



Prayer Is Key to Your Relationship With God

Prayer is a wondrous resource to build an intimate relationship with God the Father. He always listens and cares. (Romans 8:26-27) Take a moment to reflect upon your own prayer life.

Do you informally talk to God through the day? There are many things 'to say' to Him, whatever is on your heart: concerns about day-to-day issues, problem situations, decision-making, and special requests. Many ask the Lord for help in thinking out delicate matters or to deal with fears. You can also purpose to be thankful, recalling His goodness.

God the Father yearns to personally speak to you daily, to share 'His mind' on relevant matters. 'Open the Scripture' to read it. Consider what His great love and wisdom are saying 'to you.'

Prayers from the Body of Christ are answered differently by the Lord, as compared to Israel in time past. This is clear when context is noticed. Why? Saints in this time are empowered with His Spirit and the complete Word. God still does glorious works, but today He desires to focus on empowering the inward man, renewing the mind as you read it. "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind..." (Romans 12:2)

What's this look like? As you pray for a sick friend, the Spirit stirs doctrine, motivating you in love to care for him or ask how you can help. God uses you to answer prayer as Christ's ministering hands, members of His own Body.

Since God designed suffering to work for you as you respond in faith, He provides what's needed for your inner man to 'bear' difficulties. The Spirit works the doctrine inside to teach you, producing glory now and in eternity. Thus, it would be contrary to His purpose to 'pray away' challenges. Pray rather to use God's wisdom to patiently endure. (Romans 8/1 Corinthians 10:13)

A Few Study Ideas:

1) As our example, examine Paul's prayers in Romans-Philemon. Use a concordance to study 'pray' & 'prayer;' consider context.

2) Some specifics to explore:

- "...instant in prayer..." (Rom. 12:12)

- "Pray without ceasing." (1 Thes. 5:17)

- 'For' & 'in' all things (Eph. 5:20/Phil. 4:6)

- 'Thanksgiving,' 'supplication,' and for 'requests' (Rom. 1:8-10/Phil. 1:4, 4:6)

- For the brethren (Eph. 6:18/1 Thes. 5:25)

- For oneself (Romans 1:10)

- The Spirit intercedes (Romans 8:26-28)

What a Joy to Study This Topic!!

Christian Life Coach Support Services

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Just A Minute! With Scripture

Request subscriptions/past issues & forward questions/ideas using contact information above.

Coping With Despair and Depression Part I

II Corinthians 4:8 "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed..."

God's Word is practical, functionally applicable to your life, even if you are battling despair and depression. God, through Christ Jesus, is **fully able** to help. "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace of believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." (Rom. 15:13) Scripture is not just words on a page, it's your training manual providing REAL answers for daily living! God designed His living Word to be read continually over a lifetime. Christ is our wisdom, power, & protection, providing concrete answers and help to negotiate life. (I Corinthians 1:24)

In today's fast-paced society, many expect immediate solutions. However, applying a Bible verse, especially pulled out of context, won't be a quick fix to depression. Medication may take the edge off or adjust a chemical imbalance, but can mask symptoms. Psychology/self-help books help address 'some' issues, yet the problem often remains. Lasting results require 'a change in thinking;' behavior will follow thoughts and beliefs. The Almighty created all things; the body was designed with emotions; they are a flag to get your attention or make a godly change. Trust and yield to God for answers, not man and his wisdom. "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." (Jer. 10:23)

Believers and unbelievers alike have feelings that can prompt despair. Challenging experiences, heredity, and physiological-psychological tendencies, such as hormone levels, can further influence how you respond. Sadness or feeling blue is a part of the human condition and can interfere with life, affecting relationships or daily living. Yet, whether you have periodic sadness or a more serious condition, **you need the Lord Jesus & the Word in your life daily!** Therefore, deal with *depression by starting here:

Tap into God's Resources:

1. Prayer: Make a *daily* plan to pray to your Father, asking Him to help you through this challenge, being fully expectant. Consider writing your prayers to reflect upon what you are thinking, feeling, & asking. Remember to be thankful.

2. Scripture: At the same time, even if you do not 'feel' like it, set your flesh aside and read His Word *every day*. This is how God speaks to you. Start in Romans 1. Slowly read the chapter several times, then move on to the next chapter. The Spirit will help you understand in time. Be patient... God often works silently in the invisible realm within you. Trust Him in this... it's a walk of faith.

