W.H. Thomas



LIGONIER MINISTRIES

Renew your Mind.

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Introduction

Opening with the bold declaration that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, Romans 8 is a source of great comfort for every Christian. From beginning to end, it reminds us that nothing can separate the children of God from His love. In this twelve-part teaching series, Dr. Derek W.H. Thomas exegetes this stunning passage of Scripture verse by verse and explains why he considers it to be the greatest chapter in the entire Bible.

This study guide is a companion to the video teaching series. Whether you are using the DVDs, streaming the videos on Ligonier.org, or going through the course in Ligonier Connect, this resource is designed to help you make the most of the learning experience. For each message in the series, there is a corresponding lesson in this guide. Here is what you will find in each lesson:

INTRODUCTION	<p>The introduction is a brief paragraph that summarizes the content covered in the lecture and considered in the study guide lesson.</p> <p>How to use: Use the introduction to each lesson to get a sense of the big picture before watching the video. Refer to these statements as you work through the study guide to remind you of what you have already covered and where you are headed.</p>
LEARNING GOALS	<p>The learning goals are the knowledge and skills the study guide lesson will endeavor to equip you with as you work through the lecture content.</p> <p>How to use: Familiarize yourself with the goals of each lesson before engaging with its contents. Keeping the overall purpose in mind as you watch each video and reflect on or discuss the questions will help you get the most out of each lesson.</p>
KEY IDEAS	<p>The key ideas are the major points or takeaways from the lecture.</p> <p>How to use: Use these ideas to prepare yourself for each lesson and to review previous lessons. They describe specifically the knowledge each lecture is communicating.</p>
REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS	<p>The questions are the guided reflection and/or discussion component of the lesson that are intended to help you prepare for, process, and organize what you are learning.</p> <p>How to use: Reflect on individually or discuss in a group the questions in the order in which they appear in the lesson. The timestamps in the right margin indicate where the answers to questions during the video can be found.</p>

PRAYER	<p>The prayer section offers suggestions for how to close the lesson in prayer with respect to what was taught in the lecture.</p> <p>How to use: Consider using each lesson's prayer section as a guide to personal or group prayer. These sections follow the ACTS prayer model, which you can learn more about in R.C. Sproul's Crucial Questions booklet <i>Does Prayer Change Things?</i> This helpful guide is available as a free e-book at Ligonier.org.</p>
REVIEW QUIZ	<p>The review quiz is a set of six multiple-choice questions that appears at the end of each lesson.</p> <p>How to use: Use each quiz to check your comprehension and memory of the major points covered in each lecture. It will be most beneficial to your learning if you take a lesson's quiz either sometime between lessons or just before you begin the next lesson in the study guide.</p>
ANSWER KEY	<p>The answer key provides explanations for the reflection and discussion questions and answers to the multiple-choice questions in the review quiz.</p> <p>How to use: Use the answer key to check your own answers or when you do not know the answer. Note: Do not give in too quickly; struggling for a few moments to recall an answer reinforces it in your mind.</p>

Study Schedules

The following table suggests four plans for working through the *Romans 8* video teaching series and this companion study guide. Whether you are going through this series on your own or with a group, these schedules should help you plan your study path.

	Extended 14-Week Plan	Standard 12-Week Plan	Abbreviated 6-Week Plan	Intensive 4-Week Plan
Week	Lesson			
1	*	1	1	1- 3
2	1	2	2 & 3	4 -6
3	2	3	4 & 5	7 -9
4	3	4	6 & 7	10- 12
5	4	5	8 & 9	
6	5	6	10 & 11	
7	6	7	12	
8	7	8		
9	8	9		
10	9	10		
11	10	11		
12	11	12		
13	12			
14	*			

* For these weeks, rather than completing lessons, spend your time discussing and praying about your learning goals for the study (the first week) and the most valuable takeaways from the study (the last week).

No Condemnation

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary Western culture, it has become commonplace to think of Christianity as restrictive, harsh, or judgmental in nature. Those who believe this have sadly misunderstood the central theme of the Christian faith: the forgiveness of sins as freely offered to sinners because of what Jesus Christ has accomplished. In this lesson, Dr. Thomas explores one of the pivotal motifs of Romans 8, the reality that there is no condemnation for sinners who place their hope in Jesus Christ.

LEARNING GOALS

When you have finished this lesson, you should be able to:

- Summarize some of the major themes in the book of Romans
- Describe specific ways the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit work in the lives of believers

KEY IDEAS

- Although we fail to live up to God's standards in ourselves, there is no condemnation for those who place their faith in Jesus Christ.
- The gospel is Trinitarian in origin and shape, involving all three persons of the Trinity.
- The power of the Holy Spirit enables believers to experience true freedom.

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Before the Video

What Do You Think?

Take a moment to answer the following questions. They will prepare you for the lecture.

- When you think of Romans 8, what specific verses, if any, come to mind?
- How would you explain the gospel message to another person?

Scripture Reading

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

—Romans 8:1–4

- According to these verses, why is there no condemnation for those who are in Christ?

During the Video

Answer the following questions while you watch the video. They will guide you through the lecture.

Romans 8 in Context

0:00–10:17

- What theme begins Romans 8 and what theme ends Romans 8?
- According to Romans 3, who has sinned and fallen short of the glory of God?
- Which Old Testament figures does Paul reference in Romans 4 and 5? How do they fit into God's story of redemption?
- What does Paul say about the residual power of sin in his life in Romans 7?

The Trinitarian Rescue Mission

10:17–26:17

- Which hymns does Dr. Thomas mention as examples of the scriptural reality that there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ?

- What did the ancient heresy known as Docetism teach about the human nature of Jesus?
- According to Romans 8:4, what role does the Holy Spirit play in the Christian life?

After the Video

Answer the following questions after you have finished the lecture. They will help you identify and summarize the major points.

- Why does Dr. Thomas consider Romans 8 to be the greatest chapter in the Bible? Do you agree or disagree with this claim? Why or why not?

If you are in a group, have the members discuss their answers to the above questions. What other passages of the Bible do you consider to be particularly striking or helpful in explaining the realities of the gospel?

- What role did Paul wish for Rome to play in the spread of the gospel?

If you are in a group, have the members answer the following question. How has God positioned and equipped your church, small group, Sunday school class, or family to advance His mission in the world?

- Dr. Thomas describes Romans 8:1–4 as thoroughly Trinitarian. Referencing these verses, what role does each person of the Trinity play in your salvation?

If you are in a group, have each member discuss their awareness of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit's work in his or her life. Which person of the Trinity is easiest for you to relate to? With which person do you struggle most to interact?

PRAYER

Commit what you have learned from God's Word in this lesson to prayer.

- Praise God for the majesty of His unfailing love displayed in the drama of redemption.
- Confess ways that you may struggle with guilt, doubt, or insecurity about your salvation.
- Thank God for His perfect work as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in saving you.
- Ask God to grant you greater assurance of His love and forgiveness in your life.

REVIEW QUIZ

Use these multiple-choice questions to measure what you learned from this lesson.

1. In John Bunyan's illustration, what was the man holding a muckrake unable to see?
 - a. The soil beneath his feet
 - b. The crown over his own head
 - c. The road to the Celestial City
 - d. The greater purpose behind his menial labor
2. Paul's great missionary goal was to take the gospel to Rome.
 - a. True
 - b. False
3. "So long as Christ remains outside of us, all that He has accomplished is. . . ." What phrase completes this thought from the pen of John Calvin?
 - a. ". . . ours for the taking."
 - b. ". . . imputed to our account."
 - c. ". . . offensive to our depraved minds."
 - d. ". . . useless and of no value to us."
4. Which of the following best describes the natural reflex of a holy God toward human sin?
 - a. Love
 - b. Forgiveness
 - c. Indifference
 - d. Wrath
5. In the doctrine of double imputation, what is reckoned to Christ's account?
 - a. Divine justice
 - b. Eternal life
 - c. Human sin
 - d. Perfect obedience
6. According to Romans 8:4, for what purpose has God redeemed us?
 - a. So that we might be holy
 - b. So that we can go to heaven when we die
 - c. So that we will merit salvation through our righteousness
 - d. So that we would be free from the law of God

Answer Key—No Condemnation

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Before the Video

What Do You Think?

These are personal questions. The answers should be based on your own knowledge and experience.

Scripture Reading

- According to these verses, why is there no condemnation for those who are in Christ?

This passage reveals that God has declared sinners to be just on the basis on Jesus Christ's atoning sacrifice. The law alone could not justify sinners, but the righteous requirement of the law has been fulfilled for us by Jesus Christ. When we believe in Him, we live according to a new law, the law of the Spirit of life.

During the Video

Romans 8 in Context

- What theme begins Romans 8 and what theme ends Roman 8?

Paul declares in Romans 8:1 that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ. In Romans 8:39, he concludes by proclaiming that for these redeemed ones there can be no separation from the love of God. The theme of no condemnation begins Romans 8 and the theme of no separation ends Romans 8.

- According to Romans 3, who has sinned and fallen short of the glory of God?
Paul states in Romans 3:23, "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." This truth is foundational to Paul's exposition of the gospel throughout the book of Romans. Since all of humanity is dead in sin, salvation can come from nowhere else but the person and work of Jesus Christ.

- Which Old Testament figures does Paul reference in Romans 4 and 5? How do they fit into God's story of redemption?

In Romans 4, Paul alludes to the Old Testament accounts of Abraham and David as examples of two men who were counted righteous, not on the basis of their works or deeds but on the basis of their faith. In Romans 5, Paul contrasts Jesus with Adam. Just as Adam's sin brought spiritual death to all of humanity, the righteousness of Jesus brings spiritual life to the human race. For this reason, Jesus is described as the second Adam.

- What does Paul say about the residual power of sin in his life in Romans 7?
In Romans 7:14–25, Paul vividly describes the spiritual conflict that he experiences as a redeemed and forgiven man who still possesses a sinful nature. He famously remarks, “I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing” (v. 19). This passage reminds us not only of our need for God’s forgiveness but also of our need to be made holy by the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit.

The Trinitarian Rescue Mission

- Which hymns does Dr. Thomas mention as examples of the scriptural reality that there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ?

Dr. Thomas first quotes from “Before the Throne of God Above.” This hymn describes the mysterious fact that our sinful souls are counted free; because God’s justice has been satisfied by Christ’s sacrifice, our sins are pardoned. Dr. Thomas also refers to Charles Wesley’s “And Can It Be?,” which includes the line “No condemnation now I dread.”

- What did the ancient heresy known as Docetism teach about the human nature of Jesus?

The Docetists committed the theological error of denying the reality of Christ’s incarnation. Against orthodox claims that Jesus was fully human and fully divine, the Docetists taught that Jesus merely appeared in human form without truly being human. The Apostle John spoke out against this heretical view in his first epistle.

- According to Romans 8:4, what role does the Holy Spirit play in the Christian life?

In Romans 8:2, Paul states that the Spirit of life has set believers free from the law of sin and death. Romans 8:4 reveals the results of this freedom. By the power of the Holy Spirit, believers are set free to live out the law of God. The purpose of this obedience is not to merit God’s forgiveness but rather to declare that God’s saving work has already taken place in the lives of His people.

After the Video

- Why does Dr. Thomas consider Romans 8 to be the greatest chapter in the Bible? Do you agree or disagree with this claim? Why or why not?

Dr. Thomas is not claiming that some parts of the Bible are more important than others. Instead, he is arguing that some passages, particularly Romans 8, communicate the gospel with unique clarity and power. Individual responses to Dr. Thomas’ position may vary.

- What role did Paul wish for Rome to play in the spread of the gospel?

Paul hoped that Rome could become a base similar to the city of Antioch, from which Christian missionaries could be sent throughout the Roman Empire. He

longed to see the gospel take root in Spain, which represented the distant frontier of the Roman world.

- Dr. Thomas describes Romans 8:1–4 as thoroughly Trinitarian. Referencing these verses, what role does each person of the Trinity play in your salvation?

The gospel as presented in Romans 8 involves the unique work of all three persons of the Trinity. God the Father sent His Son to accomplish redemption and is the just judge who makes the declaration of “no condemnation” for those who are in Christ. God the Son came as our representative and substitute, and through the reality of double imputation, our sin was credited to Him, and His righteousness was credited to us. It is through the power of God the Holy Spirit that the redemption accomplished by Jesus is applied to believers and that they are enabled to live in the freedom of Jesus Christ.

REVIEW QUIZ

Lesson 1

1. **B.**
The man working with a muckrake was not able to see the crown that was being held over his own head. Fixated on his menial labor, he did not realize that he was a king. In the same way, Christians often struggle to grasp their royal status as children of God.
2. **B.**
Paul desired to use Rome as a strategic base from which to send Christian missionaries to the far reaches of the Roman Empire. Paul’s great ambition was to take the gospel message to Spain.
3. **D.**
Calvin observed that the vast riches of redemption achieve no benefit for sinners who remain separated from Christ. It is only through union with Jesus that fallen people become beneficiaries of the gospel’s promises.
4. **D.**
In His holiness, God cannot look on sin. By nature, human beings are children of wrath. Because Jesus Christ took sin on Himself and His righteousness was credited to those who believe, the requirements of divine justice have been satisfied. All who place their hope in Jesus Christ receive not wrath but forgiveness and grace from God the Father.
5. **C.**
The doctrine of double imputation describes the great exchange that took place between Jesus and sinful humanity. Sin was imputed to Christ, and Christ’s perfect righteousness was imputed to those of the human race who believe in Him.

6. A.

Romans 8:4 states that redemption was accomplished “in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us.” This righteous living on the part of Christians is not a prerequisite to God’s grace but is rather a response to it. Thus, this verse teaches that the intended outcome of God’s redemptive work was a redeemed humanity set free to display the holy nature of God through joyful and grateful obedience.

2

A New Mind-Set

INTRODUCTION

Romans 8 draws a stark contrast between the attitudes and lifestyles of people who are spiritually dead and those of people who are spiritually alive. In this lesson, Dr. Thomas will discuss what it means to be alive spiritually and will describe the ripple effect of this supernatural life in the lives of believers.

LEARNING GOALS

When you have finished this lesson, you should be able to:

- Articulate the differences between a mind-set and lifestyle based on the flesh and a mind-set and lifestyle based on the Spirit
- Identify and explain three metaphors for spiritual life found in the New Testament

KEY IDEAS

- The New Testament uses three pictures to depict the spiritual life of the Christian from new birth to new creation.
- Romans 8:5–7 teaches four realities about Christians: (1) Christians are spiritually alive; (2) Christians live for God; (3) Christians are at peace; (4) Christians are spiritually minded.

