

Safe in God's Love

Teaching Tips

Aug. 7, 2016

Bible Study Guide 10

Words You Should Know

A. Foreknow ([Romans 8:29](#)) *proginosko* (Gk.)—To know beforehand or foresee.



B. Predestinate ([Romans 8:29](#)) *prooridzo* (Gk.)—To limit in advance, determine before, or ordain.



Teacher Preparation

Unifying Principle—We Can Conquer! People are constantly tossed about by the trials and tribulations of life. Where can they find safe haven? Paul tells the Romans that through the love of God in Christ Jesus, they will find a Savior whose love they can never be separated from and by whom they will be loved and delivered from all troubles.

A. Read through the entire lesson, writing down phrases or ideas that are unclear for you to do further study.

B. Consult your pastor or minister about your church's position on predestination and its connection with salvation. If there is time and opportunity, invite a person knowledgeable of church doctrine to come in and answer difficult questions about the subject.

O—Open the Lesson

A. Write where the class can see, "How can understanding more about biblical doctrines (teachings) help Christians be more secure in God's love and plan?" Emphasize that although the lesson has difficult words and brings up controversial issues, the goal of today's session is for each student to walk out of the classroom more secure in God's love.

B. Read In Focus and briefly discuss Miriam's situation. Can you recall a similar class? What did you think about Judy's advice?

C. Have one or two students read the Aim for Change and Keep in Mind verse.

P—Present the Scriptures

A. Read silently the Focus Verses. Have the students write down some questions and remind them to focus on God's securing love—not the great debate.

B. Break into groups and discuss The People, Places, and Times; Background; and In Depth.

E—Explore the Meaning

A. Briefly share your personal answers to the Discuss the Meaning, Lesson in Our Society, and Make It Happen.

B. Give a few statements to help the students apply the lesson personally to their lives. Let a few students respond.

N—Next Steps for Application

A. Summarize the lesson.

B. Pray each student will be filled with the comfort that absolutely nothing can separate them from God's love.

Worship Guide

For the Superintendent or Teacher

Theme: Safe in God's Love

Song: "Safe in His Arms"

Devotional Reading: [1 John 4:7–16](#)



Bible Background • [ROMANS 8:28–39](#)



Printed Text • [ROMANS 8:28–39](#) | Devotional Reading • [1 JOHN 4:7–16](#)



Aim for Change



By the end of the lesson, we will: REVIEW the principal points of Paul's teaching on Jesus, from whose love we can never be separated by any turmoil or hardship; BELIEVE that Christ Jesus was God's plan for humankind from the beginning of creation; and COMMUNICATE the joy and love of Christ with others.

In Focus

"Judy, I know you made it through two years of Bible school, but I'm having a hard time."

"What's the matter, Miriam?" her friend asked.

"The class always argues and debates. Every doctrine the teacher brings up seems to have different sides."

"I know. That used to bother me at first, too. I was lost when they started throwing names and terms around."

"How did you deal with it?"

"I reminded them to get practical. You are taking Bible classes to help teach your junior high girls, so ask them, 'How would you break that down to a thirteen year old being bullied?' And the last thing, remember what our youth group leader told us..."

Judy and Miriam laughed and quoted her together, "The Bible is God's love letter to us."

"She was so right," Judy said. "After I listen to all this academic stuff in class, I need to go home and ask God, 'Where is the love?' Everything He says to us in the Bible is wrapped up in God's love."

"Thanks so much for the advice."

As believers we are secure in the love of God through Christ. How does this belief affect our everyday lives?

Keep in Mind

“What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?” ([Romans 8:31](#)).



Focal Verses

KJV

Romans 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.



29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

31 What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?

32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

33 Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.

34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

NLT

Romans 8:28 And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.



29 For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son, so that his Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.

30 And having chosen them, he called them to come to him. And having called them, he gave them right standing with himself. And having given them right standing, he gave them his glory.

31 What shall we say about such wonderful things as these? If God is for us, who can ever be against us?

32 Since he did not spare even his own Son but gave him up for us all, won't he also give us everything else?

33 Who dares accuse us whom God has chosen for his own? No one—for God himself has given us right standing

with himself.

34 Who then will condemn us? No one—for Christ Jesus died for us and was raised to life for us, and he is sitting in the place of honor at God’s right hand, pleading for us.

35 Can anything ever separate us from Christ’s love? Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death?


36 (As the Scriptures say, “For your sake we are killed every day; we are being slaughtered like sheep.”)




37 No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us.

38 And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God’s love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God’s love.