3. Body of Christ: Saints are closer than family, being members of Christ's own Body; arrange your schedule to have regular fellowship with them. They are your support. Choose someone you trust, who knows Scripture, for accountability; begin immediately. (Resources: Friends/family/local assembly/life coach)

Determine to implement these important suggestions. Next month's article will continue concrete coping strategies to functionally help in dealing with depression. Forward questions and issues you'd like addressed.

God is Always Listening... Are You?

* (Call a professional today, if you are seriously consider hurting yourself/others)

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Paul's Roman Epistle: Designed to Establish the Body of Christ

Romans 4: Student Study Insights

Romans 4:3 "For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness."



**The goal each month will be to address one successive chapter in the book of Romans and relay a few helpful study insights for application.*

One way for a student to gain insight into the context of Scripture is to 'look back.' The last verses in Romans 3 set the stage for Chapter 4, that is, to be just with God is by faith alone. "Where is the boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith." (Romans 3:27) The use of Old Testament Bible characters, Abraham & David, in Romans 4, details how 'imputed righteousness' has always been received by faith... No works. This provides opportunity to appreciate God's wondrous **free** gift.

Use a few ideas below to enrich your search for Truth. (Create a personal study tools list; add new insights as you go.)

1. Be Open And Really 'Hear' God: As you pray/read/meditate, God desires a humble attitude, exalting His Word as the final authority; "...thy word is truth." (John 17:17) Set aside 'what others say' to see objectively. Read Romans 4 several times. "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind..." (Rom. 12:2)
2. Definitions In The Word: Examine the issue of 'faith.' Many key terms are defined within Scripture; see if you can find a clear definition in Chapter 4. Highlight the verse or jot it down for future reference.
3. Opening Question: Paul often begins with a question, inspiring students to think about what's been taught prior, to relate it to the next component of the doctrine about to be laid forth. Study Genesis 12-22 to consider Abraham's life, then answer the question.
4. Resources: 'Imputed righteousness' **a)** Try using a

new type of Bible dictionary: An 'expository' dictionary locates the specific Greek word, so you can find other places in Scripture where the same term is used. This provides a more precise definition. **b)** Consult an Accountant/CPA: This profession functionally knows what it means to be 'imputed' or 'reckoned' to an account.

5. Read To Seek Answers: **a)** How was righteousness imputed to Abraham/David? **b)** What kind of faith did they have to gain God's righteousness? Is it defined in this chapter? **c)** Who are 'the blessed' that will not have sin imputed? (Create/study your own questions.)

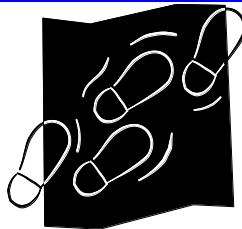
6. Prove The Word: **a)** Verse 16: Paul states Abraham 'is the father of us all.' How can this be? Genesis 17 provides clues. Was Abraham righteous before/after being circumcised? (The qualification for obtaining the covenant is in Genesis 17:1-5. Did he get it and why?) **b)** Faith example: Is Abraham a good 'faith' example to use in Romans 4? Was it simply a 'lack of faith' in Genesis 12-17 when he tried to have a son by his own works? Or, could God have been patiently teaching Abraham, giving him grace and 'a little information at a time' about how He would bring forth 'the seed?' (Study it for yourself: Gen 15:1-4, 16, & 17:15-19.) Abraham's perfect 'faith' education resulted in a 'strong faith walk.' He was even able to offer his only son Isaac, the promised seed, as a sacrifice in Genesis 22, trusting God by 'faith.' Isn't God patiently teaching you the same way through the Word, graciously 'filling in holes and gaps' along the way? **Think on this!**

Faith... Needed to Be Justified, But Also to Live Unto God

1 Corinthians 2:5 "That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."

Most associate 'faith' with being saved unto eternal life. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. 5:1) This relates to trusting God's specific salvation message and His complete provision, faith in the blood of Christ. (Rom. 1-5)

However, equally important is the link between faith and actually living Truth out in the details of life; our sanctified walk. (Rom. 6-16) Just as we were unable to do anything to be justified, so too, there are 'no works' that our flesh can do for *godly service* that are acceptable to our Father. We simply believe God's specific instructions to us in His Word, Romans-Philemon, and 'yield in faith.'