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Before the Video

What Do You Think?

Take a moment to answer the following questions. They will prepare you for the lecture.

- What signs indicate that God is working in a person's life?

- How does having a relationship with Jesus Christ change the way someone thinks? In what ways would your worldview be different if you did not know Jesus?

Scripture Reading

For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot.

—Romans 8:5–7

- How do you react to the statement that the mind set on the flesh cannot submit to God's law? How does the spiritual condition of the mind influence the way a person lives?

During the Video

Answer the following questions while you watch the video. They will guide you through the lecture.

Alive for God

0:00–11:17

- Which three New Testament word pictures does Dr. Thomas mention as illustrations of the quality of life enjoyed by the Christian?
- According to Romans 8:5, what is the main difference between those who are spiritually dead and those who are spiritually alive?

At Peace and Spiritually Minded

11:17–25:15

- Is the peace spoken of in Romans 8:6 an objective or subjective type of peace? Explain.
- What does it mean to be spiritually minded?
- What does the Holy Spirit think about?

After the Video

Answer the following questions after you have finished the lecture. They will help you identify and summarize the major points.

- What do the word pictures of new birth, new creation, and resurrection all have in common?

If you are in a group, have the members identify and explain which of these word pictures most vividly communicates God's redemptive work to them.

- What do the default thoughts of a person's mind indicate about a person? What is it that your mind defaults to when you're not thinking of anything in particular?

If you are in a group, have the members read Philippians 4:8-9 and discuss what they consider the Apostle Paul to have in mind that is pure, lovely, commendable, excellent, and worthy of praise.

- How do a person's habits relate to the process of sanctification?

If you are in a group, have the members share examples of specific habits in their lives. Which habits are particularly enriching? What is a habit that you would like to change?

PRAYER

Commit what you have learned from God's Word in this lesson to prayer.

- Praise God for His sovereign work of redemption.
- Confess ways in which your mind-set is still rooted in the flesh rather than in the Spirit.
- Thank God for sending the Holy Spirit to give you new life and growth in grace.
- Ask God to help you break sinful habits and form new habits that glorify Him.

REVIEW QUIZ

Use these multiple-choice questions to measure what you learned from this lesson.

1. The main thrust of Paul's argument in Romans 8:4 can be summarized as "If you do certain things, you will live."
 - a. True
 - b. False

-
2. What is the proper relationship between indicatives and imperatives in Scripture?
 - a. Imperatives precede indicatives.
 - b. Imperatives and indicatives are simultaneous.
 - c. Indicatives and imperatives are interchangeable.
 - d. Indicatives precede imperatives.
 3. What does the account of Jesus and Nicodemus demonstrate?
 - a. Even a great teacher may not be truly gifted.
 - b. Even a great teacher may not be regenerate.
 - c. Even a great teacher may not be sanctified.
 - d. Even a great teacher may not be received.
 4. Which of the following best describes the natural condition of the human will?
 - a. Inclined to choose good over evil
 - b. Free to choose any outcome
 - c. In bondage to sin and self
 - d. Morally neutral
 5. Who famously declared, “Our hearts are restless until they find their rest in Thee?”
 - a. Augustine
 - b. Athanasius
 - c. John Calvin
 - d. John Owen
 6. Which of the following best defines spiritual-mindedness?
 - a. Focusing intently on the person and work of the Holy Spirit
 - b. Imagining what it would be like to be in heaven
 - c. Minding the things that the Holy Spirit minds
 - d. Thinking only of otherworldly things

Answer Key—A New Mind-Set

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Before the Video

What Do You Think?

These are personal questions. The answers should be based on your own knowledge and experience.

Scripture Reading

- How do you react to the statement that the mind set on the flesh cannot submit to God's law? How does the spiritual condition of the mind influence the way a person lives?

Reactions to the first question will vary, but these verses indicate that there is a very strong correlation between the spiritual character of a person's thoughts and the spiritual character of a person's actions. The spiritual posture of our hearts and minds determines the moral nature of our actions.

During the Video

Alive for God

- Which three New Testament word pictures does Dr. Thomas mention as illustrations of the quality of life enjoyed by Christians?

Dr. Thomas noted the New Testament word pictures of new birth (John 3:3), new creation (2 Cor. 5:21), and resurrection (Rom. 6:13) as illustrations of the type of life that Christians experience as a result of their union with Christ.

- According to Romans 8:5, what is the main difference between those who are spiritually dead and those who are spiritually alive?

Those who are spiritually dead live according to the law of the flesh, but those who are spiritually alive live according to the law of the Spirit. Just as the act of producing fruit distinguishes a real tree from a Christmas tree, so the fruit of the Spirit that is manifested in the life of a believer is clear evidence of spiritual life.

At Peace and Spiritually-Minded

- Is the peace spoken of in Romans 8:6 an objective or subjective type of peace? Explain.

Though it is true that the Christian experiences the objective peace of being justified or at peace with God, this is not what Paul is describing in Romans 8:6. Rather, the subjective sense of peace of conscience, or spiritual rest, is in view.

- What does it mean to be spiritually minded?

To be spiritually minded means to have in mind or think about what the Holy Spirit thinks about. The more we experience the sanctifying work of the Spirit in our lives, the more our minds will focus by default on the things of God.

- What does the Holy Spirit think about?

This is the question that Dr. Thomas said has haunted him since reading John Owen's treatise On Being Spiritually Minded. Though no mortal can claim precise knowledge of the mind of the Holy Spirit, Owen suggests that the thoughts of the Holy Spirit center on the things of God, particularly the persons and redemptive work of the Father and the Son. As we grow in maturity, our minds will be continually drawn to thoughts of Christ and the gospel, justification and the overtures of redemption, and to Scripture and the God who is all in all.

After the Video

- What do the word pictures of new birth, new creation, and resurrection all have in common?

These three word pictures each appear in the New Testament as illustrations of the type of life that Christians now possess through the work of Jesus Christ. Each of these three realities requires God's sovereign and decisive action in order to bring sinners out of spiritual death and into spiritual life.

- What do the default thoughts of a person's mind indicate about that person? What is it that your mind defaults to when you're not thinking of anything in particular?

A person's default thoughts reveal what is of ultimate importance to a person, ultimately indicating whether that person is spiritually dead or spiritually alive. Because of the personal nature of the second question, responses will vary.

- How do a person's habits relate to the process of sanctification?

Dr. Thomas explains that sanctification involves the process of God's breaking our old habits and forming new habits within us. As the Spirit teaches us to live more and more according to the law of the Spirit, we will find that our thoughts and actions naturally begin to gravitate toward the things of God. This is only possible as a result of God's sovereign and gracious work within us.

REVIEW QUIZ

Lesson 2

1. B.

Dr. Thomas stressed that Paul was not saying, "If you do certain things, you will live." Rather, he summarized Paul's teaching in Romans 8:4 as the exact opposite: "Because you live, you will now do certain things."

2. **D.**
The realities of the gospel, stated grammatically as indicatives, always precede the Christian's moral duties, which are expressed as imperatives. The very grammar of the gospel informs us that our good works are to be performed, not as a way of earning God's forgiveness, but as a grateful response to the forgiveness that is already ours in Jesus Christ.
3. **B.**
At the time of his conversation with Jesus, Nicodemus was not regenerate. Although Nicodemus was a learned man and a respected teacher of God's Word, Jesus wanted him to understand that he needed to be born again in order to experience the kingdom of God.
4. **C.**
As a result of the fall, the natural condition of the human heart is one of inescapable bondage to sin and self. Left to itself, the human heart is not free to choose anything but evil. For this reason, God must carry out His work of new creation in the heart before any person can experience saving faith in Jesus Christ.
5. **A.**
In his spiritual autobiography The Confessions, Augustine of Hippo prayerfully remarked, "Our hearts are restless until they find their rest in Thee." This statement vividly encapsulates Paul's teaching in Romans 8:6 that a Spirit-centered mind-set brings true and lasting inner peace.
6. **C.**
Spiritual-mindedness, as described in Romans 8:5–7 is neither the mental posture of focusing on otherworldly things nor the act of merely thinking about the Holy Spirit. Rather, spiritual-mindedness is the result of the Spirit's regenerating and sanctifying work, whereby believers actually begin to think in the same way and about the same things as the Holy Spirit. The more we grow in spiritual-mindedness, the more our thoughts will naturally gravitate toward the things of God.

3

The Indwelling of the Spirit

INTRODUCTION

One of the greatest treasures of the gospel is the reality that the Spirit of God dwells in believers. This simple but profound truth can change every part of our lives. In this lesson, Dr. Thomas describes what it means to have the Spirit dwelling within, and he invites believers to revel in the glorious hope of the future that the Holy Spirit offers us.

LEARNING GOALS

When you have finished this lesson, you should be able to:

- Recognize the results of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit
- Affirm your hope in the future because the Holy Spirit dwells in you
- Cultivate a more vibrant and worshipful relationship with the Holy Spirit

KEY IDEAS

- The Holy Spirit offers assurance to believers that they belong to Jesus Christ.
- The Holy Spirit's presence within believers is a guarantee of their future resurrection.
- The Holy Spirit reminds believers of the importance of their bodies and of the reality of the new heavens and new earth.

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Before the Video

What Do You Think?

Take a moment to answer the following questions. They will prepare you for the lecture.

- How have you observed the work of the Holy Spirit in your life?

- What are the main differences you have noticed between people who have the Holy Spirit dwelling in them and people who do not have the Holy Spirit?

Scripture Reading

You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

—Romans 8:9–11

- What are the results of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit for believers?

During the Video

Answer the following questions while you watch the video. They will guide you through the lecture.

Assurance through the Spirit

0:00–6:38

- What is the New Testament’s answer to the common question, “Who are you?”
- “I am going away, and I will come to you” (John 14:28). Which future event was Jesus referring to when He said this?

Life through the Spirit

6:38–16:08

- Thomas Goodwin once asked a prospective student, “Are you ready to die?” What was he intending to ask by this question?
- What is different between the conversion experiences of Dr. Thomas and his wife?

Hope through the Spirit

16:08–24:47

- What is located under the pulpit of the First Presbyterian Church in Columbia, S.C.? How does Dr. Thomas use this to teach the children of his congregation?
- How does Dr. Thomas describe the new heavens and the new earth?

After the Video

Answer the following questions after you have finished the lecture. They will help you identify and summarize the major points.

- In what sense is the gospel's focus on the work of Jesus and the gospel's focus on the work of the Holy Spirit one and the same?

If you are in a group, have the members read John 14. What unity and intimacy can be observed between Jesus and the Holy Spirit from this passage?

- “Can you date the moment of your conversion?” Which question did Dr. Thomas say is more important than this question?

If you are in a group, have the members describe the circumstances of their conversions. Do you remember a specific moment when you were converted, or have you always known Jesus? How is God's glory displayed through each of these experiences?

- The term *heaven* is often used to refer to two separate realities: the intermediate state and the reality of the new heavens and the new earth. How are these different?

If you are in a group, have the members discuss their individual reactions to Dr. Thomas' description of what the new heavens and the new earth will be like.

PRAYER

Commit what you have learned from God's Word in this lesson to prayer.

- Praise God for sending His Spirit to dwell within you.
- Confess areas in your life which you need to surrender more fully to the Lord.
- Thank God for giving you His guarantee in the Spirit that you will be raised to live with Him forever.
- Ask God to send His Spirit to change the hearts of those you know who do not trust in Christ.

REVIEW QUIZ

Use these multiple-choice questions to measure what you learned from this lesson.

1. Which of the following is *not* a way that Dr. Thomas described the day of Pentecost?
 - a. A consequence of the finished work of Christ on the cross
 - b. A continuation of the finished work of Christ on the cross
 - c. An application of the finished work of Christ on the cross
 - d. A final act of the finished work of Christ on the cross
2. What contrast does Paul draw in Romans 8:10?
 - a. Between the body and the soul
 - b. Between the law and the gospel
 - c. Between those in Adam and those in Christ
 - d. Between union with Christ and union with the Spirit
3. Which of the following biblical figures was regenerate before his physical birth?
 - a. Paul
 - b. Moses
 - c. Abraham
 - d. John the Baptist
4. Scripture assigns the same importance to the redemption of human bodies as it does to the redemption of human souls.
 - a. True
 - b. False
5. What is Paul's description in 2 Corinthians 5:8 of being absent from the body and present with the Lord in reference to?
 - a. A pretribulation rapture
 - b. Supernatural out-of-body experiences
 - c. The intermediate state that awaits believers after death
 - d. Our eternal home in the new heavens and the new earth
6. What is Jesus' statement in John 14:2 that His Father's house contains many mansions in reference to?
 - a. The palace constructed by Jesus' ancestor David
 - b. The intermediate state that awaits believers after death
 - c. Our eternal home in the new heavens and the new earth
 - d. A spiritual truth expressed in metaphor about life in heaven

Answer Key—The Indwelling of the Spirit

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Before the Video

What Do You Think?

These are personal questions. The answers should be based on your own knowledge and experience.

Scripture Reading

- What are the results of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit for believers?

As a result of the Spirit's indwelling, those who believe in Jesus Christ belong to Him and are no longer found to be "in the flesh." Consequently, believers experience a new type of spiritual life that continues even after physical death. The Spirit's indwelling is also a guarantee that God will one day raise believers from the dead to glory, just as Jesus Christ was raised from the dead.

During the Video

Assurance through the Spirit

- What is the New Testament's answer to the common question, "Who are you?"

The New Testament declares that whoever believes in Jesus Christ is found in Him and is therefore a Christian. Our union with Christ is at the core of our new identity. The Holy Spirit, who dwells within believers, grants us assurance that we belong to Jesus.

- "I am going away, and I will come to you" (John 14:28). Which future event was Jesus referring to when He said this?

In this statement, Jesus was not referring to His bodily resurrection or His physical return to earth in judgment. Rather, He was referring to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit which occurred at Pentecost. Since the indwelling Spirit is the Spirit of Christ, it is accurate to say that Christ indwells us. For this reason, before His ascension, Jesus told the Apostles that He would be with them always, until the end of the age.

Life through the Spirit

- Thomas Goodwin once asked a prospective student, "Are you ready to die?" What was he intending to ask by this question?

Thomas Goodwin once frightened a young prospective student by asking him, "Are you ready to die?" Goodwin was not implying that the young man's life was

nearing its end; rather, he was asking the student whether he trusted Jesus and could therefore face death with confidence in the certainty of the resurrection.

