



HOLY SPIRIT - ROMANS 8:26-27

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²⁶Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. ²⁷Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

In [Romans 8:22-26](#), there are three specific “groanings” that are mentioned and are all in the present tense. I.e., the “groanings” are something that can easily be happening right now. Creation is groaning, the believer is groaning, and the Holy Spirit is groaning. It is specifically referring to a condition that is painful, unsatisfying, and one that is creating sorrow in the individual’s heart. Just like the cry of the Israelites in Egypt, it is a cry for deliverance. For the Christian, the groaning is referring to the internal pain and sorrow that they feel because they live in a body that causes them to still stumble and sin and grieve the Holy Spirit. In all honesty, the groaning is more painful to those who are more deeply committed to Christ. Why? It is because they know that they have been shown great mercy and given grace to live in a way that honors Christ. It carries with it a kind of pain and sorrow for not doing what someone knows to be right and they want deliverance from that. Once again all of this continues to reflect on the believer’s eternal security. It really is a good thing for a believer to have this internal dissatisfaction and disappointment and frustration. Why? It is because it is a reflection that they are experiencing the work of the Holy Spirit within their life. Obviously an unbeliever may experience the same kind of dissatisfaction and disappointment, but not for the same reason.

What these verses teach is that creation wants a change and that believers want a change as well. There are some things that every believer would change if they could, but they simply cannot. They cannot change the flesh and they cannot change the corrupting influence that it is constantly trying to exercise over them. They cannot change the deceitful nature of sin or the enemy’s temptations. They cannot change the disappointment, the regret, and the frustration that is caused when they yield to the flesh. For a committed Christian, these are very real internal feelings, and they weigh on the individual’s heart, they hurt, they wound, and they upset the believer. Any sincere and committed Christian resents sin and resents its intrusion into their life. Paul expressed some of this in [2 Corinthians 5:1-4](#) when he said,

¹For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. ²For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, ³if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. ⁴For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life.

Every sincere believer is burdened and tired and weary of always having to deal with sin in their life and of always having to fight, resist, and weather the temptations. And the deeper their sanctification and growth in the things of God, the deeper will be their sense of this indwelling corruption, and therefore the greater their groaning because of it.



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The spiritual conflict seems easy to understand both doctrinally and practically. On one side there is the flesh. It is never Godward. However, on the other side of the dilemma there is the indwelling Holy Spirit, and His direction is always Godward. So, the flesh and the Holy Spirit are always in conflict with each other. [Galatians 5:17](#) says,

¹⁷For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish

So, it must be understood that the Holy Spirit is the One who actually creates this dissatisfaction and this burden and this discomfort within the believer's life regarding sin. It is His holy and righteous presence in the believer's life that makes them uncomfortable with sin – and to that we say “Thank goodness!” His work within every believer is that of creating holy desires, righteous desires, and godly longings. He leads into righteousness, holiness, and godliness, and now as believers we know what those things are. The Christian now understands what pleases God and what displeases Him. They understand what sin is and how much of an affront it is to a holy God, and the Holy Spirit is the One who is doing that work within them. In essence it is this affirming that creates the tension with sin that troubles the believer and disturbs them when they yield their lives to that sin. Deep inside each believer knows that they are grieving the Holy Spirit who indwells them and that the glory of God within them is being diminished. No wonder a sincere and committed Christian groans.

Now, the question that has to be asked is what is it that the believer actually desires in all of this? Paul states in v23 what it is – we are “**eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body**”. It is the “**redemption of our body**” for which we are looking. The word “**redemption**” is “*apolutrosis*” and it refers to the payment of a ransom to buy back and deliver someone from a circumstance from which they are powerless to liberate themselves or from an imposed penalty which they could never repay. The word was used in Greek writings describing the liberation of prisoners of war, slaves, and those who were under the penalty of death. They had no power to deliver themselves.

Now, it does not say that the believer is longing for the redemption of their souls or for the redemption of their spirits. They already possess those things. They have already been saved and given a new nature. However, **this new nature is incarcerated in a sinful body** – and that is the problem. Until the believer's body is redeemed, it will remain prone to sin, prone to sickness, prone to pain, prone to hurt, prone to death, prone to failure, and prone to continuing disappointment. By experience alone, every believer knows that, understands that, and in reality it is the very criticism that non-Christians level at believers. They say,

“You call yourself a Christian, but look at how you live, look at how you talk, look at the sinful things that you have done. You are no better than we are.”

