

ROMANS

THE CHRISTIAN'S CONSTITUTION

STUDY TWENTY

Glorying and Groaning

Romans 8:18–27

If you are being crushed, you are on the right road. If your will is being broken, you are on the path of maturity. If you find yourself at wit's end to know how to deal with what you're going through, welcome to the club of fellow believers who are pilgrims and strangers in a foreign land.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

WE remember the difficult courses in school we tried to avoid. The rigorous syllabus, the numerous homework assignments, and the comprehensive exams made us groan. Yet, our groaning turned into celebration when we walked down the aisle for graduation and realized the difficulty had purpose—to prepare us for greater success and lasting productivity.

We groan when heaven registers us for the required course of suffering. Our souls ache from the stings of our fallen world. Our hearts melt with despair when our tears refuse to dry with the passing of time, and the soles of our feet bleed from the thorns and thistles that fill the path in our walk with God.

If all we saw were the hardships, then we would lose heart. But Paul helps us in our suffering by lifting our eyes to the glory to come and opening our spirits to the One who joins us in our pain. If you're sinking under the weight of your trials, hear Paul's words of encouragement. Let them raise your spirit with the hope of a restored creation when you realize the purpose of your pain: to usher you into glory.



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PREPARE YOUR HEART

*The eyes of the LORD watch over those who do right;
his ears are open to their cries for help. . . .
The LORD is close to the brokenhearted;
he rescues those whose spirits are crushed.* (Psalm 34:15, 18)

Express your gratitude for God's attentive care to your cries for help. Thank Him for His presence that comforts and His power that transforms with His precious Word.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

As we learned in the previous *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study, one of the benefits of the Holy Spirit's ministry is the intimacy and belonging we experience in our Father-child relationship with God.



Observation: Glorying and Groaning

With what heartening truth did Paul reassure his readers in [Romans 8:18](#). How does this verse compare groaning with glorying? Why is this point important for Paul to state up front?¹

Paul is saying between the two, the glorying will be so magnificent it will eclipse the pain of all the groaning. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

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In [Romans 8:19–22](#), note the word that Paul repeated four times, *creation*. What four facts did Paul assert about creation as a co-sufferer with us.

1. [8:19](#): _____
2. [8:20](#): _____
3. [8:20–21](#): _____
4. [8:22](#): _____

Summarize these facts in your own words so you can communicate them to a suffering friend.

We know that groaning is temporary. It's a consequence of the fall. It's a means to an end. And it's universal—the whole creation groans. In [8:23](#), in what ways did Paul say we groan as creation groans?

Now observe the personal pronoun in [8:24–27](#). What do verses [8:24–25](#) say? In the depth of our groaning when we can't put our words together to pray, what do verses [8:26–27](#) tell us?

This is what we can count on. “God searches the hearts, He knows the mind of the Spirit, because He intercedes for us, and it’s always according to the will of God.” Count on the Spirit to know what to pray for. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

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Interpretation: Groanings and God's Assistance

Let's dig into the meaning of key concepts in our passage. According to [Romans 8:19–22](#), what is creation eagerly awaiting? What day is creation looking forward to?

Consult your Bible-study resources. In the article, “[Creation](#),” in *Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology* at biblestudytools.com, read the section titled, “Re-creation.” How and when will God free creation from “death and decay” (Romans 8:21)?

The curse of the ground in Genesis 3—that's when the groaning started for the earth. Now it will continue to groan until our Lord Himself changes it with His presence. When the desert will blossom like a rose. When the lamb and the lion shall lie down together. When there will be peace again in that great time of the kingdom of our Savior, Jesus Christ. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

“We believers also groan,” Paul wrote, but, unlike creation, “we have the Holy Spirit within us as a foretaste of future glory” (8:23). How does the Holy Spirit's indwelling presence give us a taste of the good things to come?