- What is different between the conversion experiences of Dr. Thomas and his wife?

In His sovereignty, God grants spiritual life to His elect at different times in their lives. While Dr. Thomas can identify the precise moment when he came to know Jesus, his wife cannot recall a time in her life when she did not know and trust in Jesus as Lord and Savior.

Hope through the Spirit

- What is located under the pulpit of the First Presbyterian Church in Columbia, S.C.? How does Dr. Thomas use this to teach the children of his congregation?

Located below the pulpit are the graves of former church members Mr. and Mrs. Law. When Dr. Thomas delivers the weekly children's address at his church, he stands directly over these graves. He uses this fact as an opportunity to teach the children that one day Mr. and Mrs. Law will rise from the dead and physically emerge from the grave to glory, as will all who have died in the Lord.

- How does Dr. Thomas describe the new heavens and the new earth?

Dr. Thomas described the new heavens and the new earth much like existence as we know it but without sin. In the new heavens and new earth, God intends to re-create the beauty, wonder, and magnificence of His current creation. Therefore, there is good reason to anticipate that the God who created the things we enjoy in this life will one day re-create and perfect them in the next.

After the Video

- In what sense is the gospel's focus on the work of Jesus and the gospel's focus on the work of the Holy Spirit one and the same?

Just as there is unity among the three persons of the Trinity, there is an organic unity in the work that each person accomplishes. The Holy Spirit indwelt Jesus Christ, raised Him from the dead, and now has been sent by Jesus to dwell within believers. The work that the Holy Spirit accomplishes in and through believers is a continuation of the ministry of Jesus Christ.

- “Can you date the moment of your conversion?” Which question did Dr. Thomas say is more important than this question?

As edifying as it can be to recall and recount the specific circumstances of conversion, Dr. Thomas reminds us that a more important question is “Are we spiritually alive?” The crucial issue is not whether we recall how and when we were converted; it is whether we are displaying the evidence of conversion. Even if we cannot recall a specific date and time, all who trust in Jesus Christ can rest in full assurance that they are regenerate.

- The term *heaven* is often used to refer to two separate realities: the intermediate state and the reality of the new heavens and the new earth. How are these different?

The intermediate state is what believers experience after they die as they await the day of Christ's return. The Bible describes it as a state of conscious awareness and joy in the Lord's presence. However, the New Testament's main focus is on the hope of the new heavens and the new earth, which will be a completely redeemed, perfected, and sinless version of the current creation. The new heavens and the new earth constitute the great hope and final home of believers.

REVIEW QUIZ

Lesson 3

1. **D.**

Dr. Thomas observed that the day of Pentecost was a consequence, continuation, and application of the finished work of Jesus. However, Pentecost does not represent the final act of Christ's redemptive work. Redemption was purchased once and for all by Jesus on the cross but continues to be applied to the lives of believers today. Christ's redemptive work will culminate in the future consummation of His kingdom in the new heavens and the new earth.

2. **C.**

When Paul states in Romans 8:10 that the body is dead but the Spirit is life, he is describing the fundamental contrast between those who are in Adam and those who are in Christ. Those who remain in Adam do not have the Holy Spirit within them; those who are found in Christ have received the Spirit of life.

3. **D.**

Luke 1:42 records that John the Baptist leapt in the womb when his mother and Jesus' mother saw each other during their pregnancies. This verse indicates that the Holy Spirit had already regenerated John's soul so as to prompt him to worship and exult in the presence of the Messiah.

4. **A.**

God created humans with a body and a soul, and He intends to re-create humans with bodies and souls. It is not only our souls that are redeemed. The Bible anticipates and celebrates the certainty of bodily resurrection at the last day.

5. **C.**

In 2 Corinthians 5:8, Paul describes the condition that awaits him after his earthly death as one in which he will be absent from the body but present with the Lord. This is a reference to the intermediate state that awaits all believers who experience physical death before Christ returns. Paul clearly considered existence in the intermediate state to be preferable to this present life. Better still in Paul's mind is the

final consummation of God's kingdom in the new heavens and the new earth, when believers will be raised physically to dwell in God's presence eternally.

6. **C.**

Jesus' statement that there are many rooms in His Father's house is more than a metaphor. It attests to the physicality of the eternal life that believers will enjoy with resurrected bodies in the new heavens and the new earth.

4

Putting Sin to Death

INTRODUCTION

Even after being clothed in the perfect righteousness of Christ, we continue to wrestle with sin. Although our sinful *record* has been removed, our sinful *nature* remains. In this lesson, Dr. Thomas introduces the reality of indwelling sin and encourages us with the truth that the indwelling Spirit enables us to put it to death.

LEARNING GOALS

When you have finished this lesson, you should be able to:

- Cultivate a greater desire and deeper resolve to battle sin
- Enlist a variety of practical techniques to put particular sins to death

KEY IDEAS

- Christians need and should desire to deal with indwelling sin.
- Christians, by the power of the Holy Spirit, are able to deal with indwelling sin.
- Christians are able to employ practical methods in order to deal with indwelling sin and to strive after God-glorifying holiness.

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Before the Video

What Do You Think?

Take a moment to answer the following questions. They will prepare you for the lecture.

- What is a particular sin that you have wrestled with for a long time? Why do you think this particular sin has been such a challenge?

- What are the most effective methods you have used to combat sin in your life?

Scripture Reading

So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

—Romans 8:12–13

- What contrast do these verses reveal between those who are spiritually dead and those who are spiritually alive?

During the Video

Answer the following questions while you watch the video. They will guide you through the lecture.

The Mind-Set of Mortification

0:00–8:53

- What does it mean to mortify sin?
- According to Dr. Thomas, what may be the reason for a Christian's lack of progress against besetting sin?

The Method of Mortification

8:53–25:40

- What is the first step to take in the process of mortification?
- What should Christians refuse to be content with?
- Where should Christians focus on killing sin?
- How does accountability fit into the process of mortifying sin?
- What trap do Christians need to avoid while working to put sin to death?

After the Video

Answer the following questions after you have finished the lecture. They will help you identify and summarize the major points.

- What are the three truths on which a biblical mind-set of mortification rests?

If you are in a group, have the members discuss the following question: Which of these three truths do you embrace the most in your own battle against sin? Which of these three truths do you struggle to understand or apply?

- An effective methodology of mortification is incompatible with complacency about sin on the one hand and legalism on the other. How can complacency and legalism both hinder the process of putting sin to death?

If you are in a group, have the members describe which of these errors they most easily fall into, complacency or legalism. How can the gospel address both?

- Think about at least one besetting sin, a sin that you continually struggle with. Are you willing to put this sin to death? What pattern do you need to set in motion in order to kill this sin?

If you are in a group, have the members discuss ways that they can encourage fellow believers and hold others accountable in the shared struggle against sin.

PRAYER

Commit what you have learned from God's Word in this lesson to prayer.

- Praise God for His holy love for sinners and His holy hatred of sin.
- Confess the particular sins that you most urgently need to deal with.
- Thank God for the help the Holy Spirit gives us in mortifying our sins.
- Ask God to strengthen and assist you to encourage others in their battle with sin.

REVIEW QUIZ

Use these multiple-choice questions to measure what you learned from this lesson.

1. Who wrote the famous treatise *On the Mortification of Sin* in the 1600s?
 - a. John Owen
 - b. John Calvin
 - c. Martin Luther
 - d. Robert Murray M'Cheyne

2. According to a well-known nineteenth-century Scottish pastor, what is contained in the human heart?
 - a. The seeds of wisdom and understanding
 - b. The seeds of every sin known to man
 - c. The seeds of the freedom of the will
 - d. The seeds of righteousness
3. What did Martin Luther reportedly say when he was convinced that Satan was knocking on his door?
 - a. "Get thee behind me!"
 - b. "Here I stand. I can do no other. God help me!"
 - c. "Martin Luther doesn't live here anymore. A man in Christ lives here now."
 - d. "I am not my own. I belong, body and soul, in life and in death, to Jesus Christ."
4. Which of the following theological terms refers to the process of bringing to life the fruit of the Spirit within a Christian?
 - a. Glorification
 - b. Justification
 - c. Regeneration
 - d. Vivification
5. Godliness is never merely personal.
 - a. True
 - b. False
6. Dr. Thomas' story about the tree in his backyard illustrates which of the following truths?
 - a. By God's grace, Christians are able to defeat particular sins.
 - b. Sin is easier to kill when we are accountable to other Christians.
 - c. Some sins seem to be defeated but may still be alive.
 - d. The right tool is needed to destroy certain sins.

Answer Key—Putting Sin to Death

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Before the Video

What Do You Think?

These are personal questions. The answers should be based on your own knowledge and experience.

Scripture Reading

- What contrast do these verses reveal between those who are spiritually dead and those who are spiritually alive?

According to Romans 8:12–13, those who are spiritually dead live according to the flesh. In contrast, those who are spiritually alive put fleshly deeds to death. A person's way of living with regard to the flesh is an indication of whether or not that person is spiritually dead or alive.

During the Video

The Mind-Set of Mortification

- What does it mean to mortify sin?

Mortification is an ancient term for the act of putting something to death. To mortify one's sins is to undertake the process of killing the sinful desires of one's own heart. Those who are still in Adam are ruled by these desires; those who are in Christ are empowered by the Spirit to put their old master to death.

- According to Dr. Thomas, what may be the reason for a Christian's lack of progress against besetting sin?

Dr. Thomas suggests that if a Christian fails to progress in sanctification and continues to struggle with particular sins over an extended period of time, the underlying reason may be a lack of desire to deal with those sins. Christians will not succeed in their battle against sin unless they genuinely desire to be free from its influence.

The Method of Mortification

- What is the first step to take in the process of mortification?

Mortification of sin begins with saying no to sin. When we were dead in our sins, we lacked the will or desire to say no to sin. God's grace in our lives now enables us to deny worldly passions and the desires of our flesh.

- What should Christians refuse to be content with?
Christians should refuse to be content with partial holiness. Settling for partial holiness allows sin to maintain a dangerous foothold in a person's life.
- Where should Christians focus on killing sin?
Mortification of sin occurs most effectively when we focus on killing sin at its source. We do not merely want to treat the symptoms of the disease; we want to eradicate the disease itself. Consequently, we must deal with the underlying sinfulness in our hearts and minds, not just the sins we commit outwardly.
- How does accountability fit into the process of mortifying sin?
Sin never affects just one person. Just as the people in our lives experience the effects of our individual sins, they can also serve as part of the solution. Sin dies most quickly when we fight it together.
- What trap do Christians need to avoid while working to put sin to death?
Christians who take seriously the call to deal with sin must beware of falling into legalism. We do not fight against sin to earn God's favor or attain a higher spiritual status. Rather, we seek to put sin to death out of love for God and a desire to be holy as He is holy.

After the Video

- What are the three truths on which a biblical mind-set of mortification rests?
The three truths that are central to a mindset of mortification are (1) Christians need to deal with their indwelling sin; (2) Christians should desire to deal with their indwelling sin; and (3) Christians are able to deal with their indwelling sin.
- An effective methodology of mortification is incompatible with complacency about sin on the one hand and legalism on the other hand. How can complacency and legalism both hinder the process of putting sin to death?
Complacency with regard to personal sin and holiness can result in incomplete efforts to put sin to death. By settling for partial holiness, we allow certain sins to retain influence in our lives that they should no longer have. Legalism may profess to be a commitment to holiness but is really another form of partial holiness. Legalism tends to fixate on the eradication of certain external sins while allowing internal sin, such as pride, to remain unchecked.
- Think about at least one besetting sin, a sin that you continually struggle with. Are you willing to put this sin to death? What pattern do you need to set in motion in order to kill this sin?
This question is personal in nature. Answers will vary from person to person. However, the pattern you identify to put this particular sin to death should be drawn from the five principles discussed in this lesson: (1) say no to sin; (2) don't be content with partial holiness; (3) kill sin at its source; (4) be accountable to others; and (5) don't fall into legalism.

REVIEW QUIZ

Lesson 4

1. **A.**
*John Owen, a Puritan theologian who lived during the 1600s, wrote the influential treatise titled *Of the Mortification of Sin in Believers*, which continues to be influential among Christian readers to this day.*
2. **B.**
The Scottish pastor Robert Murray M'Cheyne once said, "The seed of every sin known to man is in my heart." The fact that sin resides within us underscores the importance of confronting and defeating our sinfulness.
3. **C.**
Martin Luther is reported to have replied: "Martin Luther doesn't live here anymore. A man in Christ lives here now." This response reflects the reality that those who are in Christ are a new creation, no longer subject to the tyranny of sin and spiritual death.
4. **D.**
The Puritans, Reformers, and medieval theologians emphasized the dual doctrines of mortification and vivification. Mortification refers to the putting to death of the old, sinful person. Vivification refers to the bringing to life of the new person, who is alive in the Spirit.
5. **A.**
Godliness is not merely a personal. Paul's instructions to believers in Romans 8:12–13 are given using plural verb conjugations, indicating that mortification through life in the Spirit is to be done as a group. The process of putting sin to death is best carried out in the context of Christian community.
6. **C.**
Dr. Thomas' story illustrates the truth that some sins are concealed and may appear to be defeated but in reality may still be very much alive. Just as Dr. Thomas' tree did not die while its roots survived intact, so our besetting sins persist until they are destroyed at the root.

5

The Spirit of Adoption

INTRODUCTION

The eighth chapter of Paul's letter to the Romans outlines a robust theology of the person and work of the Holy Spirit. In previous lessons, we have already discussed the Holy Spirit's work in uniting believers to Christ, setting them free from the power of sin, and aiding them in the struggle against indwelling sin. In this lesson, Dr. Thomas describes the Holy Spirit's vital work in our adoption into God's family.

LEARNING GOALS

When you have finished this lesson, you should be able to:

- Identify and describe a variety of ways that the Spirit works in the lives of Christians
- Understand and rejoice in your privileged status as a child of God

KEY IDEAS

- The Holy Spirit leads believers to become more like Jesus Christ.
- The Holy Spirit leads believers out of slavery and into God's grace.
- The Holy Spirit enables believers to become part of the family of God.
- The Holy Spirit bears witness to the fact that believers are God's children.

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Before the Video

What Do You Think?

Take a moment to answer the following questions. They will prepare you for the lecture.

- What effect does thinking of yourself as a child of God have on you?