So, even though the believer's spirits has been redeemed, their bodies are still waiting for redemption and for deliverance.

Now, someone is going to ask what our new bodies will actually be like. [Philippians 3:20-21](#) states that believers will indeed be given new bodies and that those bodies will be like the body of Christ, or the body of the resurrected Christ.



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²⁰For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

[1 Corinthians 15:35ff](#) gives an extensive commentary on the kind of new body that believers will one day receive and it says that it will be like that of Christ. [Romans 6:5](#) says the same thing in a little different way,

⁵For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection,

One issue that needs to be clearly addressed is the false idea that a Christian can have two natures. That is simply not an accurate theological or doctrinal position. Believers are new creations and they have a new spirit. Unfortunately that new spirit is still incarcerated in an old body. [Romans 6:6](#) reiterates that the “old man” is dead.

⁶knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin

In [Romans 6:12](#) believers are encouraged with these words,

¹²Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts.

I.e., sin reigns in the believer’s body. Their spirits have been fully redeemed, but the conflict with their body remains. [Romans 6:13](#) reiterates the same truth,

¹³And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

In [Romans 7:18a](#), Paul says this,

¹⁸For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells;...

Believers do not have two natures any more than a dog can simultaneously have the nature of a cat. Two distinct and different natures cannot exist in one entity at the same time. The accurate way to describe the issue doctrinally is that believers have a redeemed spirit living in an unredeemed body. Believers are a new creation in an old body – and that is where the conflict occurs and from what they are longing to be delivered. The believer’s body will always have appetites, desires, impulses, and sinful longings that are contrary to the will of God for their lives – and unfortunately no believer will ever receive a full rest from it until their bodies are redeemed. They will grow in their victory over their sinful body, but the conflict will never be fully removed. As long as believers have an earthly body they will always have struggles. That is exactly why all believers continue to groan. It is because they are tired of the battle, tired of the fatigue, weary from the struggle. They know what awaits them and for that they are longing.

No wonder all of this is veiled to the world. No wonder they may not be able to see Christ in believers. To be quite honest, no unbeliever really understand about this fullness that will one day be the



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believer's. When Christ came the first time, there He was in what could be called "perfect humanity", and yet even in that state the world did not recognize Him. They still just saw a man. They called Him a fake, a traitor, a liar, a blasphemer, and One who was operating by the power of the devil himself. Why? It was because in bodily form He just appeared to be like everyone else. However, the moment He was resurrected and given His redeemed body, everyone could see and understand and know exactly who He was. The same will be true of all believers at the Second Coming. There will be no question at the Revelation and at the unveiling of the sons of God that occurs at the Second Coming.

One day the believer's body will be transformed to be like that of Christ. They will be glorified and changed by the Holy Spirit and those same bodies will become immortal and incorruptible. However, right now the Holy Spirit is content to just be changing the believer in their inner man. Very often the suffering and struggling and pain that believers experience are the very tools that the Holy Spirit uses to help conform them to the image of Christ. As Paul states in [Romans 8:28](#),

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

Now, [Romans 8:26-27](#) speaks specifically to the groaning of the Holy Spirit and His praying for the believer. In introducing these two verses, it needs to be understood that not only does the God the Holy Spirit pray for the believer, but Jesus Christ also prays for them as well. It is important to appreciate what all of that means for the believer in the big picture of [Romans 8](#). [Hebrews 7:25](#), speaking of the ministry of Christ for believers, says this,

²⁵Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

Once again, everything in [Romans 8](#) is ultimately related to the doctrine of eternal security. There will never be a moment in the believer's life where any sin that they have committed will be held against them in such a way that it somehow causes them to forfeit the salvation that God has given to them. That is one of the greatest and most profound truths that a Christian can ever know. Why? It is because each believer fully knows that sin still remains in their life after they are saved. Do they still continually fail and stumble and sin against God in our life? Sure they do. But the work of God in salvation, the work of Christ in salvation, and the work of the Holy Spirit in salvation all **guarantee** the believer's salvation, and ultimately guarantee that "**nothing can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus**". The word "**nothing**" clearly includes the believer's sins. Each believer will be presented both "**faultless**" and "**blameless**" at the throne of God. [Colossians 1:21-22](#) confirms this simple, yet profound truth.