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Do you long for your body to “be released from sin and suffering” (Romans 8:23)? Certainly, we all do. One release is through physical healing, but that’s not permanent. Paul has in mind a future day of glory. What does “the redemption of our body” mean (8:23 NASB)?

We hope for the day that the groaning will become glory. Hope is always about something that has not yet happened, but you anticipate it happening.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

In [8:24–25](#), Paul encouraged us to hope in what we do not see. How did the persecuted Christians in Rome understand Paul’s point about hope? In what was Paul urging them to put their hope?

According to [8:26–27](#), the Holy Spirit helps us in our groanings by interceding for us “with groanings that cannot be expressed in words.” How does the Spirit’s groaning and intercession encourage sufferers? How does it encourage you?

And so we don’t know how to pray as we should and look at this, “the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.” Isn’t that great? He can interpret my groanings. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

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Correlation: Groanings and God's Assistance

To understand the origin of suffering, we must visit Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden—before the fall of humanity. Compare the magnificent landscape—jade-green grass, the river that flows to four streams, and the beautiful sky—with the hostile scene after their sin (*Genesis 1:26–30; 3:17*). What did the curse bring? How would you compare the future reality in *Revelation 21:1–22:6*?

What the curse brought was the toil, the thorns, and the thistles that grow. It's the exhaustion that comes at the end of too long a day at work.

—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

See Job among the ashes, scraping his skin with a piece of broken pottery (*Job 2; 42:1–6*). Hear Paul recount his various sufferings (*2 Corinthians 11:22–28; Philippians 3:1–11*). Think about the bloody sweat of Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane (*Luke 22:39–44; see also Isaiah 53; and Hebrews 5:8*). From these men's lives, what can we learn about suffering?

I came to realize that suffering is not an adjunct part of the curriculum, but it is an essential course. It is a part of Christian Life 101, and it didn't come easy for me because I, like you, found myself in a world that highlighted success and comfort and pleasure and ease and even selfishness. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Compare *Romans 5:3–5; 8:26–27; 2 Corinthians 1:3–4; 4:7–18; James 1:2–8, 12*. What should be our response when we encounter hardship, and why? What awaits those who persevere under trials? How does knowing that believers have divine help at their disposal strengthen them during hardship?

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Application: Remember You're Not Alone!

How do we respond to suffering? First, with longing. Groaning for relief feeds our deeper longing for God's redemption. Suffering dulls our taste for this world and builds our appetite for God and His kingdom. How has suffering intensified your spiritual hunger for God?

Second, we can respond to suffering by drawing near to the Spirit, who comes alongside us, joining us in our suffering and interceding for us with groaning of His own. What does it mean to you that the Holy Spirit is with you groaning as you groan and interceding for you?

Third, we respond with hopeful perseverance. We all struggle in the hard class of suffering. What truths in this passage help you persevere? How can you remember these truths?

There's a crown set aside for those who suffer on this earth and glorify Christ in their suffering. The greater the groan, the greater the glory.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

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Think about God’s power available to you in your weakness. What current situations in your life expose your weakness? How can you let God strengthen you?

*The weaker our spirit, the stronger His support. . . . It’s okay to keep groaning.
When you come to a place and you don’t know the answer, just groan, and the
Spirit of God gets busy carrying the right message to the Godhead.*
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



A FINAL PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank You for Your presence. Thank You for being attentive to my groanings—the deep longings of my heart. Thank You for Your strength when I am weak. And thank You that You will never leave and that I am on my way to upcoming glory! In Jesus’ name, I pray. Amen.

ENDNOTE

1. To learn more about Pastor Chuck Swindoll’s *Searching the Scriptures* Bible-study method, go to the web page, “[How Does Pastor Chuck Swindoll Study the Bible?](#)”

For the 2025 broadcasts, this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study was developed by Mirlenda Noëlliste in collaboration with Aaron Massey, senior vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, and Bryce Klabunde, vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll’s messages. Copyright © 2007, 2025 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide. Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

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