- Why is it important for you to be reminded that you are a child of God?

Scripture Reading

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

—Romans 8:14–17

- According to these verses, what are the results of the Holy Spirit’s work in the lives of believers?

During the Video

Answer the following questions while you watch the video. They will guide you through the lecture.

The Spirit of Holiness and Grace

0:00–9:44

- “For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.” What kind of leading does Paul mean?
- “Have you been to Sinai?” What was the significance of this question that was once common among Scottish Presbyterians?
- In the parable of the prodigal son, what characterized the older brother’s perception of sonship? How was that perception inaccurate?

The Spirit of Adoption and Witness

9:45–24:36

- Why does Paul describe believers as “sons” and not as “sons and daughters” in Romans 8:14–15?
- How is the concept of God as Father different in the Old Testament and the New Testament?

- What feelings are suggested by the use of the verb “cry” in Romans 8:15?

After the Video

Answer the following questions after you have finished the lecture. They will help you identify and summarize the major points.

- How does the Holy Spirit use conviction of sin to lead believers to spiritual freedom?

If you are in a group, have the members read 1 Corinthians 10:13. How might the Holy Spirit use our experience of conviction of sin to help us when we are tempted to sin?

- What are the benefits of being a child of God?

If you are in a group, have the members share what is most significant to them about being a child of God.

- Why is it important that the Holy Spirit is a witness to us of our royal status?

If you are in a group, have the members discuss why adoption is a powerful depiction of the gospel.

PRAYER

Commit what you have learned from God’s Word in this lesson to prayer.

- Praise God for adopting you as His child.
- Confess any ways in which you may struggle to relate to God as a Father.
- Thank God for His love, care, and protection displayed in His works of creation and redemption.
- Ask God to grant you a greater awareness of your royal status through the Spirit’s witness.

REVIEW QUIZ

Use these multiple-choice questions to measure what you learned from this lesson.

1. Which of the following best describes our relationship with the Holy Spirit during the process of our sanctification?
 - a. A second baptism of the Holy Spirit is required before our sanctification.
 - b. Our efforts to grow in Christ are done in participation with the Holy Spirit.
 - c. We take a passive role as the Spirit does the work of sanctification for us.
 - d. Regeneration is the Spirit's work, whereas sanctification is our work.
2. In the parable of the prodigal son, the primary underlying source of the older brother's resentment was which of the following?
 - a. The father's joy over the younger brother's return
 - b. The jealousy that the older brother harbored toward his younger brother
 - c. The older brother's slave-like perception of his relationship with his father
 - d. The younger brother's shameful behavior
3. The term *Abba* was used only in Bible times and only to refer to God as a heavenly Father.
 - a. True
 - b. False
4. The description of God as a heavenly Father allows for both comparison and contrast with earthly fathers.
 - a. True
 - b. False
5. In which of the biblical covenants does the doctrine of adoption play the most prominent role?
 - a. The Abrahamic covenant
 - b. The Davidic covenant
 - c. The Mosaic covenant
 - d. The new covenant
6. Adam and Eve's act of disobedience to God can be traced to what sort of tendency?
 - a. Lawlessness
 - b. Defiance
 - c. Legalism
 - d. Depravity

Answer Key—The Spirit of Adoption

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Before the Video

What Do You Think?

These are personal questions. The answers should be based on your own knowledge and experience.

Scripture Reading

- According to these verses, what are the results of the Holy Spirit's work in the lives of believers?

This passage first states that believers are led by the Spirit. This is not a spirit of slavery, but a Spirit of freedom and grace. Moreover, all who are led by the Spirit have become the children of God. Finally, the Spirit bears witness to the truth that those who are united to Christ in His suffering are also united to Him in His glorious inheritance.

During the Video

The Spirit of Holiness and Grace

- “For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.” What kind of leading does Paul mean?

When Paul uses the vocabulary of leading in Romans 8:14, he is not referring to the act of merely giving guidance. Instead, Paul has in mind the Holy Spirit's active role in leading believers into holiness. The Spirit leads us in sanctification, the process of becoming more like Jesus.

- “Have you been to Sinai?” What was the significance of this question that was once common among Scottish Presbyterians?

The old question “Have you been to Sinai?” has less to do with geography and more to do with the spiritual reality of conviction of sin. To ask if a person has been to Sinai is to ask if that person is aware of his sin and desires to be rid of it.

- In the parable of the prodigal son, what characterized the older brother's perception of sonship? How was that perception inaccurate?

The older son's response to his father in Luke 15:29 reveals that he considered sonship to be a state of servitude or slavery. This mind-set is a tragic and fundamentally flawed understanding of what it means to be a child of God. Paul's words in Romans 8:15 make it clear that the Spirit of adoption is antithetical to a spirit of slavery.

The Spirit of Adoption and Witness

- Why does Paul describe believers as “sons” and not as “sons and daughters” in Romans 8:14–15?

Paul uses the language of sonship because sons were the ones who inherited a father’s property in the ancient Roman world. In Romans 8:14–15, Paul understands within the term “sons” both men and women, but only the concept of sonship communicated the theological truth of inheritance in a Roman context.

- How is the concept of God as Father different in the Old Testament and the New Testament?

References to God as “Father” are rare in the Old Testament, and the ancient Hebrews would address God with such reverence that they would use alternate terms of address, meaning the exact pronunciation of the divine name is no longer known. The New Testament, on the other hand, pairs reverence with intimacy, referring to God as “Father” with regularity. This new and intimate relationship with God as a heavenly Father is one of the great differences between the old and new covenants.

- What feelings are suggested by the use of the verb “cry” in Romans 8:15?

The word for “cry” that is used in Romans 8:15 suggests pain and dereliction rather than intimacy and nearness. This is not to imply that Christians do not experience intimacy with our heavenly Father. Rather, this word choice invites us to run to our Father with open arms during times of turmoil and distress.

After the Video

- How does the Holy Spirit use conviction of sin to lead believers to spiritual freedom?

Often a believer’s first experience of the Holy Spirit comes through conviction of sin. The Holy Spirit reveals to us the extent of our brokenness and our need for God’s grace. Through conviction of sin, the Spirit also shows sinners that we are powerless to save ourselves. This experience of conviction is a necessary step toward repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. The Spirit who convicts us of sin also empowers us to reach out to God for mercy and forgiveness.

- What are the benefits of being a child of God?

The benefits of being a child of God include childlike access to God through prayer, the love and attention of a caring Father, God’s parental guidance and discipline, a vibrant family of brothers and sisters, and an imperishable inheritance in God’s kingdom.

- Why is it important that the Holy Spirit is a witness to us of our royal status?

As fallen human beings, we tend to lose sight of our identity as God’s children. The world, the flesh, and the devil all work against us to convince us that our identity is found in other things. By bearing witness to God’s adoption of us, the Holy

Spirit helps us live with the confidence, freedom, and joy that come with being children of God.

REVIEW QUIZ

Lesson 5

- 1. B.**

Philippians 2:12–13 affirms that believers are to take responsibility to work out their salvation but states that God also works in believers to carry out this task. Consequently, growth in holiness is a task that we undertake in participation with the leading and power of the Holy Spirit.
- 2. C.**

Although the older brother was likely upset by any number of developments in this parable, the underlying source of his anger and unhappiness was his fundamental misunderstanding of what it meant to be a son to his father. Rather than enjoy a relationship of joy and intimacy, the older brother legalistically perceived his sonship as a status of joyless servitude.
- 3. B.**

Abba is the Aramaic word for “father” and is still in use today, as Dr. Thomas’ story from his time in Jerusalem indicates. Paul’s use of a common familial term to describe our relationship with God is intentional, as it indicates the tender and intimate connection that we have with God the Father.
- 4. A.**

God sets the holy standard for what a father should be. Many earthly fathers imitate God faithfully in this area and offer a good, though incomplete, picture of God’s fatherly care. Sadly, other earthly fathers have fallen so far short of God’s standard as to bear virtually no resemblance to His standard of fatherly love. Since God is the ideal Father, He cares for us perfectly in situations where our earthly fathers have failed.
- 5. D.**

One of the major differences between the promises of the new covenant and the promises made by the other covenants in the Old Testament is the profound reality that in Christ we receive adoption as God’s children. Under this covenant, we have the privilege of relating to God in a way that would have been unusual for the believers who lived before the time of Christ.
- 6. C.**

A trace of legalism can be detected in Adam and Eve’s spiritual mind-set. Although they had been abundantly provided for, they began to interpret God’s provision for them as miserly and incomplete. When we begin to doubt the love and care of God, we give in to the legalistic tendency to take matters into our own hands, acting according to a set of additional requirements that we believe will bring us closer to God through our own actions.

Hope in the Midst of Futility

INTRODUCTION

As a result of human sin, we experience brokenness and futility in all areas of life. The world in which we live retains much of its original majesty, but it is also in a state of groaning until the day when Christ will make all things new. In this lesson, Dr. Thomas discusses the profound effects of the fall on the world and describes the glorious hope we have in Christ of a world made new.

LEARNING GOALS

When you have finished this lesson, you should be able to:

- Identify ways in which the created order expresses its longing for redemption
- Articulate a biblical vision for living in the tension between the already and the not yet

KEY IDEAS

- All creation has been subject to futility because of the curse on human sin.
- Christians currently live in a period of tension between the already and the not yet.
- Christians can find hope in God's promise that one day we will be glorified and creation will be reborn.

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Before the Video

What Do You Think?

Take a moment to answer the following questions. They will prepare you for the lecture.

- What are the biggest problems the world faces? What is the source of those problems?

- When you think about the new heaven and the new earth, what excites you the most? How might our hope for a restored world influence the way we live now?

Scripture Reading

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope 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. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. 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. For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

—Romans 8:18–25

- What emotions or reactions to the present and future state of the world are attributed to Christians in these verses?

During the Video

Answer the following questions while you watch the video. They will guide you through the lecture.

Subjection to Futility

0:00–12:22

- Which examples of futility from the book of Ecclesiastes are mentioned?
- What is the source of futility in the world?

Liberation from Futility

12:23–25:02

- In what ways has God’s “not yet” broken into the “now” of this present world?
- Where else in the Bible is the restoration of this broken world mentioned?

- What additional meaning is carried by the Hebrew and Greek words for *glory*?

After the Video

Answer the following questions after you have finished the lecture. They will help you identify and summarize the major points.

- Romans 8:17–18 presupposes that suffering is a normal part of the Christian life. Why is suffering to be expected? How does this compare with the expectations of most Christians today?

If you are in a group, have each member describe an experience of suffering. What role did each member’s faith play in that experience?

- In this lesson, Dr. Thomas refers to the theological concept of the “now” and the “not yet.” What do these terms mean? In what sense is there tension between them?

If you are in a group, have the members discuss ways that they have observed or experienced the “now” and the “not yet” in their own spiritual lives.

- Describe the significance of the word “firstfruits” in Romans 8:22. What do the firstfruits of the Spirit guarantee?

If you are in a group, have the members share how the indwelling presence of the Spirit has given them hope and comfort in the midst of a particular challenge or obstacle.

PRAYER

Commit what you have learned from God’s Word in this lesson to prayer.

- Praise God for His promise to create a glorious new heaven and new earth.
- Confess times when you have doubted God’s goodness because of the evil around you.
- Thank God for the assurance He has given you that He is at work in this broken world.
- Ask God to give you renewed patience, hope, and faith to withstand this present evil age.

REVIEW QUIZ

Use these multiple-choice questions to measure what you learned from this lesson.

1. Who subjected the creation to futility?
 - a. Adam
 - b. Eve
 - c. God
 - d. Satan

2. “The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune.” Which of the following writers described human existence as being characterized this way?
 - a. C.S. Lewis
 - b. John Owen
 - c. Martin Luther
 - d. William Shakespeare

3. The book of Job teaches that people consistently reap what they sow.
 - a. True
 - b. False

4. The term *entropy* best describes which of the following?
 - a. The first law of thermodynamics
 - b. The notion that everything is meaningless
 - c. The idea that things are constantly getting better
 - d. The principle that everything is in the process of breaking down

5. What does Paul compare the groaning of creation to?
 - a. The bondage of slavery
 - b. The loss of a loved one
 - c. The pain of childbirth
 - d. The suffering of Job

6. What category best describes the references in Revelation 21 to the absence of sea and sun in the new heaven and the new earth?
 - a. Poetic language
 - b. Biblical language
 - c. Scientific language
 - d. Apocalyptic language

Answer Key—Hope in the Midst of Futility

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Before the Video

What Do You Think?

These are personal questions. The answers should be based on your own knowledge and experience.

Scripture Reading

- What emotions or reactions to the present and future state of the world are attributed to Christians in these verses?

In these verses, Paul indicates that the current experience of believers is characterized by suffering and groaning. However, this inner groaning is also accompanied by the hope that God will one day complete His redemptive work in the world and in us. Since the object of our hope is not yet realized, this present period of waiting produces patience.

During the Video

Subjection to Futility

- Which examples of futility from the book of Ecclesiastes are mentioned?

Three examples of futility mentioned by the Preacher in Ecclesiastes were cited: (1) the sun rises and falls repeatedly without reaching its destination; (2) the wind blows around but nothing seems to be gained; and (3) all rivers run to the sea, but the sea is never filled. All of these examples express the idea that even constant activity is insufficient to produce lasting and meaningful results.

- What is the source of futility in the world?

Ultimately, the cause of the world's brokenness is the sin of our first ancestor, Adam. As a result of humanity's rebellion against God's authority in the garden of Eden, God pronounced a curse on all of creation. Human labor is now characterized by sweat and toil, as we contend with the thorns and thistles that impede the work of our hands. As a consequence of the curse, all creation is subject to futility.

Liberation from Futility

- In what ways has God's "not yet" broken into the "now" of this present world?

There were several ways mentioned in which the "not yet" has penetrated the "now," including the resurrection of Jesus, the arrival of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, the regeneration of new believers, and the Spirit's work in the lives of believers.

- Where else in the Bible is the restoration of this broken world mentioned?
Several biblical passages mention the restoration that awaits the created order. The creation of new heavens and a new earth are foretold in Isaiah 65:17–25 and 66:7–24. In Colossians 1:20, the reconciliation of all things is described as one of the outcomes of Christ’s redemptive work. In Acts 3:21, Peter also anticipates the future restoration of all things when Jesus returns to earth.
- What additional meaning is carried by the Hebrew and Greek words for glory?
The Hebrew word kabod and the Greek word doxa, which are typically translated “glory,” carry the additional meaning of “weight.” God’s glory therefore has a certain weightiness or substance to it. C.S. Lewis described this concept in his famous lecture “The Weight of Glory.”

