

Prayer = Talking to God.

I've said it before, I don't know if there's a person over the age of 20 who has not prayed. Even if they feel they are talking to a God they don't know...Something in us, when we're scared or helpless, wants to reach out and seek help from beyond our world. From God.

For the Christian, we learn about God from the Bible. And what we learn about God in the Bible is that there is One God. And this One God is made up of Three Persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit. ***It's confusing to say that there's One God but that He's in Three Persons, isn't it?*** What do we mean? Well, we mean that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit are all unified in their thinking, their desires, and their goals. They do not argue with each other, they do not contradict one another. They are also equal to one another, each of them being fully God and having every characteristic of God as the other two persons have. This makes them a unified essence. However, they each have their own roles in relating to one another and accomplishing their plans. Now, how does this affect how we talk to God? Well, in general, when Christians pray:

1. We pray to God the Father. We can pray to Jesus and the Spirit but most of the time, God the Father is the One we are talking to...
2. We are given access to God the Father through our union with Jesus, God the Son. His death and resurrection, forgives our sin against God and gives us new life as God's children. By abiding in Christ, we come to God as our Father with confidence.

Now, what role does God the Spirit play in our prayers? Well, that's what we are going to talk about tonight. And here's what we're going to see: **GOD THE SPIRIT PRAYS WITH US AND FOR US**

1. The Spirit Prays With Us (26)

Paul says we are weak. Weak here talks about a lack of ability. **It's similar to when you get home with a bunch of groceries. You want to carry every bag in on the first trip...but you don't have the strength to carry them all OR there's too many to fit in your hands. You aren't ABLE to do it. In the same way, Paul says we want to talk to God but we are not able to talk to Him like we should.** We are doing the best we can in our prayers...however, because we are not perfect and sinless, our prayers aren't either. As Paul says, we all struggle to know how to pray OR even what to pray for.

So, the Spirit comes and helps us. What does it mean that the Spirit "helps" us? The word "help" implies that the Spirit comes alongside us as we pray, not takes over for us. He takes what we're doing and adds His own effort. The same word is used in a story about two women named Mary and Martha in **Luke 10:38–40**

[38] Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. [39] And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. [40] But Martha was distracted with much

serving. And she went up to him and said, “Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me.” (ESV)

Mary wanted Martha to come and work with her...that’s the same idea here in **Romans 8**. Now, why do I bring this up?

Maybe you’ve not prayed before or not prayed often and you don’t know how to get started. It can be awkward and difficult to get started and then when we do get started, we don’t know what words we should say or not say. We don’t want to offend God, right? And then our minds get distracted by the things we have going on around us or by things we have to do later in the day and we have to keep coming back to focus on God. Maybe we even forget what we were praying about...Or maybe we’re just really going through something at the moment, and we are trying but we can’t think of the words to say to God.

All of this is what Paul means by the word “weakness.”

So, what does the Spirit do? He comes alongside us and He prays *with* us. He may help in a few ways. Maybe as we pray, He brings to mind things we should offer up in prayer - a person or an event we should talk to God about. Or maybe He brings to mind a verse or a promise about God we can pray. He comes alongside us and helps. He doesn’t take over. His help doesn’t mean we don’t pray. Rather, it means we aren’t praying on our own. He helps us fill in the gaps.

That’s a huge encouragement to pray, especially when we don’t feel like it. So, even you kids, do you know that when you try and talk to God that the Spirit of God will help you? You don’t need to be afraid to talk to God because God will help you talk to Him.

So, the Spirit prays with us...but the Spirit also does something else.

2. The Spirit Prays For Us

Paul says twice that the Spirit “intercedes” for us. *Now what does that mean?* It means that the Spirit goes to God and prays for you, as your representative. The Spirit is one of your biggest supporters. He wants to see you grow, so He goes to God the Father and prays for you.

