

God's Answers in Romans: Where do I fit in God's plan?

1. Read Romans 8:13-21.

2. Was there anything in the sermon that concerned you, helped you or confused you?

3. "...if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God."

You can always pass. If the group has been together long enough, give everyone the opportunity to describe ways in which they have perceived that other members of the group are more like Jesus now than they used to be.

4. "The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children."

There are many different ways that people experience the Holy Spirit in their lives. Give each person the opportunity to describe their experience of the Holy Spirit and to what extent their experience convinces them that the Holy Spirit is living inside them.

5. Paul says you have not received a "spirit that makes you a slave again to fear"--referring to the fear of condemnation and experiencing the just the wrath of God. Discuss the consequences of someone never fearing the wrath of God before they are reconciled to God (or never coming to understand the wrath of God after they are reconciled to God). Have you practiced breathing a huge sigh of relief that there is no longer any condemnation for you? What are some things you worry about? How important are they compared to knowing you will not be condemned?

6. "Now if we are children, then we are heirs — heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ.."

Discuss our future inheritance--the kingdom of heaven in the next life. Take a few minutes to summarize what the Bible says about the next life. To what extent are you looking forward to heaven? What impact will a person's understanding of heaven have on their life right now?

7. If Romans is a treasure map, what is the treasure?

8. Discuss the statement: People TREASURE the things of this life too much, And the KINGDOM and RELATIONSHIPS of the next life too little.

9. How can we pray for you?

Rom 8:15:

..you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father."

Luke 12:32-34

32 "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. 33 Sell your possessions, and give alms; provide yourselves with purses that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. 34 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. RSV

Sanctification is one indication we are LED by the Spirit.

All who are LED by the Spirit are CHILDREN of God

And CO-HEIRS with Christ of EVERYTHING.

And freed from FEAR.

Supplemental materials:

Phil 3:20-21: But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body. [see also 1 Cor 15:49]

John 14:1-4

14:1 "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. 4 You know the way to the place where I am going."

Phil 1:21-24

21 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. 22 If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! 23 I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; 24 but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body.

Quotes:

“Our belief that Heaven will be boring betrays a heresy—that God is boring. There’s no greater nonsense.”--Randy Alcorn, *Heaven* (I highly recommend this book.)

One pastor was not looking forward to heaven. He said, “I can’t stand the thought of that endless tedium. To float around in the clouds with nothing to do but strum a harp... it’s all so terribly boring. Heaven doesn’t sound much better than Hell.” Randy Alcorn, *Heaven*

In Mark Twain’s, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Huck comments on Miss Watson’s version of Heaven. Huck says, “She said all a body would have to do there was go around all day long with a harp and sing, forever and ever. So I didn’t think much of it... I asked her if she reckoned Tom Sawyer would go there, and she said, not by a considerable sight. I was glad about that, because I wanted him and me to be together.”

“Nearly every Christian I have spoken with has some idea that eternity is an unending church service... We have settled on an image of the never-ending sing-along in the sky,... forever and ever... And our heart sinks. Forever and ever? That’s it? That’s the good news? ... and we turn once more to the present to find what life we can.”--John Eldridge

Of the 90 % of Americans who believe in heaven, 120 out of 121 believe they are going there.

“what we call heaven is life in this perfect world as God intended humanity to live it. When he put Adam in Paradise at the beginning, Adam fell, and all fell with him, but men and women are meant to live in the body, and will live in a glorified body in a glorified world, and God will be with them.”--Martyn Lloyd-Jones

“God’s honor consists precisely in the fact that he redeems and renews the same humanity, the same world, the same Heaven, and the same earth that have been corrupted and polluted by sin...this world passes away in its present form...to give birth and being to a new world.” --Herman Bavinck

“The total work of Christ is nothing less than to redeem this entire creation from the effects of sin. That purpose will not be accomplished until God has ushered in the new earth, until Paradise Lost has become Paradise Regained.” --Anthony Hoekema

“The modern philosopher had told me again and again that I was in the right place, and I had still felt depressed even in acquiescence.... When I heard that I was in the wrong place...my soul sang for joy, like a bird in spring. I knew now...why I could feel homesick at home.”--G.K. Chesterton

“If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world.”--C.S. Lewis

The third incomparable grace of faith is this:

it unites us to Christ as a wife and a husband are united in one flesh.

Now when two people are married, it follows that all they have, becomes theirs in common.

Good things as well as evil things. So that whatsoever Christ possesses,

that now belongs to you, and whatever belongs to you, that Christ claims as his.

And O if we compare these possessions we shall see how infinite is our gain,

for Christ is full of grace, life and salvation.

and we are full of sin, death and condemnation, but let faith step in and then sin, death and hell belong to Christ and grace, life and salvation come to us.

For if he is a husband, he must needs take to himself that which is his wife's,

and at the same time impart to his wife that which is his,

and therefore we the believing, by the wedding ring of faith,

become free from all sin, fearless of death, safe from hell, and endowed with this eternal righteousness, life and salvation of our husband, Jesus Christ.

O, who can value highly enough these royal nuptials?

Who can comprehend the riches of the glory of his grace?

Do you not see the importance of faith, which is a wedding ring, and that it alone can fulfill the law and justify without works.--Martin Luther, *The Freedom of a Christian*

Remember:

As we continue in Romans 8, the following practices may help you to live in the Spirit more fully:

- Revel in the gospel several times every day. Breathe a big sigh of relief and remember that Jesus has done it all and then smile with joy.
- Talk to God throughout the day. Make your relationship with him personal. Tell him what you appreciate about him. Let your love and admiration for him grow. Become more attracted to Jesus and more repulsed by sin.
- Develop good habits of spiritual training. Cooperate with the Spirit in this way and the supernatural transformation of your desires will happen faster.