²¹And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled ²²in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight.

[Jude 24](#) says,



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²⁴Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.

The word “**blameless**” is the Greek word “*amōmos*”, and it is composed of the negative particle “*a*” and the word “*mos*” which means blemish. So, literally it translates as no blemish, or unblemished. It also carries with it the idea of being faultless, or with no faults, and that is why it is translated as “**faultless**” in Jude, even though it is still the word “*amōmos*”. In [Jude 24](#), the NASB and ESV translates “**faultless**” as “**blameless**”. The Amplified, ASV and RSV translate it as “**unblemished**” or “**without blemish**”– which is probably the most accurate of all. And that is exactly how they will be presented to God. Christ is praying for that, and the Holy Spirit is praying for that as well. Speaking of the work of Christ on the believer’s behalf in this matter, [1 Corinthians 1:8-9](#) says,

⁸who will also confirm you to the end, that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

So, they will be brought to the end without blemish, without fault, blameless before God. It cannot be any better than that for the believer – and each believer needs to deeply appreciate this incredible work of God on their behalf. To make it even more remarkable, one of the major works of God on the Christian’s behalf is that of protecting them from the incredible assaults of Satan against them that might somehow destroy their faith. That specific truth is often referred to as the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, or the doctrine of eternal security. It is the work of God preserving His children and demonstrating that by giving them the grace to persevere in the faith – even when they are prone to fail and waver in that faith.

It is the Holy Spirit of God who at this very moment is sustaining, keeping, guarding, protecting, defending, shielding, and watching over the life of each believer. It is God who is sustaining and keeping each one. If this protection was left up to Christians, each would be a dismal failure and a miserable disappointment. Without the Holy Spirit’s sustaining influence in the believer’s life, they would just spiritually collapse and morally disintegrate. In and of their own resources, absolutely no one is a match whatsoever for the world, the flesh, or the devil. However, with the interceding Christ and the indwelling and interceding Holy Spirit, the enemy can never remove or destroy the believer’s salvation.

Once again, salvation is all of God. Believers have been saved in the past – **justification**; they are being saved in the present – **sanctification**; and they will be saved in the future – **glorification**. Once they have been saved, the work of God in their life guarantees that they will be brought to glory. It is all of God. Every member of the Trinity has a part in sustaining, keeping, and protecting this great salvation. [2 Corinthians 1:21-22](#) says,

²¹Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, ²²who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

All three members of the Godhead are mentioned there. Because the Triune God is fully involved in every aspect of the believer’s salvation, there is nothing that can ultimately overwhelm and defeat the



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salvation that God has given to them. In reality, the Christian's personal faith may be defeated at times simply because they are still clothed in an unredeemed body. They may yield to sin, they may give up, they may fail miserably, they may be discouraged, and they may want to quit. Scripture states that some days are just what it calls an "evil day". [Ephesians 6:13](#) says,

¹³Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

However, ultimately, finally, and in the end, nothing can overpower, engulf, or devastate the salvation that God has provided. It is an eternal salvation. **The very faith to believe in God is a gift from God.** [Ephesians 2:8-9](#), the classic passage on this, says it this way,

⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, ⁹not of works, lest anyone should boast.

What is the "gift of God"? **It is the faith that eternally saves!** What a gift! It is a faith that God has given to believers, a faith that God has implanted within them, a supernatural faith that He has produced within them, and a faith that He used to bring each one to Himself. It is all of God – always, all of God. In the final analysis, there is absolutely no charge that the enemy can bring against a believer that will stand. [Romans 8:31-35](#) says,

³¹What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³²He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? ³³Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.

There is not one single argument that Satan, or anyone else for that matter, can bring before God that will somehow convince Him that He needs to remove or annul a believer's salvation. There is nothing that Satan can do to rescind a believer's salvation, and there is nothing that the believer can do to lose their salvation.

