

## **Romans 8 Church-wide Study**

### **Small Group Session 6 – Praying When You Don’t Understand**

#### **GATHERING**

Last week we talked about the glory that is promised to all who have been adopted into God’s family. It’s a glory that far surpasses any suffering we will face on this side of eternity. I hope that last week you asked the Lord to give you a foretaste of the glory divine and were able to spend some valuable time alone in His magnificent eternal presence.

This week we are going to dig into the role of the Holy Spirit who helps us whenever we face struggles in life.

#### **READ ROMANS 8:26-27**

*“<sup>26</sup> 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. <sup>27</sup> 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.” (ESV)*

#### **OPENING PRAYER**

*During this prayer, ask God’s Holy Spirit to search our hearts and be our Guide and Helper as we seek to glorify Him as we learn more and more about His being.*

#### **WHAT IS THE CONDITION OF YOUR SOUL?**

We are going to take our groups deeper today during the next 12 minutes. John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist movement, instructed and insisted that believers get into cells or groups of 2 or 3 people and discuss weekly the question: *“How is it with your soul?”*

PLEASE BREAK INTO GROUPS OF 2 OR 3 AND DO THIS AT THIS TIME NOW

#### **PLEASE READ ALONE THEN OUTLOUD 1 Corinthians 2:11-14**

*“<sup>11</sup> For who knows a person’s thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. <sup>12</sup> What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us. <sup>13</sup> This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual realities in Spirit-taught words. <sup>14</sup> The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit.”*

- When you think of the term “*spiritually discerned*” what do you think of – how would you define this? Do you think you possess this ability to be wise in this way?
- Can you name to the group a time when Satan was using his crafty skill of deception to try and confuse, trick, or hook you, and God’s Spirit living within you quickened you to the scheme? Maybe it’s happened after the fact?

## WATCH THE PANEL DISCUSSION VIDEO

### 1. What did you hear in the video that really spoke to you?

## READ AGAIN ROMANS 8:26-27

*“<sup>26</sup> 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. <sup>27</sup> 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.” (ESV)*

2. What has it been like for you to live in a world that, as Jerry said in the sermon, “*is riddled with sin, suffering, and death*”?
  - What has God done to help us in this world?
  - Have someone read John 16:33. **Why do we have so much trouble accepting that declaration of Jesus?**
3. Paul says in Romans 8:26, “*The Spirit helps us in our weakness.*” **How have you experienced the Spirit helping us in our weakness?**
4. In his sermon, Jerry talked about times when the Spirit takes over your prayers (*for example, the 10 year-old boy dying, you being laid up in a hospital room, etc.*).
  - **Name a time when this has happened in your life – when the Spirit has taken over your prayers.**

Let's read Douglas Moo's statement that Jerry quoted in the sermon:

*“God knows what the Spirit intends, and there is perfect harmony between the two, because it is in accordance with God’s will that the Spirit intercedes for the saints. There is one in heaven, the Son of God, who ‘intercedes on our behalf,’ defending us from all charges that might be brought against us, guaranteeing salvation in the Day of Judgment (8:34). But there is also, Paul asserts in these verses, an Intercessor ‘in the heart,’ the Spirit of God, who effectively prays to the Father on our behalf throughout the difficulties and uncertainties of our lives here on earth.” (Douglas Moo, The Letter to the Romans)*

- As a group, break down the roles or actions of all three parts of the Trinity that Douglas Moo talks about.
  - The “Intercessor in the Heart” is your Advocate, BUT ultimately who’s will is going to be accomplished?
    - What’s the point of all this?
    - What do you think the Holy Spirit accomplishes when He intercedes on our behalf?
      - Invite the members of your group to consider keeping a journal of all that the Spirit has accomplished in them that they are aware of. This can help in future seasons of struggle to see that the Spirit has moved in the past, and He will continue to move in the future.
5. In the sermon, Jerry shared three truths that we glean from these two verses. Let’s spend a little time with those truths.
- You don’t have to understand everything that’s going on in your life. God is moving in our lives regardless of how well we understand all that is going on.
    - Why is it important for us to accept this truth?
  - God isn’t judging you in the struggles you face.
    - What IS God doing when you face struggles? (hint: look at verse 27 and notice the word “searches”)
    - Why is it important for us to accept this truth?
  - God is FOR you. Read Romans 8:31 and look once more at verses 26-27.
    - What does all of this say about the heart of God and His relationship with you?

Jude 1:20-21 says:

*“But you, dear friends, by building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in God’s love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.” (Jude 1:20-21*

God wants to form an intimate relationship with you through prayer. He is always looking for worshipers who pray in the Spirit and truth.

One person wrote: *“Praying in the Spirit is prayer with divine help. It’s trusting in faith and relying on God to hear, understand, and act. Praying in the Spirit is a gift to be received through faith in Christ Jesus.”*

**6. How do you intend to live this out?**

**7. What is your takeaway from today’s discussion?**