After the Video

- Romans 8:17–18 presupposes that suffering is a normal part of the Christian life. Why is suffering to be expected? How does this compare with the expectations of most Christians today?
Scripture considers suffering to be a normal part of human experience in a fallen world. Additionally, believers have a reason to expect suffering due to their union with Christ (Rom. 8:17). Jesus warned His followers to expect trouble and adversity. Just as the world opposed Christ, so it will also oppose those who bear His name. Although most Christians in the West have not been accustomed to suffering for the sake of Christ, suffering may become a more familiar aspect of the Christian life as Western culture drifts further from a Christian worldview.
- In this lesson, Dr. Thomas refers to the theological concepts of the “now” and the “not yet.” What do these terms mean? In what sense is there tension between them?
The “now” refers to the current fallen state of humanity and the world due to sin and the curse. The “not yet” denotes the eschatological realities of God’s kingdom that have not yet arrived in their fullness. As Dr. Thomas indicates, the “not yet” has already broken into the “now” in decisive ways. Consequently, Christians live in a hybrid reality in which the effects of the fall and traces of the coming kingdom exist side by side.
- Describe the significance of the word “firstfruits” in Romans 8:22. What do the firstfruits of the Spirit guarantee?
In the Old Testament, firstfruits were seen as the foretaste or guarantee of the fullness of the harvest that was on its way. For Christians living in the tension of the already and the not yet, the Holy Spirit is God’s deposit and guarantee of a greater inheritance to come. The Spirit offers believers assurance that God is faithful to fulfill His promises and will one day complete His work of making all things new.

REVIEW QUIZ

Lesson 6

1. **C.**
Although Adam's transgression in the garden of Eden brought sin into the world, the futility that characterizes current human experience originated with God's curse on creation in Genesis 3:16–19.
2. **D.**
In the famous “to be or not to be” passage from Hamlet, Shakespeare uses the phrase “slings and arrows of outrageous fortune” to describe the plight of human existence. In so doing, Shakespeare accurately expressed the biblical principle of futility.
3. **B.**
Job's friends believed that people reap what they sow and therefore concluded that Job's misfortunes were the result of his sin. However, the book of Job demonstrates that, as a result of the brokenness and futility of this life, people often reap what they do not sow.
4. **D.**
The term entropy, expressed in the second law of thermodynamics, describes the phenomenon that all matter is subject to decay and the tendency to disorder.
5. **C.**
In Romans 8:22, Paul states that the whole creation has been groaning in the pains of childbirth. This groaning will continue until the new heavens and new earth are fully realized.
6. **D.**
Apocalyptic language is the most comprehensive description of Revelation's language about the new heaven and the new earth. Because these descriptions are given in apocalyptic language, they must be interpreted according to the rules of the biblical apocalyptic genre rather than as a conclusive scientific fact. Though no human knows exactly what the new creation will be like, Dr. Thomas expects there to be oceans, whales, stars, and planets, much like the current creation.

Praying with the Spirit

INTRODUCTION

Many Christians are dissatisfied with their prayer lives. Despite our best intentions, prayer can be awkward and, at times, difficult. We may struggle to focus, find the right words, or develop consistent habits. Fortunately, Romans 8 offers us hope and encouragement. In this lesson, Dr. Thomas describes how the Holy Spirit graciously and patiently prays with and for us, so that our prayers ascend to God's throne room with beauty and power.

LEARNING GOALS

When you have finished this lesson, you should be able to:

- Describe the Holy Spirit's role in our prayers
- Pray with a renewed sense of confidence

KEY IDEAS

- Prayer can be a struggle even for mature Christians.
- The Holy Spirit intercedes for believers and helps them as they pray.
- Christians are able to pray successfully with the Spirit's help.

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Before the Video

What Do You Think?

Take a moment to answer the following questions. They will prepare you for the lecture.

- Do you usually find prayer to be easy or difficult? What is the best prayer advice or instruction that you have received?

- Name one or two people you know who are particularly gifted in the area of prayer. What is unique or noteworthy about the way that they pray? How have their prayers made a difference?

Scripture Reading

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. 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.

—Romans 8:26–27

- According to these verses, how does the Holy Spirit help believers pray?

During the Video

Answer the following questions while you watch the video. They will guide you through the lecture.

The Struggle of Prayer

0:00–8:01

- Which two Old Testament figures are mentioned in relation to prayer? How did they struggle in prayer?
- Which two New Testament figures are mentioned in relation to prayer? How did they struggle in prayer?

Our Helper in Prayer

8:01–17:35

- What does the illustration about the piano teach us about the Holy Spirit’s role in our prayer lives?
- How is it that the Holy Spirit is able to intercede for us “according to the will of the Father”?

Encouragements for Prayer

17:35–25:05

- Christians are not expected to know the _____ in all of its detail.

- In our distress, God is not just _____. He _____.
- God’s work for us is not limited to what we can _____.
- In our weakness and struggle, the Holy Spirit does not pray _____ us so much as _____ us and _____ us.
- The Father always hears _____.

After the Video

Answer the following questions after you have finished the lecture. They will help you identify and summarize the major points.

- Who intercedes with God the Father on behalf of Christians? What is different about these two intercessors?

If you are in a group, have the members read Hebrews 7:23–25 and then Hebrews 4:14–16. How should this reality change the way that you pray?

- What does the phrase “groanings too deep for words” in mean?

If you are in a group, have the members discuss why it is a challenge to “know what to pray for as we ought” (Rom. 8:26).

- What does the illustration of being next to someone in a dark cave communicate about the presence of the Holy Spirit in prayer?

If you are in a group, have the members answer the following question: Why is prayer that is sincere, reverent, and humble important for the Christian life?.

PRAYER

Commit what you have learned from God’s Word in this lesson to prayer.

- Praise God the Father for always hearing His Spirit.
- Confess areas of weakness in your prayer life.
- Thank Jesus and the Spirit for interceding on your behalf.
- Ask God to help you pray boldly, consistently, and in alignment with His desires.

REVIEW QUIZ

Use these multiple-choice questions to measure what you learned from this lesson.

1. In which language was the Lord's Prayer originally prayed?
 - a. Aramaic
 - b. Hebrew
 - c. Greek
 - d. Latin
2. After three unsuccessful seasons of prayer, God finally removed Paul's thorn in the flesh after one last extended period of prayer and fasting.
 - a. True
 - b. False
3. The three persons of the Trinity are one God, but each person has His own distinct consciousness.
 - a. True
 - b. False
4. Who taught that there is a firm barrier between the *noumena* and the *phenomena* such that God does not interact with life in the physical world?
 - a. Friedrich Nietzsche
 - b. Charles Darwin
 - c. Immanuel Kant
 - d. Sigmund Freud
5. According to Dr. Thomas, who or what is groaning in Romans 8:26?
 - a. All of creation
 - b. Believers
 - c. The Holy Spirit
 - d. Believers and the Holy Spirit
6. Which of the following statements about prayer is *not* true?
 - a. The Father always hears the Holy Spirit's prayers.
 - b. God's work in the lives of Christians surpasses their understanding.
 - c. Christians are not expected to have detailed knowledge of God's will.
 - d. The Holy Spirit prays for, with, and against believers in equal measure.

Answer Key—Praying with the Spirit

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Before the Video

What Do You Think?

These are personal questions. The answers should be based on your own knowledge and experience.

Scripture Reading

- According to these verses, how does the Holy Spirit help believers pray?

Our human attempts to pray are often marked by weakness and ignorance of how to pray and even what to pray for. In these moments, the Holy Spirit comes to our aid, intercedes for us, and offers on our behalf the prayers we ought to pray.

During the Video

The Struggle of Prayer

- Which two Old Testament figures are mentioned in relation to prayer? How did they struggle in prayer?

From the Old Testament, the prayer struggles of Job and Elijah were described. Throughout the majority of the book of Job, Job struggles to understand the reason for his afflictions and wonders where God has been in all his agony. Elijah's prayers are marked by a mood of darkness and despair, as he struggles to understand why God had permitted—seemingly—the wickedness of Jezebel to go unchecked.

- Which two New Testament figures are mentioned in relation to prayer? How did they struggle in prayer?

From the New Testament, the prayer struggles of Paul and Jesus were described. Paul had asked the Lord three times to remove his thorn in the flesh. Jesus, aware of the agony that awaited Him on the cross, fervently cried out to His Father to spare Him but ultimately placed His trust in the Father's hands.

Our Helper in Prayer

- What does the illustration about the piano teach us about the Holy Spirit's role in our prayer lives?

As Dr. Thomas was helping to move a piano, he was fully engaged in the task of carrying the heavy instrument. However, the six deacons helping him provided the real power that moved the piano. In the same way, Christians are to be actively

involved in and fully committed to the act of prayer. Yet, the real power behind our prayers comes not from us but from the Spirit who prays for us, with us, and, sometimes, against us.

- How is it that the Holy Spirit is able to intercede for us “according to the will of the Father”?

The Holy Spirit not only knows us, but He also knows God. Because the Spirit is the third person of the Trinity, He knows the mind of God. Therefore, the Holy Spirit, as God, knows the will of the Father and prays in accord with it on our behalf.

Encouragements for Prayer

- Christians are not expected to know the *will of God* in all of its detail.
- In our distress, God is not just *watching*. He *understands*.
- God’s work for us is not limited to what we can *understand*.
- In our weakness and struggle, the Holy Spirit does not pray *against* us so much as *for* us and *with* us.
- The Father always hears *the Holy Spirit*.

After the Video

- Who intercedes with God the Father on behalf of Christians? What is different about these two intercessors?

Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit both intercede with the Father on behalf of Christians. Jesus Christ is physically present at the Father’s right hand, where He intercedes for us in the heavenly throne room. The Holy Spirit dwells in believers, ministering to us from within, praying with us and for us, and purifying our prayers as they approach God’s throne.

- What does the phrase “groanings too deep for words” in mean?

Paul understands that sometimes we pray without words. This phrase describes situations in the lives of believers when our thoughts and feelings are too full, intense, or complex to convey in words. Even when we are overwhelmed to the point that all we can do is groan or sigh, we can be confident that our heavenly Father understands us perfectly because of the Holy Spirit.

- What does the illustration of being next to someone in a dark cave communicate about the presence of the Holy Spirit in prayer?

At moments during a cave tour, when the lights are turned off, we can experience a cave in complete darkness. We cannot see one another at all, but if we pay attention closely, we can hear the quiet breathing of another person or feel the warmth coming from someone standing next to us. In the same way, we cannot see the

Holy Spirit, but we can still sense the warmth and comfort of His presence as He embraces us and intercedes for us.

REVIEW QUIZ

Lesson 7

1. **A.**
Scholars believe that Jesus originally prayed the Lord's Prayer in Aramaic. The Gospel writers translated it into Greek so that it could be understood and prayed by believers throughout the Roman world. Today this prayer is read, taught, and prayed in a multitude of languages by Christians around the world.
2. **B.**
There is no evidence to suggest that Paul's thorn was ever removed, even in spite of his continued struggle in prayer. Christians whose persistent prayers have remained unanswered are therefore in good company.
3. **A.**
The three persons of the Trinity are one God. They share the same divine substance and are equal in power and glory. Yet, they each possess a distinct consciousness. Thus, Paul states in Romans 8:27 that the Father knows the mind of the Spirit.
4. **C.**
Enlightenment philosopher Immanuel Kant concluded that if God exists, He cannot perforate into the here and now. This belief has profoundly influenced Western thought and culture. However, it is starkly at odds with biblical truth, which affirms that God dwells in believers and is actively involved in human life.
5. **B.**
This lecture presented the view that Romans 8:26 is referring to the groaning of believers, which often expresses thoughts and feelings that are "too deep for words." The interpretation that it is the Holy Spirit who groans with us on our behalf was considered but ultimately rejected.
6. **D.**
At times, the Holy Spirit does pray for, with, and against believers. However, the Spirit primarily prays for believers and with believers. He only prays against the prayers of believers when their prayers are in need of correction due to incomplete understanding or selfish motives.

8

The Ultimate Promise

INTRODUCTION

Romans 8:28 is one of the most famous and most frequently quoted verses in the entire Bible. The promise that God is at work for our good has provided a foundation of hope for Christians in the most trying of circumstances. In this lesson, Dr. Thomas will explore this well-loved verse and invite Christians of all walks of life to revel in the hope that it offers.

LEARNING GOALS

When you have finished this lesson, you should be able to:

- Understand to whom the promise of Romans 8:28 is made
- Find encouragement in the vast scope of God's promise in Romans 8:28
- Rest and delight in God's perfect, sovereign, and loving work in your life

KEY IDEAS

- God promises Christians that He is at work in their lives in a special way.
- God's sovereign work encompasses all aspects of the believer's life.
- God is committed to bringing about ultimate good in the believer's life.

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Before the Video

What Do You Think?

Take a moment to answer the following questions. They will prepare you for the lecture.

- What comes to mind when you hear or read Romans 8:28?

- How has this verse made an impression on you or ministered to you?

Scripture Reading

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

—Romans 8:28

- According to this verse, what are the criteria for having God work in this way? What is the result?

During the Video

Answer the following questions while you watch the video. They will guide you through the lecture.

The Character of Those to Whom the Promise Is Made 0:00–5:42

- How does Dr. Thomas describe the people who are recipients of this promise?
- What future awaits those who are outside of this promise?

The Comprehensiveness of the Promise 5:42–15:51

- Who is responsible for the evil that occurs in the lives of Christians?
- What did God do with the evil deeds that were carried out against Joseph?

The Conquest Envisioned by the Promise 15:51–24:50

- In what sense is the future closed? In what sense is the future not closed?
- What role does God play in the little decisions in life? What role does human choice play in those decisions?

After the Video

Answer the following questions after you have finished the lecture. They will help you identify and summarize the major points.

- How was Romans 8:28 pictured at the opening of this lesson? What impact can Romans 8:28 have in a believer's life?

If you are in a group, have the members discuss Bible passages that have been a particular source of strength in their lives.

- What is the difference between God's working for our good and God's working for what makes us feel good?

If you are in a group, have the members discuss situations where difficulty and hardship have prepared the way for greater good and flourishing.

- What is the logical alternative to God's being in control? How would human life be different if the future were open?

