

## THE FINAL FOUR

### Romans ch. 8

**F**ew parts of Scripture equal the transformational eloquence or define the Holy Spirit's work more clearly than Romans chapter 8, qualifying it to be enshrined in His Deal's "Final Four."

Romans is arguably theology's *magnum opus*. Martin Luther jump-started the Reformation when he discovered in ch. 1 that God saves us because we *trust* Him, not through our *merit* (Romans 1:17).

Some thirty years have passed since Jesus returned to heaven as mega-missionary Paul writes to Gentile and Jewish followers of Christ in Rome's fledging "house churches." The Gospel migrated to Italy with those who'd been in Jerusalem and witnessed the stirring outpouring of the Holy Spirit during Pentecost (Acts 2:1-11).

**Let's read Romans 8:1-39 (p.1021, GNB).**

### "Free At Last!"

#### Romans 8:1-4

To demo His holy nature, God gave Moses Ten Commandments and many regulations for Jews to obey (Leviticus 7:22, 37-38, p. 92). For 1,500 years Israel tried to keep "the Law" but rebelled, turning to other gods. Victory over sin is impossible without being, as Jesus said, "born again." If we're to get right with God, His Spirit must do what we cannot accomplish (Romans 3:10-12, 21-24, p. 1017).

God's Son became a man, lived a sinless life, fulfilled the Law to a fare-thee-well and took our place on the cross so that He might offer forgiveness to all (Philippians 2:6-11; Titus 3:3-7, p. 1088).

Although our old sin nature still sins, God has declared us forgiven, crediting Christ's sinlessness to our spiritual spreadsheet. We may not always *feel* forgiven, BUT GOD insists that we *are* (Galatians 5:16-26, p. 1059).

DISCUSS: Describe how we go about letting the Spirit direct our lives.

### "When in Romans, do ....."

#### Romans 8:5-11

We are ruled by God or by Satan. Sin can no longer condemn those led by God's Spirit, giving us a revolutionary new way to really live! We now can *choose* to do what God wants, being no longer *captive* to sin (2 Corinthians 5:17-21, p. 1048).

DISCUSS: At the cross God made friends and peace with EVERYone. Why then do we balk at telling others the BEST NEWS one could hear?

### **“That’s Who You Are” Romans 8:12-17**

When God’s Spirit occupies us at the moment we surrender our lives to Him, He upgrades us from “sin’s slaves” to His beloved, “adopted sons.” As fully-vested members of God’s family (the Church which is the Body of Christ) we’ve become part of Love’s solution to humanity’s hate-filled divisions.

Every morning we can say, "Lord, today I want to be all in for You. Take my appointments, thoughts, words, relationships, and lead me by Your Spirit to do and be what will bring You joy today."

DISCUSS: What recent evidence proves that God’s at work in your life?

### **Prayer Proxy Romans 8:18-27**

Our planet is *groaning* under the tonnage of sin that spoiled God’s perfect Creation. BUT GOD promised to restore the earth to its original goodness -- a divine do-over! Count on it because the future is in His hands, not ours (Revelation 21:1-8, p. 1136).

Pain is a result of Adam and Eve's sin, but our afflictions will end when we swap our mortal carcasses for new, immortal bodies like Christ’s (2 Corinthians 5:1-4, p. 1048).

Our sovereign God can use every trial we face. He’s in ultimate control over all that touches us. Even when we’re at a loss for words, the Holy Spirit talks to the Father on our behalf.

DISCUSS: How did God help you through one of your trials?

### **“It’s All Good” Romans 8:28-30**

God is the Potter; we’re His clay (2 Corinthians 4:7-11, p. 1048). He will finish what He has started in us (Philippians 1:6). Not everything *is* good, BUT GOD’s bumper-to-bumper coverage spans from loving us before Creation to a long-term lease in heaven.

We can be sure that God loves us, wants the best for us, and that we're destined to be like Christ. Instead of nursing crippling guilt, we can have unshakable confidence that our "Daddy" is *causing EVERYTHING* to eventually pan out for good (Proverbs 20:24, p. 588; Romans 11:33-36, p. 1026; 2 Corinthians 4:16-18, p. 1048).

God leaves nothing to chance in a believer's life, using everything to give us Christlike characteristics (Genesis 50:20-21a, p. 47).

DISCUSS: When you're down or hurting, what helped you through it?

### **"Who Got Yo Back?"** **Romans 8:31-39**

As our Father's adopted sons we have nothing to fear. He's forgotten **ALL** our sin and is our Advocate and Protector, not our accuser or condemner. Nothing or no one in all the universe, not even we can come between us and God's love. **GOD IS FOR US!** Who cares who's against us (Psalm 56:4, p. 515; Jude 24-25, p. 1121)!

DISCUSS: When you feel you've exhausted your share of God's grace, how do you dig your way out of that pit?

### **"Who's Your Daddy?"**

Paul says since the same Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead is living in us, we *belong* to Him. But, he cautions, if we haven't said "yes" to the Spirit's invitation, we don't belong to Christ. There's no "I *think* I'm a Christian;" or "I *hope* I am." Happily, we can **know** whether we're in or out (1 John 5:11-13, p. 1118). Do you?

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