39 No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.


The People, Places, and Times

Firstborn. In this passage, Paul refers to Jesus as the firstborn from the dead—first to die but rise up from the dead and never die again. Jesus as forerunner made the pathway for believers to pass from earth to heaven after death ([John 6:39, 44, 14:4–6](#)). The firstborn is considered extremely valuable and given specific responsibilities, but also special privileges, as God gave to Jesus ([John 5:20, 30](#)). 

God’s elect. All the redeemed whom God by His sovereign initiative has predetermined to set His love and establish an intimate relationship with according to His good pleasure. The term is used in the Old Testament for Israel, and in the New Testament for those whom Christ will gather together at the end of the age to be with Him. Election is based on God’s love and initiative, not on the virtues of the elected; it is purely based on God’s choice. 



Background

The terms foreknowledge and predestination cause a great amount of controversy among Christians. When Paul penned these words, he was not attempting to win a theological argument. Christians during Paul’s time faced extreme opposition. The letter may have been written before the extreme violence to Christians under Nero’s reign (A.D. 54–68).

Paul wanted to lay out truth, without deviation. He wanted the Christian congregation in Rome to know of the certainty of their future state in heaven. Any one of them at any time might face death. The apostle wanted to plant in their mind that those who love God are appointed from on high with a purpose. God has recognized and determined to harmoniously place them in the body of Christ ([Ephesians 4:15–16](#)). 

Paul simply breaks down the progression that leads to the ultimate honor of the saints. He magnifies God’s supreme gift, His Son, to which all other gifts pale in comparison. He notes that none can condemn them for anything because Christ gave His life and He is their eternal security. At the beginning of the church age, the riches of God’s glory laid a sure foundation. Paul leaves no stone unturned to express the inseparable love of God toward those in Christ.

At-A-Glance

1. God Working It Out ([Romans 8:28–30](#))



2. God Sides with Believers (vv. 31–34)

3. God’s Love Is Inseparable (vv. 35–39)

In Depth

1. God Working It Out ([Romans 8:28–30](#))



God is at work behind the scenes. He always used the Christians’ experiences (even negative ones) to draw His children nearer to Him, build godly character, and fulfill His plans and purposes ([Romans 5:3–5](#)).



God knows absolutely everything about all individuals. Before creation, He knew each person’s past, present, and future. His desire and goal is for each person to come to Him and be like Christ ([Philippians 3:21](#)). Those who trust Christ for their salvation become His brothers and sisters. Christ made it possible for Christians to be clean and pure in God’s eyes and made ready for heaven. This group is showered with special advantages. They are given the title “God’s elect,” His called ones.



2. God Sides with Believers (vv. 31–34)

Paul here attempts to explain God’s loving intentions concerning salvation, growth, and final destinations. God’s children should respond by knowing nothing will come up against them that they will not be able to handle because God is powerful and He surrounds and carries them. Believers can go through this life with confidence.

What is our assurance of this? Jesus is the guarantee. God is not deciding whether things will work out for His children based on how well they kept the law or were good, but He declared all believers righteous when Christ died on the Cross. God provides everything needed to live the Christian life ([2 Peter 1:3–4](#)). Only Jesus was given the privilege to sit on the right hand of God ([Romans 8:34](#)). He constantly speaks on the believer’s behalf, because He faced earthly temptations ([Hebrews 2:18](#)). He pleads before the Father concerning His brothers and sisters. The conversation is always free of judgment. He will never point an accusing finger. He assists believers as we stand in a world that opposes God.



3. God’s Love is Inseparable (vv. 35–39)

The New Testament church suffered and withstood horrible persecution. Paul painted a vivid image of the love of God. He wanted all to know that absolutely nothing can pull them apart from His love. Jews were persecuted by the empire, and both Jewish and Christian church members were attacked by the empire and some of the Jews. Many times they went without food and the necessities of life. Some faced torture and death. In spite of this, Paul declared believers to be winners; because of God’s upholding power and love, they overcame ([1 John 4:4](#)).



The apostle offered confident comfort to frail human beings. No earthly or heavenly power can pull them away from God’s compassion and grace—not even the final moments before death, one’s daily irritations and problems, spiritual beings, supreme rulers, a mighty work or miracle, anything on this present earth, or anything that will have to be faced in the future, no present earthly philosophy or profound mystery or anything in creation.

Search the Scriptures

1. How do all things, even the bad events in life, work together for the good of believers ([Romans 8:28](#))?



2. List the things Paul says will never separate Christians from the love of God and use the definitions mentioned in the lesson ([Romans 8:35, 38–39](#)).



Discuss the Meaning

Believers go through many trials in life. In the midst of our suffering, it can be tempting to give up in defeat. How can we be “more than conquerors through Him that loved us”?



Lesson in Our Society

You’ve probably heard the phrase “looking for love in all the wrong places.” People often get tangled up in sexual activities because they are seeking deep friendships and companionship. They hope their relationships will last. However, the end result is often sexually transmitted diseases, broken hearts, or children growing up in homes without two parents. Some of them eventually find God and realize His love is what they were looking for all along.