If you are in a group, have the members discuss God's sovereign control over all things. Is the knowledge that God superintends our lives a source of comfort, or does this seem unfair? How does knowing that God is at work for your good change the way you live?

PRAYER

Commit what you have learned from God's Word in this lesson to prayer.

- Praise God for His sovereign power and grace at work in the lives of His people.
- Confess your struggles to trust in God during life's most difficult moments.
- Thank God for His promise to work for your ultimate good and salvation.
- Ask God to help you trust Him even when a good outcome is hard to imagine.

REVIEW QUIZ

Use these multiple-choice questions to measure what you learned from this lesson.

1. According to the lecture, what effect should Romans 8:28 have on believers?
 - a. They will become Calvinists.
 - b. They will become puffed up with pride.
 - c. They will experience the realities of security and hope.
 - d. They will never experience significant trials or hardships.

2. What assurance does Romans 8:28 give believers about everything that will ever happen to them?
 - a. It will be good.
 - b. It will be for their good.
 - c. It will be divinely overridden to accomplish good.
 - d. It will make them feel good.
3. Which of the following misfortunes did Joseph *not* experience?
 - a. Enslavement at the hands of his own family members
 - b. False accusation of an attempted sexual sin
 - c. Imprisonment despite innocence
 - d. His firstborn's death during the famine in Egypt
4. Which of the following best describes God's role in the events of human life?
 - a. God is the Author of all good and evil that takes place on earth.
 - b. God is the first, or ultimate, cause of everything humanity experiences.
 - c. God is the ultimate cause of all good, and Satan is the ultimate cause of all evil.
 - d. God orchestrates key events and allows the rest to occur on its own.
5. Which of the following conditions best describes the *summum bonum*, or greatest good, of believers?
 - a. A life of ease and comfort
 - b. Faith, hope, and love
 - c. Regeneration
 - d. Glorification
6. God's work in the lives of believers is fully compatible with their exercise of free will.
 - a. True
 - b. False

Answer Key—The Ultimate Promise

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Before the Video

What Do You Think?

These are personal questions. The answers should be based on your own knowledge and experience.

Scripture Reading

- According to this verse, what are the criteria for having God work in this way? What is the result?

This promise applies to those who have been called by God and who love God. The result of this promise is that God sovereignly works in the lives of His people to advance their well-being and His glory.

During the Video

The Character of Those to Whom the Promise Is Made

- How does Dr. Thomas describe the people who are recipients of this promise?
Dr. Thomas notes that the promise in Romans 8:28 applies to those who love God, who are justified by faith alone in Christ alone, who have the imputed righteousness of Christ, who call God “Abba, Father;” who are called by the Holy Spirit, led by the Spirit, helped by the Spirit, and interceded for by the Spirit.

- What future awaits those who are outside of this promise?
God’s promise to work for good does not apply to those who are not regenerate, who are not indwelt by the Spirit, who have not been effectually called to Jesus, and who have not embraced Him as Savior and Lord. Sadly, things will turn out catastrophically for those who are not found in Jesus Christ.

The Comprehensiveness of the Promise

- Who is responsible for the evil that occurs in the lives of Christians?
Satan and his forces are the ones responsible for the evil that Christians experience in their lives. Satan hates God and all of God’s children. Yet, God sovereignly overrides the wicked schemes of Satan for His own glory and the good of His people.
- What did God do with the evil deeds that were carried out against Joseph?
Joseph experienced a considerable amount of personal tragedy and misfortune in his life. Yet he proclaimed in Genesis 50:20 that what his brothers had intended

for evil God had actually intended for good. God worked through the wicked deeds that had been perpetrated against Joseph in order to save many lives and preserve the people of Israel.

The Conquest Envisioned by the Promise

- In what sense is the future closed? In what sense is the future not closed?

The future is closed in the sense that everything about our future has been ordained by God. God has appointed a specific end to history, and every moment of human existence is working steadily toward that end. However, the future is not closed in the sense that human beings have real decisions to make.

- What role does God play in the little decisions in life? What role does human choice play in those decisions?

The logical conclusion of the doctrine of God's sovereignty is that God superintends even the small, minute actions and decisions that people make in everyday life. Yet, God does not exercise His sovereignty in a way that reduces human beings to robots or automatons. People consciously and intentionally make decisions and commit actions that bring about God's foreordained purposes.

After the Video

- How was Romans 8:28 pictured at the opening of this lesson? What impact can Romans 8:28 have in a believer's life?

Romans 8:28 was pictured as a large and secure fortress that offers strength and security that cannot be found in worldly things. As a result of God's promise, believers can experience a stability, freedom, and confidence that life's tempests and gales cannot blow over.

- What is the difference between God's working for our good and God's working for what makes us feel good?

Romans 8:28 does not promise that believers will always be happy or that they will be exempt from times of difficulty and trouble. Often, we have ideas about what we think would be best and are disappointed when life does not go as we had planned. God is ultimately interested in making us holy, and the process of sanctification often involves experiences that we do not enjoy but that work toward our ultimate good.

- What is the logical alternative to God's being in control? How would human life be different if the future were open?

The alternative to God's being in control would be a world of uncertainty. Because God is in control, we can know that all things will work together for our good. Without His control, there could be no such guarantee, and seemingly trivial human decisions could have catastrophic results.

REVIEW QUIZ

Lesson 8

1. **C.**
While Romans 8:28 is a frequently referenced Calvinistic verse, one of the emphases in the opening of this lesson was that the knowledge of Romans 8:28 should produce Christians who experience the security and hope of the promise of God, even during seasons of hardship. Because God's promise is ultimately of grace, Christians should not be tempted to the sin of pride, owing all things to Him.
2. **B.**
Romans 8:28 promises that everything that happens to believers will be for their good. Some things will be good in themselves, some things will cause believers to feel good, and some things will need God to work through them in order to bring about good. In the end, all things will be for their good.
3. **D.**
Joseph's catalog of misfortunes includes being sold into slavery by his brothers, being falsely accused of attempting to lie with Potiphar's wife, and languishing in prison in spite of his innocence. Later, he was able to look back on his misfortunes and see that God had worked through his trials to accomplish good.
4. **B.**
God is the first or ultimate cause of everything in human experience because He sovereignly ordains everything that comes to pass. Yet, He is not the author of evil. Evil is actually set in motion by the people, circumstances, or satanic schemes that are secondary or proximate causes of those particular events. Moral culpability rests with the proximate cause that commits evil acts, not with the primary cause that works through them for good.
5. **D.**
The greatest good of Christians, which God is actively at work to bring about, is our glorification. Every event in our lives is a step toward the day when we will be raised from the dead and made perfect to live forever with the Lord.
6. **A.**
God is the primary or ultimate cause of human events, and human free will is often the secondary or proximate cause, so God's sovereignty is compatible with free will. Humans make real decisions with real and lasting consequences. Yet, God superintends these decisions to accomplish good, and no human action can ever undermine His holy purposes.

The Golden Chain

INTRODUCTION

Having described God's loving act of working for our good in all things in Romans 8:28, Paul goes on to describe God's work in bringing us to saving faith and into His glorious presence. In this lesson, Dr. Thomas explores the beauty and majesty of Romans 8:29–30, the unbreakable sequence commonly known as the golden chain of salvation. It is a source of tremendous hope and encouragement for Christians at any stage in their life with Christ.

LEARNING GOALS

When you have finished this lesson, you should be able to:

- Identify and describe five key events in the spiritual lives of Christians
- Understand and articulate the sovereign role that God plays in salvation
- Rest in the certainty that God will bring you to His kingdom in glory

KEY IDEAS

- In eternity past, God foreknew and loved His children.
- In eternity past, God decreed salvation for those whom He loves.
- In history, God effectually calls to saving faith those whom He has predestined.
- In history, God declares those who trust in Jesus Christ to be righteous in His sight.
- In eternity future, God will raise believers to Himself for eternal life with Him in glory.

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Before the Video

What Do You Think?

Take a moment to answer the following questions. They will prepare you for the lecture.

- In what ways have you noted God’s sovereign work in your life?
- As you look back on your life, in what ways can you see God leading and directing your spiritual growth?

Scripture Reading

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. 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 8:29–30

- What does this passage teach us about God’s role in our spiritual lives?

During the Video

Answer the following questions while you watch the video. They will guide you through the lecture.

Foreknown and Predestined

0:00–16:07

- What is the ultimate reason why a person becomes a Christian?
- What reality does the term *predestination* refer to? At what point in a Christian’s life does predestination occur?

Called, Justified, and Glorified

16:07–24:36

- Would it be accurate to refer to Christians simply as “called ones”? Why or why not?

- What is justification? How does the theological reality of the already and the not yet relate to justification?
- What reasons do believers have to be confident of their eventual glorification?

After the Video

Answer the following questions after you have finished the lecture. They will help you identify and summarize the major points.

- According to Romans 8:29–30, what ultimate good does God have in store for His children? What does that look like in the lives of Christians?

If you are in a group, have the members describe the most significant ways that they have changed and become more like Jesus since becoming a Christian.

- How might having a Calvinistic or Arminian understanding of conversion shape a person's attitude about his salvation?

If you are in a group, have the members discuss the circumstances of their new birth in Christ. How was God's involvement evident? What role did you play in your own conversion?

- What is the difference between God's general call and God's effectual call?

If you are in a group, have the members describe the role God's general call played in their conversions. If the general call is the means God ordinarily uses to bring people to faith, what does that mean for the church?

PRAYER

Commit what you have learned from God's Word in this lesson to prayer.

- Praise God for His gracious foreknowledge and love for you in eternity past.
- Confess ways in which you are not living in conformity with the image of Christ.
- Thank God for giving you faith and working in you to make you more like Christ.
- Ask God to continue to transform you into the image of His Son through the Spirit.

REVIEW QUIZ

Use these multiple-choice questions to measure what you learned from this lesson.

1. Which theological term best describes the process of becoming like Christ?
 - a. Justification
 - b. Mortification
 - c. Sanctification
 - d. Glorification
2. What idea is communicated by the Latin term *ordo salutis*?
 - a. God's act of decreeing or ordering who will be saved
 - b. Jesus' command for His followers to be salt and light in the world
 - c. The principle that God is completely sovereign over human affairs
 - d. The logical sequence and order in which salvation occurs
3. Which pastor and theologian popularized the phrase *golden chain* to describe the spiritual process outlined in Romans 8:29–30?
 - a. John Bunyan
 - b. John Owens
 - c. Martin Luther
 - d. William Perkins
4. What is the best description of God's foreknowledge?
 - a. God's love for believers long before they were born
 - b. God's familiarity with the intimate details of people's lives
 - c. God's knowledge of who will accept and who will reject Him
 - d. God's election of believers based on their foreseen faith
5. In a forensic, legal sense, Christians are currently as holy as they can ever be.
 - a. True
 - b. False
6. The Synod of Dort met in 1618–19 to discuss and reach a decision on what topic?
 - a. Arminianism
 - b. Justification by faith alone
 - c. Proper administration of the sacraments
 - d. The authority and inerrancy of Scripture

Answer Key—The Golden Chain

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Before the Video

What Do You Think?

These are personal questions. The answers should be based on your own knowledge and experience.

Scripture Reading

- What does this passage teach us about God's role in our spiritual lives?

This passage teaches that our spiritual lives and journeys are from beginning to end the result of God's sovereign and loving work. Before we came into existence, God knew us and set us apart to be made like His Son. At the right moment in our lives, He sent His Spirit to regenerate us, calling us to faith in Christ. By faith, we are justified by God's grace and await with confidence the time when God will raise us from the dead and make us perfect. As Hebrews 12:2 teaches, the Lord is indeed the founder and perfecter of our faith.

During the Video

Foreknown and Predestined

- What is the ultimate reason why a person becomes a Christian?

A person ultimately becomes a Christian because God has acted decisively to bring that individual to faith. We all were once spiritually dead in our trespasses. God has given us spiritual life, and our faith in Jesus is a response to God's sovereign work that can be traced back into eternity past to His foreknowledge.

- What reality does the term *predestination* refer to? At what point in a Christian's life does predestination occur?

To predestinate is to set a person's destiny beforehand. Before any person was ever born, could make a decision, or possessed a will, God issued a decree for the spiritual life and eternal destiny of every believer.

Called, Justified, and Glorified

- Would it be accurate to refer to Christians simply as "called ones"? Why or why not?

"Called ones" could be an accurate synonym for Christians. In 1 Corinthians 1:2, Paul refers to the Corinthian believers as a people "called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." To

be a Christian is to be someone whom God has effectually called to believe in and follow Jesus Christ.

- What is justification? How does the theological reality of the already and the not yet relate to justification?

Justification is a declaration by God that we are just. It is a legal, forensic verdict from God, our just Judge, that we are not guilty. This declaration, which God will pronounce on the day of judgment, is the “not yet” verdict brought into the here and now. God’s pronouncement of justification can never be undone.

- What reasons do believers have to be confident of their eventual glorification?

In the logic of Paul’s thought, glorification is the inevitable result of being justified. Because God has a firm hold on His people, no power on heaven or earth can prevent God’s children from receiving their eternal inheritance.

After the Video

- According to Romans 8:29–30, what ultimate good does God have in store for His children? What does that look like in the lives of Christians?

God’s ultimate aim for us is to glorify us, which is the result of His process of molding and shaping us to bear the image of His Son, Jesus Christ. We can have confidence that in the midst of life’s uncertainties, our pain and frustration are not in vain. God uses all of our circumstances to purify our hearts and make us like Christ.

- How might having a Calvinistic or Arminian understanding of conversion shape a person’s attitude about his salvation?

Dr. Thomas points out that these two different theological perspectives, if logically carried out to their natural conclusions, lead to very different attitudes about conversion. The consistent Calvinist will have a profound sense of his own spiritual helplessness and will confess that his salvation is entirely the work of God. The consistent Arminian, on the other hand, will see conversion as his own doing. Though God provided the offer of eternal life, the believer receives the credit for wisely accepting God’s offer.

- What is the difference between God’s general call and God’s effectual call?

God’s general call is the proclamation of the gospel with a general invitation to believe. Christians are commissioned to extend this general call to all people. God’s effectual call is issued by His Holy Spirit. The Spirit’s effectual call results in a prompt and decisive act of faith in Jesus Christ. This effectual call can be the result of a long process or can occur in an instant.