So far it has been clearly seen all the way through [Romans 8](#) that these verses are a treatise on the believer's eternal security. It seems that almost every verse in some way or another confirms that the believer is secure in Christ, and obviously, one of the major elements of this security is the on-going work of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life. His ministry in them, to them, and for them is so extensive in this chapter, and it is this ongoing ministry of the Holy Spirit within the believer that helps to validate and solidify the believer's eternal security.

The creation groans, believers groan, and now the Scriptures declare that the Holy Spirit actually groans as well. The picture here is that believers are groaning for the redemption of their bodies. Each should understand too well the impact of sin in their life. They should clearly understand the ongoing battle that they have with sin. They should understand the very deceptive nature of sin. They understand how often they fail and succumb to sin, and so the ultimate desire is to just want to be delivered from this place of struggle. It is a very legitimate and even God given desire. One of the



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most important truths to appreciate, however, is that the Holy Spirit fully understands how the believer actually feels and He too desires that they be redeemed – and so **He groans as well.**

At a very personal level, I am very grateful that God does discipline us and that God does not discipline us. What do I mean by that? Well, whenever we continue in sin against God, whenever we remain outside of His boundaries, and whenever we may subtly forsake Him in our life, the Holy Spirit is there to both **convict** us of sin and to **chasten** us of sin. His conviction comes first, and if we do not respond to that conviction then He is forced to chasten us. Previously we have seen that if someone can just live in defiance and indifference to God's Word and never experience God's chastening, what that means is that the individual is not actually saved. **Hebrews 12:7-8** states it this way,

⁷If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? ⁸But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons.

Chastening or the lack thereof is such a clear and unmistakable evidence of whether or not an individual is actually saved.

On the other hand, we are grateful that God does not actually discipline us everytime that we do fail. I am sure that if that were the case, that every day would just be totally miserable for every believer. The Holy Spirit simply understands and recognizes the ongoing battle that every believer has with sin in their life. In **Romans 7:24**, Paul stated it this way,

²⁴O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?

We all know exactly what Paul was experiencing and how he felt. However it is important to see that the Holy Spirit did not say to him that he needed to either shape up or be shipped out. To the contrary, He told Paul in **Romans 8:1** that there is "**no condemnation**" to those who are in Christ Jesus. He understands and He makes provision in every believer's life accordingly for them to be victorious over sin. Thank goodness He is patient, understanding, and longsuffering even when believers willfully disobey. So, He does discipline us and yet He does not discipline us even when He could and be justified in it. The Holy Spirit is there to help and to strengthen the believer in their conflicts and in their battle with sin, the world, and the devil. In John MacArthur's commentary he uses the example of Peter in **Luke 22:31-32**,

³¹And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. ³²But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren."

What an encouragement. The devil wanted to sift Peter like wheat, but Christ had prayed for him and would be there sustaining him during the trial and temptation that would be forthcoming. In like manner, the Holy Spirit is there for believers as well. There will be times in a believer's life that are much more difficult than at other times. There will be periods of testing and periods of strong spiritual trials, but in all of that the Holy Spirit is there to help and provide His strength.



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So, why is the Holy Spirit groaning? It is because of this ongoing work of His where He has been given the task of bringing our salvation to completion and of presenting each believer to God as a bride without blemish. He is the One who sanctifies, sustains, and keeps us – and a part of that is this groaning for us. By its very nature, it is a very deep and profound groaning. It is one that is never heard and one that is never realized unless this passage of Scripture has been read. It is a continual groaning and a continual work of God on the believer's behalf. Once again, [Romans 8:26](#) says,

²⁶Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

It is all there. He understands that we are weak, that we have spiritual “**weaknesses**”, but notice that what the Holy Spirit does is to “**help**” us in those “**weaknesses**”. The word “**helps**” is the Greek word “*sunantilambanomai*” from “*sun*” which means together and “*antilambano*” which means to support. I.e., it means to take hold of anything with another, to take part in his burden or work, and thus to give help. It speaks of someone coming to another's aid by taking hold of the load and the burden that person is carrying and helping them carry it. The person helping does not take the entire load, but he helps the other person in his endeavor and makes the load lighter. That is an absolutely great picture of what the Holy Spirit does in the believer's life. He comes alongside of the believer and strengthens him and helps him to make it through something difficult, but the Holy Spirit does not do it all for the believer.