Paul uses an interesting phrase here, “with groanings too deep for words.” Paul is saying, the Spirit really cares for you. He really wants to see God do good things for you. Secondly, His prayers cannot be interpreted in human language. They are special types of prayer that only God can understand.

Have you ever been around two people who spoke a different language than you? They are talking and laughing about something and you’re there nervously laughing because you hope they aren’t laughing at you.

I imagine that when I read verses **26-27**. The Spirit and God the Father speak the same language and they are on the same wavelength mentally...and if you could hear the Spirit’s prayers for you, you would have no idea what He’s saying but here’s the thing...You can have confidence that He’s praying for only the best things for you.

Now, Who does the Spirit do this for? The Spirit only intercedes for the saints. ie. For those who are God's people because of their faith in Jesus. These promises, that the Spirit is helping you pray and praying on your behalf before God, are only promises for Christians. If you are not a Christian, then you can't claim them.

But the good news is this: anyone can become a Christian. All it takes is for you to turn to Jesus, believing that He is the Son of God who died and rose again from the dead, and ask Him to forgive you of your sin, and then follow Him as your Lord.

When you do that, then you are not only given eternal life with God...but you are, right now, given the Spirit of God. He comes to live within you. And your prayers are now helped by His presence, as He intercedes for you before God...**THE SPIRIT PRAYS WITH US AND FOR US**

Now, why does God do that? Why does God give us the Spirit to help us pray and to pray for us? Because God wants specific things for you, His children...The last point is that...

3. The Spirit Prays For God's Will

Those who love God, those who are called according to God's purpose (or will)...all things work together for their good. That's the promise of **verse 28**. And then **verse 29** starts with this word, "For..." which shows us that it's connected to the thought in **verse 28**. It helps us answer the question "Why does everything work for good?"

Why? Because God has predestined (or determined beforehand) that all those He foreknew (and called) would be conformed to the image of His Son, Jesus. God the Father's desire is to have a huge family with many children who all bear Jesus' image. Who have His character and His morality. His love and mercy, His justice and peace.

This is what is meant by the word "glorified" in **verse 30**...to be glorified is to finally be fully conformed to the image of Jesus.

Romans 8:29 is actually a call back to when God first made man and woman, here's what He said, **Genesis 1:26-28**

Then God said, "Let us make man *in our image*, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

So God created man *in his own image*,
in the image of God he created him;
male and female he created them.

And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." (ESV)

God's plan has always been to have children who bear His image. Not only that, but that all of creation would be filled with people who bear His image. A giant family. Now, we messed that

up when Adam and Eve sinned against God in **Genesis 3**. And then they had children who were born *in their image*, with their spiritual DNA to rebel against God. But God did not give up.

He sent His Son, Jesus, to come and offer a way back to Him. By dying in our place for our sins and then rising from the dead 3 days later, Jesus created a way for us to be forgiven of our sins and to partake in a new life as God's children. By putting our hopes in Him, we are given the same Spirit that created the world, that created new life in the dead body of Jesus, and that now creates new life in us.

And this Spirit now lives with us, helping us pray and talk to God because we don't properly know what to say or what to ask for. He's actively restoring our relationship with God. And then He also goes to God to pray that God would continue to transform us into who we were made to be...God's child, with His Spiritual DNA in our hearts and minds.

God does not just want you to escape Hell and go to Heaven...He wants you to become a different person. To become who you were made to be: His child. That's why Jesus died for you and opened the way for you to talk to God as your Father. That's why Jesus urges us to abide in Him now, so that you can talk to God as your Father *with confidence*. And that's why the Spirit prays with you and for you.

THE SPIRIT PRAYS WITH US AND FOR US...so that everything in your life works together for your ultimate good: a life free from the presence of sin and full of the presence of God. A life lived as a child of God, in eternity.

So, what now? Well, here's how we're going to walk through the rest of our time. At your table are a list of discussion questions. Work through them with the people you are with. Some of them are simply stating what's in the text. Others will require you to think and reply. Then we will finish our time with prayer and worship.