REVIEW QUIZ

Lesson 9

1. **C.**
God uses the process of sanctification to make Christians more like Jesus Christ. Sanctification takes place once we are justified and is the process by which we mortify our sins and live for the sake of righteousness. In our glorification, we will bear Christ's image perfectly.
2. **D.**
The Latin phrase ordo salutis means "order of salvation." This phrase describes the sequence of events, beginning with God's foreknowledge and ending with the glorification of God's elect, by which God rescues sinners from spiritual death and brings them into the full glory of His kingdom.
3. **D.**
Puritan pastor and theologian William Perkins popularized the phrase golden chain. The Golden Chain was the title of a book he published in 1591 that was based on Romans 8:29–30.
4. **A.**
The essence of God's foreknowledge is His love for His children in eternity past. In scriptural language, knowing involves more than mere awareness or cognition. To know someone in the ancient biblical sense is to love that person.
5. **A.**
Although Christians grow in personal holiness through the process of sanctification, in God's eyes they already possess the righteousness of Christ. When God the Father looks at His children, we are just as holy in His sight now as we will be when we are made perfect in the new heaven and the new earth.
6. **A.**
The Synod of Dort convened in the Netherlands in 1618–19 to settle the controversy that had been caused by the teachings of Jacobus Arminius. The decision of the synod, articulated in the Canons of Dort, outlined five points of Calvinistic theology in response to the five points of Arminianism.

No Expense Spared

INTRODUCTION

Nowhere in Scripture is the extravagant love of God for sinners more clearly expressed than in the final section of Romans 8. Romans 8:31–32 vividly describes God’s resolute commitment to bring Christians all the way to glory. In this lesson, Dr. Thomas demonstrates that the foundation of this commitment ultimately rests in what God has already done for us in Christ. Because the Father gave His only Son, we can rest in the confidence that no obstacle can hinder us from experiencing the vast riches of His grace and mercy.

LEARNING GOALS

When you have finished this lesson, you should be able to:

- Understand God the Father’s love for you and how He demonstrated it in Christ
- Describe the sure foundation on which the salvation of every believer is established
- Experience greater confidence in God’s willingness and ability to fight for you as you face trials, temptations, and spiritual battles

KEY IDEAS

- God the Father loves sinners to such an extent that He did not spare His only Son.
- The Son of God willingly became the Mediator between God and man, taking on Himself a human nature and dying as a substitute for us on account of our sins.
- Our eternal future is secure because of the Father’s love for us, the Son’s sacrifice for us, and the Holy Spirit’s work in us.

 REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Before the Video

What Do You Think?

Take a moment to answer the following questions. They will prepare you for the lecture.

- How do you understand what was taking place between the Father and the Son at the cross?
- Where in your life right now do you need God's assurance that He is for you?

Scripture Reading

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?

—Romans 8:30–31

- What does the phrase “these things” refer to in the first sentence of this passage? What is set forth as the believer's source of confidence that God will graciously give His people everything they need?

During the Video

Answer the following questions while you watch the video. They will guide you through the lecture.

Focus on the Father

0:00–10:25

- How does Nicholas Wolterstorff's book *Lament for a Son* provide a window into the heart of God the Father?
- What are the two possible ways of answering the question, “Why did Jesus die?”

Focus on the Son

10:25–20:56

- Which covenant forms the background for the divine actions described in Romans 8:32?

- What is a passage of Scripture that Jesus quoted on the cross? Why was this significant?

Focus on Us

20:56–25:04

- To what is Paul referring when he uses the phrase “all things” in verse 32?

After the Video

Answer the following questions after you have finished the lecture. They will help you identify and summarize the major points.

- Of the three primary focuses of Romans 8:31–32 on the Father, on the Son, and on us, which is the most personally moving for you to think about? Why?

If you are in a group, have the members discuss the various gospel promises outlined earlier in Romans 8. If necessary, reference Romans 8:1, 3, 9, 17, 18, and 26. Which of these promises do you most need to be reminded of as a Christian?

- How does Romans 8:31–32 offer a corrective to popular misconceptions of God the Father as miserly and unloving?

If you are in a group, have the members read 1 John 3:1. How can the fact that the Father not only forgives us but ardently loves us affect the way we worship, pray, and live out our relationship with Him?

- In effect, what alternative to the Aaronic benediction did Jesus hear on the cross? How did this counter-benediction make it possible for God’s word of blessing to be spoken over us?

If you are in a group, have the members read Numbers 6:22–27 and discuss how the words of this Aaronic benediction minister to them.

PRAYER

Commit what you have learned from God’s Word in this lesson to prayer.

- Praise God for His loving act of sending His beloved Son to die for you.
- Confess ways in which you may doubt or question the Father’s love and care for you.
- Thank God for passing judgment on His beloved Son so that you could be forgiven.
- Ask God to help you live with the boldness and confidence that He is for you.

REVIEW QUIZ

Use these multiple-choice questions to measure what you learned from this lesson.

1. What is the gospel first and foremost a statement about?
 - a. Sin
 - b. Grace
 - c. Humanity
 - d. God the Father
2. For what reason was Jesus' death on the cross just?
 - a. Jesus gave up His life willingly.
 - b. Sin had been reckoned to Jesus' account.
 - c. Multitudes of sinners have received salvation because Jesus died.
 - d. The execution of Jesus was carried out in accordance with Roman law.
3. Which phrase occurs repeatedly in the Gospel narratives of Jesus' arrest, trial, and crucifixion?
 - a. "Double imputation"
 - b. "Atoning sacrifice"
 - c. "Handed over"
 - d. "Put to death"
4. Whom were the Father's words at Jesus' baptism and transfiguration primarily intended for?
 - a. Jesus
 - b. Eyewitnesses
 - c. Future Christians
 - d. The Pharisees and Sadducees
5. Due to human free will, what Jesus accomplished on the cross is only partially applied to sinners.
 - a. True
 - b. False
6. What primary role did Jesus assume that eventually took Him to the cross?
 - a. Mediator
 - b. Miracle worker
 - c. Opponent to the Pharisees
 - d. Prophet like Moses

Answer Key—No Expense Spared

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Before the Video

What Do You Think?

These are personal questions. The answers should be based on your own knowledge and experience.

Scripture Reading

- What does the phrase “these things” refer to in the first sentence of this passage? What is set forth as the believer’s source of confidence that God will graciously give His people everything they need?

Paul uses the phrase “these things” as a shorthand reference to the riches of the gospel summarized in the preceding verses of Romans 8. This includes the spiritual realities of no condemnation; the life-giving, indwelling power of the Holy Spirit; the adoption of believers as God’s sons and daughters; the hope for future glory that outweighs present sufferings; and God’s active work for believers’ good in all circumstances. As proof that God will graciously give His people all things, Paul cites God’s willingness to send His own Son as a sacrifice in order to redeem His elect.

During the Video

Focus on the Father

- How does Nicholas Wolterstorff’s book *Lament for a Son* provide a window into the heart of God the Father?

Wolterstorff’s book describes the searing pain that he experienced when his adult son died in a rock-climbing accident. This autobiographical description of the agony of loss offers a glimpse into what the Father might have experienced when His Son Jesus Christ died on the cross.

- What are the two possible ways of answering the question, “Why did Jesus die?”

One possible response to this question is to say that there is no justice in His death. This answer suggests that Jesus’ suffering for sins that He did not commit demonstrates that God is not just. The alternative is to say, rightly, that Jesus died because God is just, for although Jesus had not personally committed any sins, He willingly took on Himself the guilt of sin. Death on a cross was God’s just response to the sin that had been imputed to Jesus.

Focus on the Son

- Which covenant forms the background for the divine actions described in Romans 8:32?

Behind the realities of Romans 8:32 lies the eternal covenant of redemption, which is the agreement made between the Father and the Son in eternity past to rescue God's elect from their sins.

- What is a passage of Scripture that Jesus quoted on the cross? Why was this significant?

Jesus' words "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" are a direct quote from Psalm 22:1. These words reflect the abandonment that Jesus was genuinely feeling at that moment. He does not address God as "My Father," which indicates a severing of the familial relationship that the Father and Son had always known. These words uttered by Jesus during the darkest moments of His life indicate that He went through the hell—the separation from God—that we deserve.

Focus on Us

- To what is Paul referring when he uses the phrase "all things" in Romans 8:32?

The phrase "all things" is not intended as a reference to materialistic, worldly things. Rather, Paul has in mind the glory that awaits believers who will be in perfect conformity to the image of God's Son in the new heaven and the new earth.

After the Video

- Of the three primary focuses of Romans 8:31–32 on the Father, on the Son, and on us, which is the most personally moving for you to think about? Why?

Romans 8:31–32 focus on the Father, on the Son, and on us in teaching the reality that if God is on our side, nothing can stand against our growth in grace and entry into His glorious kingdom. In considering this reality and the love of the Father and Son, answers to this question will naturally vary.

- How does Romans 8:31–32 offer a corrective to popular misconceptions of God the Father as miserly and unloving?

In contrast to popular misconceptions of the Father as uptight, unforgiving, and vindictive, Romans 8:31–32 reveals God the Father's true posture. In these verses, we see a passionate Father who loves us so tenderly that He would even sacrifice His only begotten Son in order to restore us to Him. In Christ, we are more loved by the Father than we can ever imagine.

- In effect, what alternative to the Aaronic benediction did Jesus hear on the cross? How did this counter-benediction make it possible for God's word of blessing to be spoken over us?

Dr. Thomas remarked that when Jesus was hanging on the cross, the Father's silence toward Him, in effect, declared, "The Lord curse You and be angry with You, and hide His face from You and refuse to smile on You, and give You hell." We receive the Aaronic blessings because Jesus received this curse. If the Father had spared His Son, we could not be saved. Because Jesus willingly took our curse, we receive the blessing that His righteousness deserves.

REVIEW QUIZ

Lesson 10

1. **D.**

Dr. Thomas noted that the gospel is first and foremost a statement about the Father. Naturally, the gospel also says a tremendous deal about the Son, the Holy Spirit, fallen humanity, and the eternal destiny of believers. However, the gospel begins first and foremost with God the Father who sent the Son.

2. **B.**

The death of Jesus on the cross was a just death because sin had been imputed to Him. He received the punishment that sin deserved in His body. This is good news, for apart from His atoning work, no one can be saved.

3. **C.**

The phrase "handed over" appears several times in the accounts of Jesus' arrest, trial, and crucifixion. Jesus was handed over to the scribes and Pharisees, handed over to Pilate, handed over to Herod, and handed over to be crucified. Each of these was possible only because the Father handed Jesus over to suffer and die in our place.

4. **A.**

The Father's words of divine approval were intended primarily for Jesus Himself. They confirmed His identity, offered assurance of His mission, and communicated the Father's delight in His Son.

5. **B.**

The full measure of redemption that Jesus accomplished will be applied to all people for whom Jesus died. God has sovereignly ordained to save all whom He foreknew, and nothing will stop the redemption purchased by Christ from bringing God's elect all the way home.

6. **A.**

Jesus' ministry accomplished many things, but the main reason that He came to earth was to deal with the issue of sin. It was this role as the Mediator between a holy God and sinful man that made His death on the cross necessary.

Silencing the Accuser

INTRODUCTION

Throughout our Christian lives, we can expect Satan to hurl all manner of accusations against us in an effort to discourage and rob us of our joy in the Lord and hinder our growth in grace. In this lesson, Dr. Thomas reminds us that the gospel of Jesus Christ brings us all the way home despite the accusations of the devil. Because of the finished work and ongoing ministry of Jesus Christ, no accusation against us will ever stand.

LEARNING GOALS

When you have finished this lesson, you should be able to:

- Identify three would-be accusers and explain why their accusations fail
- Describe Jesus' current role as an intercessor for God's people

KEY IDEAS

- The various accusations Christians may face are not enough to condemn them.
- Since the penalty for our sin has been paid in full, our peace with God is secure.
- Jesus Christ is our advocate at the Father's right hand, defending us from all accusations.

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Before the Video

What Do You Think?

Take a moment to answer the following questions. They will prepare you for the lecture.

- In what areas of your life do you tend to be most easily discouraged?

- Do you ever struggle to have assurance of salvation? Why?

Scripture Reading

Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.

—Romans 8:33–34

- What is the significance of the sentence “It is God who justifies” in this passage?

During the Video

Answer the following questions while you watch the video. They will guide you through the lecture.

The Question

0:00–14:25

- How did Christian respond to Satan's accusations against him in John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*?
- What are the two primary pastoral problems identified by John Owen?

The Answer

14:25–25:14

- “Payment God cannot twice demand.” What does this line from the poem by Augustus Toplady refer to?
- Why was it fitting that Jesus was mistaken for a gardener after He rose from the dead?

After the Video

Answer the following questions after you have finished the lecture. They will help you identify and summarize the major points.

- What three distinct accusers did Dr. Thomas identify in this lesson?

If you are in a group, have the members discuss the differences between these accusers. Which of these accusers do you have to deal with most frequently?

- What particular distortion of the gospel was warned against in this lesson?

If you are in a group, have the members discuss why the parable of the prodigal son is an effective illustration about the right and the wrong way to think about the gospel and our relationship with the Father.

- Where is Jesus Christ right now? What is He doing?

If you are in a group, have the members discuss why Jesus' intercession at the right hand of the Father is important to remember when we face the accusations of the devil. What other things must Christians remember?

PRAYER

Commit what you have learned from God's Word in this lesson to prayer.

- Praise God for being both a just Judge and loving Father—One who is able to deal with our sin and to show us mercy.
- Confess areas of guilt and spiritual insecurity that make it easy for you to believe the accusations of the devil.
- Thank Jesus Christ for being your advocate and intercessor at the Father's right hand.
- Ask God to help you rest in the finished work of Jesus and stand firm against the devil's accusations through the powerful working of His Spirit.

REVIEW QUIZ

Use these multiple-choice questions to measure what you learned from this lesson.

1. According to Charles Spurgeon, which of the following phrases best describes God's love for Christians?
 - a. He loves us because He loves us.
 - b. He loves us more as we become more holy.
 - c. He loves us because of our righteous works.
 - d. He loves us because we responded to the gospel in faith.
2. "Payment God cannot twice demand." What attribute of God does Augustus Toplady appeal to in this poetic statement?
 - a. Love
 - b. Mercy
 - c. Justice
 - d. Wrath

-
3. What tactics of the devil did Dr. Sproul say believers should be most wary of?
 - a. Deception
 - b. Accusation
 - c. Temptation
 - d. Manipulation
 4. In the epistle of 1 John, what words are used to describe God when we confess our sins to Him?
 - a. He is extravagant and kind to forgive.
 - b. He is gracious and loving to forgive.
 - c. He is merciful and able to forgive.
 - d. He is faithful and just to forgive.
 5. Jesus' death atoned for all the past, present, and future sins of His people.
 - a. True
 - b. False
 6. Which of the following events was a public demonstration that justification had been accomplished?
 - a. The crucifixion
 - b. The resurrection
 - c. The transfiguration
 - d. The day of Pentecost

Answer Key—Silencing the Accuser

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Before the Video

What Do You Think?