The word “**weaknesses**” refers to a spiritual feebleness and frailty. It comes from a word that literally means to be without strength and to be impotent. It refers to someone who has a lack of strength and courage in the face of trials and someone who seems to have difficulty in standing for Christ. It is a word that is repeatedly linked in the New Testament to illness and sickness. The “**weaknesses**” in this passage, however, are not physical weaknesses and infirmities, but spiritual weaknesses. [Hebrews 4:15](#) uses the same word when it says,

¹⁵For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.

Now, every believer can identify with this issue of spiritual weaknesses, but it is important not to miss the specific weakness that Paul is speaking about in this passage. Notice what v26 says,

²⁶Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

One of the specific “**weaknesses**” here is not just a general spiritual weakness, even though that certainly does apply, but it is a weakness in the believer's ability to pray as they ought to pray. The weakness spoken of here is defined by the context which speaks of prayer. One of the things in the spiritual realm in which the believer's weakness needs God's power is certainly in the issue of prayer. These “**weaknesses**” are very spiritual in nature and include the specific inability of a Christian to know that for which they should actually pray. [Romans 8:27](#) says that when that happens, when a



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believer does not know how to really pray in a manner that God wants them to pray, that the Holy Spirit makes intercession for them with groanings that cannot even be uttered.

...He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

He prays for the believer exactly for that which they need to be prayed. There is great comfort in this profound truth. Too often prayers are weak, feeble, and lack understanding and perspective on exactly how God may want the individual to pray. However, at that moment, as the believer is sincerely and earnestly seeking God for His perfect will in their life, the Holy Spirit comes along side of them and begins to pray for them exactly as God would want them to pray. He prays exactly what God the Father would want to be prayed, or as Paul says here **“according to the will of God”**.

The problem that most every Christian faces in this area is that they are weak in their ability to know what they should ask or how they should specifically pray. There is just a lot about both the present and the future that cannot be known, and so prayers are often off target. At that moment, the Holy Spirit intercedes for the believer **“according to the will of God”**. My personal opinion is that this is not something that necessarily happens every day. It could, and I would not argue against that at all. Some days are just better than others. However, there are those very difficult and trying times in a person’s life, those times when they find themselves in despair, those times when they are losing heart, and those times when they seem to be without strength. It is then, at that moment of spiritual weakness in their life and at that moment when they could fail miserably and do things that would be spiritually inappropriate. It is then that the Holy Spirit most likely comes along side to help.

There are things that happen to all of us that have the ability and power to literally crush us spiritually and if possible to devastate our spiritual lives. That is the enemy’s plan – to destroy, to defeat, and to hurt. However, it is in the very midst of that in which the Holy Spirit **“helps”** the believer. He is there praying when the believer cannot see what is taking place and when they do not even know what to pray if they knew. All of us can look back on some difficult times in our lives when we had no idea how things would turn out for our good, but now as we look back we can see the great hand of God in all that happened, and rather than being defeated by all that happened, we were strengthened, encouraged, helped, and ultimately more conformed into the very image of Christ Himself.

At a personal level, often times I wonder why some of us are not just spiritual ruins and spiritual wrecks because of some of the debilitating circumstances that have confronted our lives. I wonder why our faith was not just annihilated, and all of our reason removed, and all of our hope literally extinguished by the trials. I wonder how through all of those times we remained serene and secure and at peace – even when things surrounding our life were dark and hopeless. I wonder why our heart was not overwhelmed and our confidence in God not destroyed. I wonder how we found a place of refuge in just one simple verse, or by one simple message, or just by a simple phone call from someone who loved us and encouraged us. Do we want to know why? It was because of the silent, invisible, strengthening, supernatural work of the Holy Spirit praying for us according to the will of God and that our faith would not fail! It was for us, but not because of anything that we may have done. The Holy Spirit rescued us and placed His sovereign, omnipotent power around our life, and He went to battle