Walk By Faith

The Almighty is far above us in goodness, righteousness... in all things. Truly, it must entirely be His power working within us to be acceptable. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." (Isaiah 55:9)

Thus, saints are told in Galatians 2:20, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; **yet not I, but Christ** liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." What else can be said on the matter? **Walk by faith!**

Family Bible Study In N. Chesterfield

Brian's Topic: A Holy Walk Before God

Time: Fridays, 7-9 PM Call for details - (804) 519-1210

Things To Do Search as a Berean (Acts 17:11)

1. Set a regular prayer/study time to maintain two-way communication with the Living God.
2. Tap into God's resources to deal with anxiety depression, or any issue of life.
3. Jesus Christ is your real power to navigate life. Open your eyes and ears to really see and hear.

Women's Bible Study

N. Chesterfield, VA

When: Every Fri. 1-3pm

Topic: Romans 9-11- God is Faithful

Call for information - (804) 519-1210

Bring Your Questions!



Brian's
View

The Sufferings of Christ Are Important

Why does our Heavenly Father allow us the privilege to suffer persecution? We get a glimpse of God's purpose for sons today in Romans 8:14, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Romans 8:18 gives us further understanding as to 'how' these sons can now view suffering. "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." As sons, the Spirit will lead us through the glorious doctrines of God's grace, with the goal of being conformed to the image of Christ. When we understand our future glory, the present day sufferings will not seem significant.

For us to be able to labor with God, we need to have 'His understanding' of suffering. For this to be accomplished, we need to function on the same hope that He does, as we face opposition and rejection. Romans 2:4 tells us 'how' God is suffering today: "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" Our Father is suffering as He holds forth 'His goodness.' He desires the lost to trust the cross of Christ, and receive the gift of eternal life. God suffers as men follow after self-righteousness and reject the Word of God.

The key to understanding 'why' we suffer persecution has two important aspects. The first, is that God wants to deal with us as adult sons. Paul tells us in II Corinthians 6:17-18 that God wants an adult, father-son relationship with us. "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be *my sons and daughters*, saith the Lord Almighty." God wants us to separate from ungodly influences so that we can live like He does and labor with Him. One of our first labors with God is to separate from ungodliness, manifesting God's wisdom and power, even to principalities and powers in heavenly places.

The second aspect of 'why' we suffer persecution is because we are being "...conformed to the image of His Son...". Romans 8:28-29 tells us this purpose and how it will be fulfilled. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren." Satan opposes saints being conformed to Christ, because of the godly labor we will produce.

It is clear from the book of Acts that God did not improve the world or make it less hostile when Paul was raised up as our Apostle. As we are educated as God's sons, we will experience the same sufferings that Paul faced. Romans 8:36-37 says what our attitude should be when we go through various types of persecution. "...For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we're more than conquerors through him that loved us." Our Father wants us to be impressed with His purpose, and how even persecution will work for our good, and further, His glory.

When we suffer persecution & continue in 'our Fathers business,' this is victory, and it will "...redound to the glory of God." (II Cor. 4:15) Thus, the sufferings of Christ ARE important. ([More on Suffering –Next Issue](#))

Groaning With Great Hope!

What does it mean to 'groan,' and is it different from 'moaning?' Verses in Romans 8, along with Webster's 1828, American Dictionary of the English Language, provides insight. 'Groaning' is an internal, mournful voice of grief, as in profound pain or sorrow; yet, with a hope for deliverance. 'Moaning,' however, seems to be more of a outward lamenting/complaining, expressing torment; the focus is on the anguish & pain.

Scripture teaches, as the creation 'groans,' so also do we understandably 'groan,' living in a sin-filled world usurped by Satan, the god of this world. "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves..." (Romans 8:22-23)

With 'confident expectation' we are waiting for our blessed hope. Paul continues, "...waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." Oh, what a day THAT will be: eternally with the Lord Jesus, with a new & perfect celestial body to live in the heavenly realm.

Masterfully, God provided perfectly. Romans 8:24 says, "For we are saved by hope..." that is, saved from being 'distressed, in despair, feeling forsaken, and being destroyed.' (II Cor. 4:8-9) Simply, hope enables us to patiently wait.

Though we 'groan,' we are to be focused on our hope and His Word, NOT the circumstances. This enables us to 'bear' the sufferings, patiently enduring, not moaning, as with no hope. (I Cor. 10:13) Scripture assures us, God has a perfect plan. He is working within us, members of the Body of Christ, "...to be conformed to the image of his Son..." to accomplish His will, even in these trials. (Romans 8:29)

Romans 8:31-32 says, "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"



'On A Personal Side'

Please forward testimonials, praises, personal growth or feedback about this newsletter. We will print all we can.