Make It Happen

God rains His love down on each one of us—not just a gentle sprinkle but buckets full, a heavy shower. But some of us have sheltered ourselves from these drops of love under an umbrella. Read [1 John 4:7–16](#) this week and ask God to help you take down your umbrella.



Follow the Spirit

What God wants me to do.

Remember Your Thoughts

Special insights I have learned.

More Light on the Text

[Romans 8:28–39](#)

28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.



Paul has been explaining how the Spirit of God helps and aids the believer in prayer. Now he transitions into the ultimate goal of the believer’s life. This ultimate goal is the result of all things working together (Gk. *sunergeo*, **su-ner-GEH-oh**) which means to partner together in labor on a common enterprise or project. The partners in this common enterprise are all things. This encompasses the whole of life whether negative or positive. The whole of life works together for good (Gk. *agathos*, **ah-gah-THOS**) which means to have positive or desirable qualities for the thing specified. In this case the thing specified is God’s purpose (Gk. *prothesis*, **prah-thay-SEES**). This word means to set forth and is also used for the shewbread of the tabernacle which was set forth on a dedicated table. The main sense is of planning a future course of action.

29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Here Paul goes further in explaining and elaborating on the purpose of God in the believer’s life. God foreknew (Gk. *proginosko* **pro-ghe-NOHS-koh**). and predestined (Gk. *proorizo*, **proh-oh-REED-zoh**) the believers for this specific purpose. The two words are in conjunction with the purpose God had in mind for believers. To foreknow is be acquainted with beforehand relative to those excluded from the choice. To be predestined is to be determined or arranged ahead of time. The believer’s destiny is already known, ordered, and arranged ahead of time for the specific purpose of being conformed to the image of God’s son. The word conform (Gk. *summorphos*, **soo-MOR-phos**) is to be made into similar essence or representative nature as something else. The end goal of the believer’s existence is

to be made like Christ (1 John 3:2). This will result in Christ being firstborn (Gk. *prototokos*, **pro-toh-TOH-kohs**) or preeminent among the believers and He will relate to them as brothers as they will share the same image (Gk. *eikon*, **AYE-kon**) or likeness.

30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

These verses continue the foundation Paul lays for the believers' assurance of God's working all things together for their good. After he lays out the purpose and shows the end result of the foreknowledge and predestination of the Christian, he goes into the process God takes to get them there. They are predestined, as Paul talks about in verse 29. They are also called (Gk. *kaleo*, **kah-LEH-oh**) or divinely summoned. This call is not the same as the general invitation to obey the Gospel, but it is a divine command that will not fail to be put into effect. This sense of the word *call* can be seen in Romans 4:17. If this were only a general command the argument of Paul concerning God's sovereign care in fulfilling His purpose in the life of the follower of Christ breaks down. It is the certainty of God's action that supports such a claim. Those who are called are also justified, and those who are justified are also glorified (Gk. *doxazo*, **dok-SAHD-zoh**) which means to be recognized and acknowledged for one's nature or attributes. The purpose of God the Father is to have the believer share in the glory of God the Son.

31 What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? 32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

As a result of this knowledge of divine sovereignty, Paul exults in the comfort of knowing God is for His people. He asks and answers his own question, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" The concept of God being for His people runs throughout the Old Testament (Psalm 56:9, 105:12–15; Isaiah 54:17). The uniqueness of Paul's words are that now through the lens of Christ even the hard times are seen as under the sovereign hand of God. Even trials and opposition are placed in our lives to conform us to the image of Christ. God is for us in all things whether good or bad. With that in mind Paul could say nothing and no one is a formidable foe.

Not only that, but God did not spare (Gk. *pheidomai*, **FEYE-doh-my**) His own Son when it came to our good. The word *spare* means to refrain or keep from harm. The sense in this verse is that God did not hold Him back as a treasure. The same word is used in the Septuagint when Joseph tells his family to "regard not your stuff" or not to take their treasured belongings to Egypt (Genesis 45:20). God delivered (Gk. *paradidomi*, **pah-rah-DEE-doe-me**) Him, which means to hand over or to give up. The word is often used for betrayal as in the betrayal of Jesus by Judas (Mark 14:10). It is also used for the Sanhedrin's giving Jesus over to Pilate (Mark 15:1) and for Pilate's giving of Jesus to the will of the Jews in Jerusalem (Luke 23:25) and to the Roman soldiers for crucifixion. In this sense, Paul is showing God was sovereignly superintending the whole of Jesus' death on the Cross. It was God who ordained that Jesus would be crucified for our good since before the creation of the world (Revelation 13:8).