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against all of the forces of hell that were raised against us. And He sustained us, and He kept us, and He delivered us – **and we did not even know it!** He shared in our weakness and took some of our load, and He, just like Christ, bore a burden that we could not bear. He lightened the pressure, He eased the grief, and He strengthened the spiritual weakness. It was the Holy Spirit who helped us, and even though we grieved Him and wounded Him and slighted Him a thousand times over, yet when we needed Him the most – there He was. He drew near when our trial and struggle bowed us to the earth. He drew near when in our despair we questioned His goodness and His love for us. Just like the Good Samaritan, He came along side of us when we were wounded and poured His healing ointment on our life and wrapped His loving and everlasting arms around us. We cannot find any greater love than what He has given to us. He is the very “**Spirit of Christ**”.

Once again, most believers simply do not know what they really should be praying for. They just do not know. No one can see even one minute ahead in their life. No one has any idea as to what tomorrow may bring. At times all believers make themselves to sound much more spiritual than they are, much more committed than they really are, much more in prayer that they really are, and much more in love with Christ and His church than they really are. So we come to the throne of grace with that illusion. No wonder many believers do not know how to pray as they ought. [Hebrews 7:25](#) says,

²⁵Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

God is able to save to the very limits. All the way from eternity past to the moment in which God called the sinner and they were saved to that time when they will pass into the eternal state and beyond – that is what being saved “**to the uttermost**” means. So, how is all of that accomplished? It is because Christ as our great high priest is making intercession for us, and the Holy Spirit is making intercession for us, and the very gates of hell cannot and will not prevail over our lives.

What should believers really pray for if they do not know how to really pray? Well, they should pray for wisdom, for understanding, and for possession of the very mind of the Spirit. They should pray earnestly that they would know the will of God and be more than willing to yield themselves to that will. They should pray that more and more they would give their lives to Christ and lay aside all of the earthly pursuits and treasures that will eventually all pass away. They should pray that the Holy Spirit would make them receptive to His will so that He can lead, guide, and help them. As much as anything, believers should pray that they would be conformed more and more to the very image of Christ Himself. Believers should pray that they would grow in their prayer life and that those prayers would be more fervent and more earnest and more sincere and more spiritual than ever before in their life.

If Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are not praying for someone, then they will never make it to glory. They will never see the heavenly Jerusalem, they will never partake of His wedding supper, and they will never receive a redeemed body. All of the very forces of hell itself are arrayed against them and will prevail. It is a spiritual warfare that they cannot perceive, and one that they cannot fully understand. However, be assured that once the sinner has become a part of God’s family, Christ the



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Son and the Holy Spirit are interceding for them with groanings that cannot be uttered and they will be brought safe into the very presence of God Himself, and that without condemnation.

The truth of the matter is that believers simply do not know how to pray as they ought. They certainly do not have a crystal ball to see what the future holds, and most people have enough problems just dealing with the present. Most people are always praying for things to work out for their benefit and for their blessing. They pray that they will not have any suffering or any pain or anything unpleasant happen in their life. They pray that they will always be well and healed of every sickness. They pray that life will not be difficult and threatening in any way and that all of their problems will be solved very quickly and painlessly. That is how many believers pray.

Once again it is important to understand that in the big picture that believers are very secure – even when things do not turn out as they may want them to turn out. Why are they secure? It is because of this ongoing intercession by the Holy Spirit and by Christ. [Hebrews 1:3](#) says that Christ is “**upholding all things by the word of His power**”. Everything is being upheld and undergirded by Christ. At this point, however, it is critical to understand one very important point. It is **not** the believer’s prayers that make the crucial difference, but the intercession of Christ and the Holy Spirit that make the difference. Some Christians rarely if ever pray, but in the end they will be delivered into eternity safe and without blame. Why? It is because of the intercession of Christ and the Holy Spirit. It is not that Christ just died on the cross and went back to heaven and is now just passively watching all of these redemptive and saving activities unfold - not at all. To the extreme contrary, both Christ and the Holy Spirit are working to uphold all things that are redemptive in nature, all things that are declared in Scripture to take place, and all things that are necessary to bring every believer to their God guaranteed and glorified salvation. The believer could never do that on their own.

