

DEVOTIONAL

WHEN IN ROME VIII
NO SEPARATION
JULY 10, 2022

GRACE
FELLOWSHIP

Discussion Starter: Why do you think some Christians doubt God's absolute love for them?

Key Text: *"What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² 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? ³³ Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ 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. ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? ³⁶ As it is written, 'For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.' ³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ 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 8:31-39)*

During the initial stages of building San Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge, construction progress was slow, almost completely stopping at times. Laborers didn't feel secure as they worked on the bridge. They couldn't concentrate on their tasks because they feared falling off the bridge. No safety devices were used, and 23 men fell to their deaths in the water 225 feet below. Engineers quickly designed and installed a massive safety net underneath the bridge. After the net was in place, at least 10 men fell into it and were saved from death. Because the workers now felt secure, they could wholeheartedly serve the project, and 25% more work was accomplished each day.

The workers on the bridge remind us of Christians who live in paralyzing fear that they'll lose their salvation. They can't concentrate on serving God because they're afraid they'll fall out of God's love. In Romans 8:31-39, Paul asserts that once we're saved, we're also eternally secure in God's love. Nothing will ever be able to separate us from the love of God—we are saved and loved by God eternally and forever! Once we know we're saved and secure in God's love; we can focus on the service He calls us to.

1. There exists no possible legitimate accusation or condemnation against believers.

"What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² 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? ³³ Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ 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." (v.31-34)

In light of the fact God foreknew us, predestined us, called us, justified us, and will glorify us (Rom.8:30), Paul concludes that God must be for all of us who are in Christ by faith. No one can stop God's purpose to save us who are justified in Christ!

Discuss: How does knowing that God is for you impact your thinking and emotions?

2. There exists no possible separation from God's love for believers.

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?"³⁶ As it is written, 'For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.' 37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ 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." (v.35-39)

In v.35-36, Paul lists hardships that can happen in this life that could tempt us to think God doesn't love us. Then he asserts in v.37 that we are "*more than conquerors*"—we experience extraordinary, continual triumph because we share in the inheritance of His glory, and nothing that Christ has gained for us can ever be taken from us. Paul himself experienced these hardships he lists in v.35-36 (see 2 Cor.11:23-29), yet he remained convinced of God's absolute love for him!

In v.38-39a, Paul lists virtually every realm and category we might think of that could challenge God's love for us—literally everything "*in all creation*" (v.39). Then Paul assures us in v.39b that absolutely nothing could ever cause God to stop loving us. Nothing! Ever! Period! God doesn't want us to feel an ounce of insecurity about His love for us in Christ. We are loved by God always, no matter what, forever. Our salvation is entirely, absolutely secure on account of His great love and grace.

Discuss: How would you encourage a new Christian to grow in their assurance of God's love?

3. Once we are saved, God keeps us eternally secure.

Discuss: Read and discuss these verses that assure the believer of eternal security: John 3:15-16; 10:28-29; Romans 8:1; 38-39; Ephesians 4:30; Jude 24.

Two questions commonly come up regarding eternal security: 1) "What about a 'Christian' who lives a sinful, unrepentant lifestyle?" and 2) "What about a 'Christian' who rejects the faith and denies Christ?" First, not everyone who claims to be a Christian has actually been born again. A true Christian may lapse into sin, but he cannot enjoy it for long and will seek repentance. A person who happily lives in a state of continual, unrepentant sin is showing they are not a Christian (1 Jn.3:6). Christians are known by the fruit they bear for God (Mat.7:6; Rom.7:4; Gal.5:21-22). Second, the Bible says that anyone who departs the faith is demonstrating that he was never truly a Christian in the first place (1 Jn.2:19). He may have put on a religious show, but he was never born again by the power of God.

For Further Study:

Free online commentary on the Book of Romans at www.enduringword.com

Eternal Security by Charles Stanley

"Assurance of God's Love" article at www.crosswalk.com