This understanding of God's gracious act in giving Jesus "for us all" is the ground by which Paul asks rhetorically, "How shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" The two words "freely give" (Gk. *charizomai*, **khah-REED-zoh-my**) are actually one word in Greek. It means to give as a sign of one's goodwill toward another. Paul emphatically states that when we see what God has done in Christ, we can be assured that God has goodwill towards us.

33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. 34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

The argument continues as Paul lays out the reasons one may disbelieve God's goodwill towards His people. He proceeds with legal terminology and asks "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" The phrase "lay anything to the charge" (Gk. *enkaleo*, **en-kah-LEH-oh**) means to accuse or file a formal legal complaint against

someone. The answer for Paul is obviously no. It is God who “justifieth” (Gk. *dikaioo*, **dee-keye-OH-oh**) or who makes or pronounces one as righteous.

There is no one to condemn (Gk. *katakrino*, **kah-tah-KREE-no**) the believer. The word condemn means to pronounce guilt for a crime and punishment for the crime in a legal context. Paul’s answer to the question of “Who is he that condemneth?” is the work of Christ. This work is not limited to Jesus’ death and resurrection but also continues as Jesus is at the right hand of God making intercession (Gk. *entunchano*, **en-toon-KHAH-no**) for us. To make intercession or intercede is to petition an authority on behalf of someone else. It is Christ who speaks to God on behalf of the Christian. The believer’s confidence that God hears him and he is no longer condemned is assured by the righteousness of Christ.

35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. 37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

Next the question is asked of possible separation from the love of Christ. The different earthly woes of God’s people are listed. Tribulation (Gk. *thlipsis*, **THLEEP-sees**) is the first of the problems listed. This word comes from *thlibo*, which means to press or squash and metaphorically has the sense of oppression or affliction. The next word is distress (Gk. *stenochoria*, **ste-no-kho-REE-ah**) which has the sense of being in constricted conditions. In some languages it can be expressed as the world falling down on someone. The third problem is persecution (Gk. *diogmos*, **dee-og-MOHS**) which is the systematic hunting down of believers for torture and execution in the effort to destroy the religion. This would be a real threat especially as Paul faced much persecution in his lifetime. Famine is the shortage of food resulting in acute hunger and death. The word for nakedness is *gumnotes* (Gk. **goom-NAH-tays**) which in this context means insufficient clothing and not total exposure. Peril (Gk. *kindunos*, **KEEN-doo-nohs**) is to be in danger from any circumstance. Paul used this word in reference to his being in danger as an apostle ([2 Corinthians 11:26](#)). The believer also faces the reality of the sword (Gk. *machaira*, **mah-KHEYE-rah**), which is the word for the small sword as opposed to a large one. This designation has caused some to question whether Paul has in mind the official “sword” of the state. However, this word is also used in [Romans 13:4](#) in connection with the authority of the state to punish. Here Paul may have been drawing up the image of official state execution. The general sense is that the believers face death at any moment.

Paul then quotes from [Psalm 44:22](#). This psalm was often quoted by second-century rabbis with martyrdom in view and Paul may have had this in view here. In contrast to this dismal fate, there is triumph and hope in the verse 37. Although the Christian’s life is similar to being a sheep prepared for the slaughter, Paul says this is not the whole of the story. Believers are more than conquerors through Christ. The KJV translates the Greek as “we are more than conquerors.” The Greek is a single word, with the basic verb for conquering intensified by a prefix (*huper*, **hoo-PAIR**) that tells the church this will be no normal victory. It will be the ultimate victory (*hupernikao*, **hoo-per-ni-KAH-oh**). To think of ultimate victory as persecuted subjects only magnifies the power of God to reward the faithful.

38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Paul is totally convinced. Nothing physical, social, or spiritual can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. Paul speaks of items in the three categories which would have the capacity for separating us from God’s love. Paul summarizes these, noting the opposites: life nor death, heights nor depths, things present or things to come with all of their abilities to frighten, paralyze, or make us turn away. None of these can separate us from the love of God.

Say It Correctly

Predestinate. pree-DES-ti-nate.

Principality. prin-si-PAL-i-tee.

Daily Bible Readings

MONDAY

Safe in Evil Times
([Psalm 12](#))



TUESDAY

God's Safety and Care
([Ezekiel 39:25–29](#))



WEDNESDAY

Living Safely
([Proverbs 28:18–20, 26-27](#))



THURSDAY

Living Steadfastly
([2 Thessalonians 3:1–5](#))



FRIDAY

God Is Truth
([1 John 5:13, 18–21](#))



SATURDAY

God Is Love
([1 John 4:7–16](#))



SUNDAY

Safe in God's Love
([Romans 8:28–39](#))