As a Christian, I am incredibly thankful that my eternal security, protection, and salvation in Christ do **NOT** depend on me or my prayers. Thank God that they do not depend on me. In and of ourselves, we have absolutely no power to cause anything to happen – none whatsoever. What can believers make happen? We could never overcome our sinfulness, we could never defeat temptation, we could never defeat the devil, we could never cause all things to work together for good, we could never keep ourselves spiritually strong, and we could never bring ourselves to glory – never! That is exactly why every believer needs this incredible work and ministry of the Holy Spirit on their behalf.

Now, exactly what is this thing that Scripture calls “**intercession**”? The NIV, NASB, and ESV all use the word “**intercedes**”. What does this particular Greek word actually mean when it says that the Holy Spirit “**intercedes**” for someone? This is a very, very interesting Greek word. It is a multiple compound word “*huperentunchano*” and it begins with two prepositions (“*huper*” and “*en*”) and then there is the verb. When a Greek word has a preposition before it, the preposition is the Greek way of strengthening and intensifying the verb. However this word has two prepositions before it and that doubly intensifies the meaning. The verb form of the word simply means to entreat and to intercede on behalf of someone else. Just the verb itself means **to plead** for someone. In fact, the verb is the word translated “**plead**” in the New Testament. However when the prepositions are added, this particular word becomes a very intense, powerful, passionate, and forceful intercession. If I can say it this way,



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it becomes more than just a prayer. It is much, much more than just making a request. It is a powerful, intense, passionate intercession. In the [Romans 8](#) context, the word means to rescue someone who finds themselves in trouble and has no resources, no means, and no power to escape the trouble that they are in. This should provide a whole different understanding of the conflict that is occurring because the word carries the idea of saving someone from a situation that would otherwise cause them to be lost. Several years ago a young lady in our church got unexpectedly caught in the powerful, dangerous, and often deadly undertow at Edisto Beach. If two or three other people had not gone out to rescue her, she very well may have drowned. She found herself in a situation over which she had no personal power to overcome. Honestly, she did not know and recognize that the undertow was even there until it was too late.

Now, that is the same idea here with this Greek word regarding “**intercession**”. The Holy Spirit has a continual, constant, and ongoing ministry where He comes to the believer’s personal rescue and where He intercedes for them in such a way that they are actually rescued from dangers and situations that for the most part they may not even know actually exist. This is utterly staggering! Notice once again how this is written. It says “**but the Spirit Himself makes intercession**”. It is the “**Spirit Himself**” doing this for the believer. Please notice that these are “**groanings which cannot be uttered**”. These are not “**groanings**” which are uttered, but are groanings that “**cannot be uttered**”. What the Scripture is profoundly declaring here is that the Holy Spirit is praying for believers in a way that they could never pray and in a way that they could never “**utter**”.

The idea is that the Holy Spirit understands all of the believer’s spiritual needs and understands the weaknesses and frailties that are an inherent part of their makeup. He understands the struggle that they all have with sin, with the flesh, and especially with the enemy. However, He also understands that with all of those inherent issues that the believer simply does not have enough insight into them to really pray for themselves effectively. In some way this is one of the reasons why at times it seems like such a battle to actually pray and intercede, but in spite of all of the obstacles and the spiritual hindrances and hurdles that the believer has to overcome, the Holy Spirit knows and fully understands their dilemma, and He longs with great intensity for them to be conformed to the image of Christ. So He intercedes for them in a profound spiritual way – a way that the believer neither sees or knows about other than this single verse. The Holy Spirit is not just grunting here as if He does not know what to pray. To the contrary, this is **an intense spiritual intercession**, and it is something that He is doing constantly. When the Holy Spirit prays for believers, God the Father answers. The verb for “**making intercession**” is in the present tense, active voice which means that it is a constant activity that the Holy Spirit is personally performing for us.

In [John 17:15 and 24](#), Jesus in His high priestly prayer for His disciples and for future believers prays this,

¹⁵**I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one.**



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²⁴“Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.

Why would He pray that if the believer could do that? Well, it really is very simple. He knew that believers could not keep themselves from the evil one and that God the Father and the Holy Spirit were the only Ones who could ultimately bring them into Christ’s very presence. No wonder believers are secure. No wonder they cannot lose their salvation. No wonder they will be brought to glory.

