

**Welcome to the
Common Ground Café!**



Sunday, November 26, 2017

**The Hand of Providence
Week 4 in the series “Engaged”
A Study of Romans 8:28-39**

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Are you an optimist, a pessimist, or somewhere in between?
Why?

Today we wrap up our 4-week study through Romans 8. If you were here the last 3 weeks, help the group draw a line from the verses listed on the left to the sentence on the right that best summarizes those verses:

Verses 1-4	What God will do for us in the future
Verses 5-17	What God has done for us in the past
Verses 18-27	What God is doing for us in the present

In verses 28-39, Paul wraps it all up with this assurance: Since nothing can stop God's plans for you, nothing can separate God's love from you.

**In Christ, nothing can stop
God's plans for you**

Read Romans 8:28.

Mark a "T" for "True" or an "F" for "False" next to the following statements. Be ready to explain your answer:

Since a good God is in charge of all things, all things that happen to me are good.

God causes all things to work out the way I want.

I can always know clearly why I'm going through a specific hardship.

If I can't come up with a good reason why God would allow something to happen to me, there can't be a good reason.

Read Acts 2:23. Did the injustice against Jesus and his agonizing death on the cross happen because of “wicked men” or “by God’s deliberate plan and foreknowledge”? Could it be both? How?

The cross is the **main story** of Christianity. All our little stories of injustice and pain only make sense in light of it. How does the story of the cross help us trust the claim of Romans 8:28?

Read Romans 8:29-30 and answer the following questions:

- ❖ List the five verbs that explain the progression of salvation. (Hint: “foreknew” is the first one. Now list the other four.)
- ❖ Briefly define the five verbs.
- ❖ The word “glorified” usually refers to the resurrection, which hasn’t happened yet. So why would Paul speak of it in the past tense in this verse?
- ❖ Just defining these five words usually results in debate (especially the first two words). But these concepts were meant to provoke praise, not just questions. How can these verses lead us to astonished praise?

In Christ, nothing can separate God’s love from you

In Romans 8:31-34 Paul discusses ***the love of the Father***, and then in Romans 8:35-39 he discusses ***the love of the Son***.

He discusses ***the love of the Father*** in Romans 8:31-34. Read those verses and answer the following questions:

- ❖ If you made a list of the evidence that God actually loves you, what does verse 32 say should be at the top of that list? When things don’t work right in our lives, could our bitterness be an indication that something else has been at the top of that list?
- ❖ Sometimes we say, “I know God forgives me but I just can’t forgive myself.” How do verses 33-34 terminate our services as prosecuting attorney?

He discusses ***the love of the Son*** in Romans 8:35-39. Read those verses and answer the following questions:

- ❖ List the hardships in verse 35. As proof that Paul personally knew what he was talking about, read 2 Corinthians 11:24-27.
- ❖ Some people would think the best evidence that God loves us would be escaping such hardships. Paul seemed to think that God's love could be experienced *within* such hardships. Has this been your experience?
- ❖ Verse 37 says we are "more than conquerors." If verse 35 isn't about conquering hardships, what are we meant to conquer?
- ❖ How does Psalm 139:7-12 compare to Romans 8:38-39? Is it possible that Paul had David's psalm in mind when he composed verses 38-39?

Looking over these four weeks in Romans 8, what new knowledge have you gained and/or what new resolution have you made?



Close with praise reports and prayer requests