

Life in the Spirit
Romans 8:26-28

²⁶ Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. ²⁷ And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. ²⁸ And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

—Romans 8:26-28 (ESV)

Context

What is *a*, if not *the*, major theme of Romans 8? Life in the Spirit!

There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because the “law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.”

“Those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit.”

“You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.”

“For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.”

“The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs.”

v 20 – “Likewise...”

This passage is a continuation of the same theme: life in the Spirit and the Spirit’s ministry to us. It is not a new topic.

The Spirit helps us in our weakness...

In our true weakness—not, perhaps, in what first comes to our minds as our “weakness.”

We are weak **in prayer!**

We are weak in prayer for others and prayer for ourselves.

We are weak in knowing the mind of God, weak in knowing how to pray according to God’s will, weak in our vision, weak in our priorities, weak in our wisdom.

Because we are weak in prayer, we are weak in our effectiveness in the world for the sake of Christ.

We are weak in our stamina in prayer, weak in our persistence, weak in our faith.

We are weak in our love, weak in our caring, weak in our longing for God’s kingdom and His glory.

But the Spirit *not* weak! He is all-powerful, and He helps us in our weakness.

We must learn to allow the Spirit to help us in our prayers.

He intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.

Sometimes we search too much for the right words when we should depend upon the help of the Spirit—who may not use words!

He intercedes for us, meaning:

He intercedes on our behalf—we who belong to Christ, have been purchased by His blood, and who has given us the gift of His Spirit.

He intercedes through us for the needs of others. Here, possibly, we need even more help than in prayers for ourselves.

v 27 – And he who is searching [pp] hearts...

God is searching our hearts—and the hearts of all people
Man looks at outward appearance, God looks at the heart
We must seek and pray for hearts that are open and without deceit
No one can fool God who may have outward deeds but has a wicked, deceitful heart.

“knows what is the mind of the Spirit” means that God is in full awareness and agreement

“The Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.”

God has a will for you, and there is no “downside” to His will. The only downside is not being in His will!

There may be difficulties—even evils that God permits—but they are not a “downside.” Nothing is outside of God’s power and sovereignty.

We must earnestly seek the will of God in prayer—for ourselves and for others.

If prayer did not matter, there would be no need for it—let alone a need for the Spirit to help us with groanings and intercession.

Things do not work out the same whether there is prayer or not.

Prayer matters. Prayer determines. Prayer that is according to God’s will receives answers. “The effective prayer of a righteous man avails much!”

“And we know....”

This is a continuation on the same theme—Life in the Spirit

Saved by God, filled with His Spirit, walking by the Spirit, setting our minds on the things of the Spirit, helped in prayer by the Spirit...

For those loving God

This is not a “test” clause, it is a clause of identification for Paul’s hearers—an encouragement to those who are loving God

For those who are loving God, who are walking in His Spirit, helped by His Spirit, praying in the Spirit—again, not “tests,” but a reassuring identification

God works all things together for God

God does it! It is not fate, it is not the result of optimism or positive thinking: God does it for those who are His!

“All things” means all things. All things are not good (clearly), but God works them for good.

To those called according to His purpose

This is who we are!

We are called according to the purposes of God, not according to our own purposes.

God has eternal purposes for you.

You are so valuable to Him, that Jesus died to redeem us.

We will not always see the fulfillment of this promise in our earthly life.

God’s purposes stretch into eternity

But “we know” that this is true. By faith!

This is God’s work, God’s purposes—He is doing it—and His purposes for us will be fulfilled by Him.