Now, any believer at any given time can become weak in faith. They can become discouraged, disillusioned, and disappointed. At times they may even become cynical, skeptical, or pessimistic in their faith. However, even if those things occur, what these verses are indicating is that the Holy Spirit understands what is happening to the believer and His intercession for them is more than powerful and effective enough to not allow anything to destroy their faith in God or God’s commitment to them. Both Christ and the Holy Spirit are interceding to the Father on the believer’s behalf and their prayers are ALWAYS and ETERNALLY effective on their behalf. What can we say? This is the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints. This is really staggering to me personally that nothing in this world or in the unseen world is strong enough to ultimately destroy the very faith that God has given to a believer or strong enough to destroy the plans that God has prepared for them. This is really a staggering truth.

The only way that someone could ever be lost to God and not make it from justification to glorification would be if Christ was dethroned and could no longer sit at the right hand of God making intercession for them, and if the Spirit of God was put out of action and could no longer cry out with these Trinitarian groanings before God on **their** behalf. **The good news is that neither one of those things are even possible.** The believer’s salvation is absolutely secure forever, and they should be as grateful for that as they can possibly be. Both Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, at the same time, are working in and for the believer in order to bring about the perfect will of God in a sustained, strenuous, but guaranteed effort. They are the guarantee of the end result – not me, not you, not our faithfulness, not our love, not our works, not our anything! So when someone comes along and says that a believer can lose their salvation, he is speaking against the interceding work of Christ and the interceding work of the Holy Spirit. What he is ultimately saying is that the believer’s sin is greater than the work and ministry of God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. In reality, that is dangerously close to spiritual blasphemy. It is like calling God a liar, making God the Son and God the Holy Spirit weaklings and impotent to save to the uttermost. **To say that God can save believers, but that He cannot keep them saved is spiritual heresy of the greatest degree.** It demeans the work of Christ like nothing else because it makes sin more powerful than Christ and His work. Please fully understand that **God took care of sin at the cross.** End of discussion! The debate ends at the cross, it ends at the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. The discussion is over! God is greater than sin and has fully and completely overcome sin to the greatest degree imaginable.

Do we realize that God the Father ALWAYS hears the prayers of God the Son and of God the Holy Spirit? He always hears their prayers and intercessions on the believer’s behalf. Not one prayer of



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theirs falls to the ground unheard. [Romans 8:27](#) clearly states that the Holy Spirit always prays according to the will of God.

²⁷Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

So, when the Holy Spirit prays for the believer, God hears because the Holy Spirit always prays in accordance with the will of God. Notice in your Bibles that the words “**the will of**” are in *italics* – which means that they are not actually in the Greek text. The following is how the Greek text actually reads:

The One but searching the hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because according to God He intercedes on behalf of saints.

I.e., the Holy Spirit makes intercession “**according to God**”, or exactly as God the Father would want Him to pray. That is why v28 follows v27,

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

And what is “**His purpose**”? It is v29-30,

²⁹For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. ³⁰Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

God’s purpose for the believer’s life is that He will bring them to glory. Every believer will be with Him in glorified bodies conformed into the image of Christ. They will be in a glorified place and they will be with Him who is glory Himself – with Christ. That is God’s overruling purpose for every believer’s life – **AND THERE IS NOTHING IN ETERNITY THAT CAN PREVENT THAT FROM HAPPENING.** The only reason “**all things work together for good**” is not because Christians are so spiritual and so committed and such great prayer warriors – not at all. I hate to pop our bubble, but none of this really depends on us in any way whatsoever. The only reason things “**work together for good**” is because of God – and God alone. [Philippians 2:13](#) says,

¹³for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.

It is God who is working in the believer and working for them. It will not do any good to try and “hang on” to salvation. Believers simply are not strong enough, not smart enough, and not willing enough. Just try living the Christian life in your own strength and see how long you will last. This is the doctrine of eternal security being revealed in these verses. We do not even know how to pray as we ought, nevertheless hang on until glory becomes real. It is sometimes nearly impossible to get professing Christians to even attend church and bring a Bible with them when they come, nevertheless make it to glory. Salvation is all of God – always all of God, and every believer should be more than glad that it is.