These are personal questions. The answers should be based on your own knowledge and experience.

Scripture Reading

- What is the significance of the sentence “It is God who justifies” in this passage?
Though Christians may face a variety of accusations in their lives, these verses remind us that the only one in a position to pass judgment on Christians is the God who loved them enough to offer up His only Son for them. This verse offers Christians the encouragement that the Judge is on their side and that their spiritual debt has already been paid in full. Therefore, no one can overturn God’s verdict to condemn us.

During the Video

The Question

- How did Christian respond to Satan’s accusations against him in John Bunyan’s *The Pilgrim’s Progress*?
In response to the accusations that Satan was hurling against him, Christian responded by acknowledging that his sins were even greater than what Satan had accused him of. By confessing our profound need for a Savior and clinging to the reality that Jesus has forgiven our multitude of sins, we can undermine the devil’s accusations against us.
- What are the two primary pastoral problems identified by John Owen?
Dr. Thomas noted the two primary pastoral problems or challenges that John Owen identified. The first challenge is to convict non-Christians that they are under the law and in need of forgiveness for their sins. The second challenge is to convict Christians that they are no longer under the law, that they have peace with God.

The Answer

- “Payment God cannot twice demand.” What does this line from the poem by Augustus Toplady referring to?

Toplady's poetic statement "Payment God cannot twice demand" is a reference to the finished work of Jesus Christ. All of our sins have already been atoned for by Jesus. It would be unjust for God to condemn us for the sins we commit, because Christ has paid our debt in full.

- Why was it fitting that Jesus was mistaken for a gardener after He rose from the dead?

In a sense, Jesus is the ultimate Gardener. He came to earth to restore Eden, to remake the creation that had become subject to the effects of sin and futility. He is the re-creator, and He's going to fashion us into something beautiful by bringing forth in us the fruit of the Holy Spirit to display His glory.

After the Video

- What three distinct accusers did Dr. Thomas identify in this lesson?

The three primary accusers that Dr. Thomas identified in this lesson are Satan, our conscience, and our selves. These three accusers operate in distinct ways so as to bombard the believer with accusations from within and without.

- What particular distortion of the gospel was warned against in this lesson?

Christians can sometimes fall into living as if Jesus has done the bulk of the work for our salvation in justification and believing it's up to them to supply what remains in their sanctification. This mind-set sadly leads to a slave-like relationship with God because we mistakenly think we need to earn His love and favor through righteous living. The gospel reminds us that we are to do good works in response to God's grace, not as a way of trying to earn it.

- Where is Jesus Christ right now? What is He doing?

Jesus is sitting at the right hand of God the Father. His resurrected body continues to exist in the heavenly realm, where He is waiting to return to earth and consummate His eternal rule over a redeemed cosmos. Until that day comes, He is interceding for His people—praying for us, defending us, and participating with the Father and the Spirit to work all things together for our good. The phrase "sitting at the right hand of the Father" refers to His control over all things, so we can trust that all things will indeed work together for our good and salvation.

REVIEW QUIZ

Lesson 11

1. A.

Charles Spurgeon pointed out that God's love for redeemed sinners is not in any way contingent on anything we have or have not done. He loves us simply because He loves us.

2. **C.**
In saying that “Payment God cannot twice demand” in his poem “Faith Revived,” Augustus Toplady is making an argument based on the view of the atonement that centers on the theme of justice. Toplady understands that such a payment for sin will never be demanded twice because Christ’s obedience satisfied the justice of the Father.
3. **B.**
Dr. Thomas recollected how Dr. Sproul made the point in a sermon that the devil’s accusations and slanders are to be feared even more than his temptations. Through accusations, the devil attempts to hurt us and cause us to doubt God.
4. **D.**
Because Jesus has fully paid for our sins, it would be unjust for God not to forgive the sins that we repent of and confess to Him. For that reason, John writes in 1 John 1:9 that God is faithful and just to forgive our sins.
5. **A.**
The penalty for our past, present, and future sins has already been paid in full. So, we do not need to pay for the sins that we will commit tomorrow or doubt our salvation should the devil use them to attack us. Jesus has paid for them all.
6. **B.**
The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead demonstrated publicly to all of creation that justification had been accomplished. The resurrection was God’s act of vindicating Jesus and all who are united to Him through faith.

No Separation

INTRODUCTION

Paul's words at the end of Romans 8 reverberate with unshaken confidence in the faithfulness and power of God to finish the work He started in the lives of His people. In this lesson, Dr. Thomas surveys some of the most majestic and beloved words in all of Scripture, as we celebrate a promise that has been a source of hope and strength to countless generations of believers—the promise that nothing can ever separate us from the love of God in Christ.

LEARNING GOALS

When you have finished this lesson, you should be able to:

- Articulate a theology of hope in the midst of suffering
- Take confidence in the promises of God to His people in Romans 8
- Use Romans 8 to encourage and strengthen other Christians

KEY IDEAS

- Although the Christian life is full of suffering and hardship, God is with His people through it all.
- Nothing can undermine God's plans to bring His people into the glory of His kingdom.
- Nothing can separate God's children from the love of Jesus Christ.

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Before the Video

What Do You Think?

Take a moment to answer the following questions. They will prepare you for the lecture.

- What have been the most challenging hardships that you have faced as a Christian?
- How has God enabled you to emerge from trials and hardships in your life?

Scripture Reading

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, “For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.” No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

—Romans 8:35–39

- Which of the obstacles listed above did Paul experience firsthand? See 2 Corinthians 11:24–33.

During the Video

Answer the following questions while you watch the video. They will guide you through the lecture.

Our Great Encouragement

0:00–10:09

- What contemporary examples are given of Christians who have faced the challenges of Romans 8:35? What hope does this passage offer them?
- Which Scripture passages does Dr. Thomas often read when he visits the bedside of a dying believer? What type of reactions do these passages evoke?

More Than Conquerors

10:09–24:31

- Why does Paul use the term “life” in Romans 8:38 to describe one of the things that may threaten to separate Christians from the love of God?
- What is the connection between Romans 8:18 and the remainder of Romans 8?

- When Elisha and his servant were surrounded by the Syrian army, what did Elisha ask God to do for his servant in 2 Kings 6:17? What hope can believers take away from this passage?

After the Video

Answer the following questions after you have finished the lecture. They will help you identify and summarize the major points.

- Read Romans 8:37. What does it mean to be more than a conqueror? How is this type of victory possible?

If you are in a group, have the members name and discuss men and women from the Bible or from church history who have been conquerors for the faith.

- With which of the hardships mentioned in Romans 8:35–39 have you struggled? How can the gospel encourage you in this struggle?

If you are in a group, have the members read 2 Corinthians 1:3–7. What is our suffering intended to produce for others? How can you use Romans 8 to help others when they doubt God's promises because of their circumstances?

- How has this study of Romans 8 made a difference in your understanding of the gospel? How has it contributed to your relationship with the Lord?

If you are in a group, have the members discuss their experience as a group over the course of these twelve lessons. What will each of you take away from this study?

PRAYER

Commit what you have learned from God's Word in this lesson to prayer.

- Praise God for His electing grace and faithfulness to bring you into glory.
- Confess ways that you doubt God's presence, love, and care during trials.
- Thank God for His work as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit for your salvation.
- Ask God to give you and fellow believers the strength to endure trials and hardships.

REVIEW QUIZ

Use these multiple-choice questions to measure what you learned from this lesson.

1. Which theologian asked his children to place his finger on the text of Romans 8:38–39 before he died?
 - a. Augustus Toplady
 - b. John Calvin
 - c. Robert Bruce
 - d. Thomas Cranmer
2. In his commentary on 1 Peter, what did John Calvin name as the way through which we enter the kingdom of God?
 - a. Through God’s predestination
 - b. Through many tribulations
 - c. Through righteous deeds
 - d. Through the narrow gate
3. Which particular event serves as the focal point for “the love of Christ” in Romans 8:35?
 - a. The crucifixion of Jesus
 - b. The incarnation of Jesus
 - c. The intercession of Jesus
 - d. The second advent of Jesus
4. The powers mentioned at the end of Romans 8:38 most likely refer to which of the following?
 - a. Anyone who inflicts hardship and persecution on believers
 - b. Areas of human culture where sin and evil are entrenched
 - c. Oppressive governments that openly oppose Christianity
 - d. Satan and his demons
5. The Greek word *tetelestai* is best translated into English as “more than conquerors.”
 - a. True
 - b. False
6. Which English Reformer demonstrated his repentance by trusting his right hand into the flame that would consume him in martyrdom?
 - a. John Hooper
 - b. John Bradford
 - c. Thomas Cranmer
 - d. William Tyndale

Answer Key—No Separation

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Before the Video

What Do You Think?

These are personal questions. The answers should be based on your own knowledge and experience.

Scripture Reading

- Which of the obstacles listed above did Paul experience firsthand? See 2 Corinthians 11:24–33.

In 2 Corinthians 11:24–33, Paul provides an extensive list of the sufferings he had endured for the sake of the gospel. Each of the hardships listed in Romans 8:35 is either openly stated or suggested in Paul’s catalog of suffering in 2 Corinthians. These obstacles strengthened Paul’s resolve and his dependence on the Lord. In 2 Corinthians 12:10, he concludes with this statement: “I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”

During the Video

Our Great Encouragement

- What contemporary examples are given of Christians who have faced the challenges of Romans 8:35? What hope does this passage offer to them?

The contemporary examples given were the persecution that Christians have endured recently in Somalia, North Korea, and certain areas of Asia. Christians who experience mortal danger for the sake of the gospel can take heart that God loves them and has promised never to leave or forsake them in the midst of their trials. Even their present sufferings are not worth comparing to the glory that will one day be revealed in them.

- Which Scripture passages does Dr. Thomas often read when he visits the bedside of a dying believer? What type of reactions do these passages evoke?

Dr. Thomas lists Psalm 23 and the words that Jesus spoke to the thief on the cross (Luke 23:39–43) as passages that he often reads during these visits. He notes that he can often sense a visible response, such as a blink or a squeeze on the hand, to indicate that the fading brother or sister has received strength and encouragement from the gospel message being presented as he or she prepares to enter the Lord’s presence.

More Than Conquerors

- Why does Paul use the term “life” in Romans 8:38 to describe one of the things that may threaten to separate Christians from the love of God?

Paul uses the term “life” in Romans 8:38 to refer to life under the sun—life that is given to futility, as outlined in Ecclesiastes. At times, even Christians can experience such vanity in life that there may not appear to be much meaning or purpose in it. In such moments, God can feel sorrowfully absent, and His love may seem like a distant memory. For this reason, Paul affirms that God’s covenantal love remains available to us in the midst of life’s futility.

- What is the connection between Romans 8:18 and the remainder of Romans 8?

Suffering is a prominent theme in all of these verses. In Romans 8:18, Paul proclaims that the present suffering of believers is not worth comparing to their future glory. Romans 8:35–39 lists specific examples of these present sufferings and proclaims them to be ineffectual in hindering believers from entering the incomparable glory that awaits.

- When Elisha and his servant were surrounded by the Syrian army, what did Elisha ask God to do for his servant in 2 Kings 6:17? What hope can believers take away from this passage?

Elisha’s servant was faltering on the brink of despair when Elisha prayed, “O LORD, please open his eyes that he may see,” and God opened the servant’s eyes so that he could see the vast multitude of angels present to defend Israel. This passage reminds believers today that—though we may not be able to see the heavenly forces that fight at our side—the strength of those who are with us is greater than the strength of those who oppose us. No obstacle or opposition is too great for God to overcome on our behalf.

After the Video

- Read Romans 8:37. What does it mean to be more than a conqueror? How is this type of victory possible?

As Dr. Thomas explained, God has already predestined us to eternal glory, and He has provided everything that we need to get there in Jesus Christ. As Ephesians 3:20–21 reminds us, God is able to do immeasurably more than all His people can ask or imagine. The infinite and abundant power of God is on our side as we fight life’s battles. Because Jesus Christ has already conquered the power of sin and death, we who are united to Him through the power of the Holy Spirit already share in His victory.

- With which of the hardships mentioned in Romans 8:35–39 have you struggled? How can the gospel encourage you in this struggle?

Answers to this question will vary from one person to another. Whatever the nature of your particular struggles, Romans 8 offers God’s assurance that you are indeed more than a conqueror through Jesus Christ.

- How has this study of Romans 8 made a difference in your understanding of the gospel? How has it contributed to your relationship with the Lord?

Answers to this question will vary. Whether you have journeyed through this study on your own or as a group, this breathtaking chapter in the book of Romans is a great source of encouragement because it provides the knowledge and certainty that God, having begun a good work in you, will complete it.

REVIEW QUIZ

Lesson 12

1. **C.**
When the Scottish theologian Robert Bruce realized that he was dying, he quoted from Romans 8:38–39 and asked his children to place his finger on those words in his Bible before he died.
2. **B.**
Calvin’s commentary on 1 Peter warns believers that we enter the kingdom of God through many tribulations. In saying this, Calvin is not presenting suffering as a prerequisite to justification; rather, it is the natural consequence of living as God’s children in a world that is hostile to God.
3. **A.**
The Greek tense used to express “the love of Christ” in Romans 8:35 suggests that Paul has in view Christ’s love for us at a certain point in the past, namely, on the cross.
4. **D.**
Paul most likely has in view supernatural forces, such as Satan and his demons, that are opposed to God and the gospel. Satan is described in Ephesians 2:2 as “the prince of the power of the air.”
5. **B.**
Greek word tetelestai, uttered on the cross by Jesus Christ, means “It is finished,” or “It is paid in full.” Dr. Thomas believes that this word best fits the description of the “one little word” that will defeat the work of the devil in Martin Luther’s “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God.”
6. **C.**
Though all of these men were martyred, it was Thomas Cranmer who thrust his hand into the fire as a gesture of repentance before being burned alive. He did this because he had earlier signed a document renouncing certain features of the Reformation. It was the hand by which he signed the document that he held in the fire to demonstrate his commitment to Christ and the gospel of salvation.

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