

ECC Growth Groups – Term 4, 2014
Behold our God – Study 7: God is Triumphant (Romans 8)¹

Big Idea: God is good and in control and is triumphantly always able to bring about his good purposes in the lives of his people.

Study Aim: That group members will: (i) understand and acknowledge God’s goodness and control in all things; and (ii) be reassured in this triumphant knowledge as it relates to their particular life circumstances.

Discussion Starter

1. What makes us doubt God’s goodness to us or his control over our lives?

Prayer

Spend some time praying together before you look at God’s Word.

Bible Reading

Read Romans 8:28-39.

Passage Questions

2. Romans 8:28 has rightly become a well-known and well-loved verse for many Christians. It speaks of God’s purpose and assures us that he is working for our good in all things. How does verse 29 help us to understand what God’s good purpose is for our lives?

This question is not intended to ‘steal’ someone’s favourite verse away from them. In fact, hopefully it does the exact opposite! However, quite often this verse can be ‘lifted’ from its context in a way that is unhelpful and results in several forms of misunderstanding and misapplication.

The word “for” at the beginning of verse 29 serves to link verse 28 and verse 29 closely together. The “good” that God is at work for in all things is not a ‘good’ of our own defining or making but rather the ultimate ‘good’ of us being “conformed to the likeness of his Son”.

3. Some people describe verse 30 as an “unbroken golden chain”. Why might they describe it in this way?

There are no breaks in the links, all the way from predestination to glorification. Those God predestines, he calls. Those he calls, he justifies. Those he justifies, he glorifies. Note also that each ‘activity’ of God in this verse is in the past tense – surprisingly and stunningly even our glorification!

¹ This series of studies is loosely based on the booklet ‘Meeting God’ by J. I. Packer in the *Lifeguide Bible Study* series (1986, IVP).

4. Have a look back over verses 28-30. How do these verses help us to see that God is triumphant?²

He is able to be at work in all things. He is able to work all things for our good – our being conformed to Christ’s likeness (his good purpose for our lives). He is able to inexorably bring people all the way from being predestined through to being glorified.

Activity

In the rest of the passage (vv 31-39) Paul launches into a series of questions and answers. Split your group into smaller groups of between two and four people (depending on the size of your group) and get them to fill in the table below³.

Verse	Question	What might cause us to ask this question?	Answer (Implied or provided in the surrounding verses)
31b	<i>If God is for us, who can be against us?</i>	<i>Given how triumphant God is (vv 28-30) it is the natural question to ask. In a sense, if vv 28-30 are true, it doesn’t matter who is against us – hence Paul’s question.</i>	<i>Paul doesn’t say that people/things won’t be against us. But it doesn’t matter because in the end God is for us and has demonstrated this by giving his Son up for us – a guarantee that he will also give us all things (v 32).</i>
33	<i>Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen?</i>	<i>Others (e.g. non-Christians, the devil)/ourselves bringing charges against us.</i>	<i>Implied answer – no one. Ultimately it is God himself who justifies us (v 33b) and therefore in the end no charges will stand.</i>
34	<i>Who is he that condemns?</i>	<i>Others (e.g. non-Christians, the devil)/ourselves causing us to feel condemned.</i>	<i>Implied answer – no one. Ultimately, Christ – who died and rose again – has ascended to the right hand of God and is interceding for us (v 34b). This means that no condemnation of us will stand.</i>

² In terms of its form, this is a summary question. It serves to capture and summarise what has been discussed so far. In terms of its function, it hopefully serves to crystallise what has been discovered and also bring the group to a similar point of understanding before progressing. This is especially important for those group members who may be learning these truths for the first time or may take longer to process the information. It is also directly in line with the big idea and study aim of the Bible study, which helps the Bible study to stay on target and helps group members to see the point behind the questions being asked and discussed.

³ You may find it helpful to start each group on a different verse. This prevents groups from being distracted by other groups reading the same verse and answering the same question and should ensure that at least between the groups each of the verses are covered. A larger copy of the table has been provided in Appendix 1 for you to hand out to each group member.

35	<i>Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?</i>	<i>Various people, events or circumstances may make us feel like we can be, or indeed are, separated from Christ's love.</i>	<i>Paul is explicit here. No one and nothing can separate us from the love of Christ – not trouble, hardship, perseverance, famine, nakedness, danger or sword (v 35b). Paul then further emphasises this point – neither death, life, angels, demons, the present, the future, any powers, height, nor depth. Indeed nothing in all creation can separate us from God's love for us in Christ (vv 38-39).</i>
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Passage Questions cont.

Bring the groups back together.

5. How do these verses help us to see that God is triumphant?

Regardless of who or what may be against us, we are reassured by the event of Christ's death that God is for us and in the end that is all that matters (vv 31-32). Ourselves and/or others may bring charges against us but God is able to justify us (declare us right before him/innocent) because of Christ (v 33), meaning no charges will stand. We may be condemned, or feel condemned, yet Christ himself is interceding for us before God (v 34), meaning that we will receive the verdict "no condemnation". Most triumphantly of all, no one and nothing is able to separate us from God's love for us in Christ (vv 35-39).

Application Questions

6. If you were to put a musical soundtrack to this passage, what would it be?

7. "God is good but he is not in control". "God is in control but he is not good". Discuss these statements in light of what we have seen in this passage.

8. How will this truth – that God is triumphant – help you day-to-day?

Close + Prayer

See Appendix 2 – 'Theology to Doxology' – and then close the study with a time of prayer.

Appendix 1 – Activity

Verse	Question	What might cause us to ask this question?	Answer (Implied or provided in the surrounding verses)
31b			
33			
34			
35			

Appendix 2 – Theology to Doxology⁴

For our ‘*Theology to Doxology*’ in this study the song, ‘*In Christ Alone*’, has been selected. If you would like to listen to a version online, you can use the URL below⁵:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8weIVgKX8Qo>

If you would like to sing together or simply read out the lyrics, they are included below:

Verse 1

In Christ alone my hope is found
He is my light my strength my song
This Cornerstone this solid Ground
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm
What heights of love what depths of peace
When fears are stilled when strivings cease
My Comforter my All in All
Here in the love of Christ I stand

Verse 2

In Christ alone who took on flesh
Fullness of God in helpless babe
This gift of love and righteousness
Scorned by the ones He came to save
Till on that cross as Jesus died
The wrath of God was satisfied
For every sin on Him was laid
Here in the death of Christ I live

Verse 3

There in the ground His body lay
Light of the world by darkness slain
Then bursting forth in glorious Day
Up from the grave He rose again
And as He stands in victory
Sin's curse has lost its grip on me
For I am His and He is mine
Bought with the precious blood of Christ

Verse 4

No guilt in life no fear in death
This is the power of Christ in me
From life's first cry to final breath
Jesus commands my destiny
No power of hell no scheme of man
Can ever pluck me from His hand
Till He returns or calls me home
Here in the power of Christ I'll stand

CCLI Song # 3350395

Keith Getty | Stuart Townend

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⁴ Theology – literally ‘a word of/about God’ is to lead to Doxology – literally ‘a word of praise/glory’. Please see the introductory notes to this section in Study 1 – Appendix 1 if you need to recall the rationale behind its inclusion.

⁵ Please note that this video includes scenes from the movie, ‘The Passion of the Christ’.