From Our Readers...

"I appreciate so much your gentle voice in the newsletter; it draws me closer to God's Word." (N. Carolina)

"My Grace sister, thank God for the work you are doing..." (Ghana)

"Thanks so much for sending. Good review of Rom 1 (Jan.) and Rom 2. (Feb.) (Virginia)

"I love how you take day-to-day struggles that, as grace believers (new or mature), we all face in our daily lives and apply the Word of God." (Illinois)

Things to Think About When Approaching Scripture

This is a wonderful opportunity to be a Berean... Look up the verses below to gain a deeper appreciation for 'How to Study!'

Exalt God and Scripture: Our life will reflect our true affections. Are eternal things more important than fleshly, worldly distractions? Scripture is our spiritual sustenance, "...more precious than rubies..." and "...more than my necessary food..." (Prov. 3:15/Job 23:12)

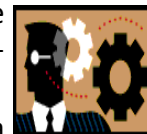
Time is Precious: Regular, quality time directly in the Word over a lifetime is needed and is a key to mature. (Romans 10:17,12:1-2) Daily/slowly read the Scriptures and pursue a desire to learn, viewing it as your *top priority*. (Proverbs 2:1-5) Consider using a mentor, one mighty in Scriptures, or find a regular study partner.



Context: God wrote the Bible in an organized manner. The Lord Jesus chose Paul to be an Apostle and write specific instructions to the Body of Christ. (Romans-Philemon) Consider the context of verses & ask questions like, who wrote it/to whom/why? "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (II Timothy 2:15)

Led by the Spirit: God desires us to grow slowly, verse-by-verse, with prayerful thoughtfulness. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." (Romans 8:14) Learning 'the deep things of God' matures us toward spiritual adulthood, enabling wise life application. Trust God to personally lead you through this training. (I Cor. 2:10)

Mind godly things: Are you minding things of the flesh and this world, or the spirit? "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he..." (Proverbs 23:7) Pray to evaluate priorities and make wise choices. (Romans 8:6-13)



Progressive Scripture: Paul's epistles are a 'form of doctrine' that function like a curriculum, gradually maturing us. "...Precept must be upon precept..." (Isaiah 28:10) Books, chapters, & verses build doctrinal understanding as time is spent reading and studying. Romans is the first book to the Body of Christ, a foundation in the fundamentals, "...to the end ye may be established..." (Rom. 1:11) The rest of Paul's epistles are built upon this.

Life manual: All Scripture is connected and important to read. It is "...written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scripture might have hope." (Rom. 15:4) The Old Testament, Gospels, and Acts provide groundwork to understand Romans-Philemon. Note how often Paul refers back to Scripture. Consider context.

It is an eternal privilege and responsibility to grow up as a mature adult believer. Learn to use this earthen vessel for God, as it is His temple, bought and paid for by Christ's own blood. Be a Berean and prove all things, then, live your convictions. (I Corinthians 6:15-20/Acts 17:10-11) Develop personal conviction by keeping Scripture as the final authority. Avoid exalting men, publications, or institutions, believing/living solely what God teaches. Can you trust your Father to perfectly teach you, then enable you to live godly by Christ the Word in you? **Be Fully Persuaded... He Is able!**



Editor's Note: Reflections on This Present Evil World

II Corinthians 4:7: "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us."

Much is changing in this country; at times, it may be disheartening. Keep your mind on 'things above' (Col. 3:1-5) and remember: "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed..." (II Cor. 4:8-9) How can this be? As we *progress* by faith in the Word, we see as God Himself sees, having the mind of Christ. "...For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." (James 4:14) We are to be confident, that "...though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, *which is but for a moment*, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight in glory..." (II Cor. 4:16-17) **Trust the Lord Jesus Christ & Focus**

The King James Bible is used for all references. Verses may be underlined, numbered, or made bold for emphasis.

THIS MONTH!

Grace Women's Retreat

Retreat Speaker: Deborah Johnson
Topic: **The Key to Please God: Let Grace Reign**

Orlando, Florida - Friday & Saturday, April 15-16

Location: Fellowship Bible Church
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sueannfitzpatrick@gmail.com

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