

New Testament Application, Part 1

By Greg Smith

Pre-Session Assignments

One week before the session, participants will take the following assignments.

Assignment One

Use an online or a printed Bible dictionary such as *Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology* at <http://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionaries>. Look up the words *slavery* and *adoption* from Romans 8:14–16. Prepare to share your answers to the following question: What are some of the essential differences between being a *slave* and an *adopted* son or daughter?

Assignment Two

Use a printed study Bible or an online resource such as the one at <http://www.openbible.info/labs/cross-references>. Use the Scripture cross-reference tool for Romans 8:17. To let Scripture interpret Scripture, look at the other biblical passages where the idea of “heir” is used. From those passages, prepare to share the meaning of the term *heir* as it is used there.

Assignment Three

Use an online or a printed Bible encyclopedia such as the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* at <http://www.biblestudytools.com/encyclopedias/isbe> or *Baker's Evangelical Dictionary* at <http://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionaries/bakers-evangelical-dictionary>. Look up the word *glory* and prepare to share about this term in relationship to Romans 8:17–18.

Scripture to Memorize

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. Romans 8:18

Session Goal

Consistent with God's Word and in the power of the Holy Spirit—by the end of this session, disciples will understand how to use basic study resources for an inductive Bible study.

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In his free time he loves going on camping adventures with his wife, Ellen, and two kids, James and Hannah. He also loves singing, playing guitar, and watching hummingbirds in his backyard. Please feel free to contact him at gsmith@swbts.edu.

It's in the Book

30 minutes

Real-Life Scenario

Several of your friends in the cafeteria begin a conversation over the question, Why would a good God allow His own people to suffer? Before you know it, you find yourself over your head in the conversation, so you promise to prepare a short summary of what God's Word says about suffering and to bring it to lunch a week later. You remember reading something about suffering for Christ in Romans 8 and decide to begin there. Do you know how to use Bible study tools to help you do this study?

Read Romans 8:14–18 out loud.

Assignment One Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment One** during the week may now share how the use of a Bible dictionary provided better background information on the words *slave* and *adoption* and how Paul used these two terms to clarify the believer's status before God.

Studying the Passage

Romans is Paul's theological masterpiece for the church and offers practical teaching on issues regarding the disciple's walk of faith. Many of Paul's letters addressed a believing community that was experiencing suffering and persecution.

Verse 15. Spirit of adoption. Paul strongly emphasized the status of the suffering believer as an adopted child. "**Abba! Father!**" For Paul, this status as an adopted child is intimate. We are invited to refer to our family status with intimate language.

Verse 16. children of God. Paul laid the foundation for the believer to recognize that whatever happens to a believer is a *family* matter and thus has future implications from the vantage point of God the Father.

One Your Own

Have you ever experienced a time of difficulty and suffering in your life? In the space below, briefly describe that time. What difference did being part of a supportive church family make? How important is it to have a church family during times of difficulty and suffering?

Assignment Two Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment Two** during the week may now share how the use of a Scripture cross-reference tool helped identify biblical passages where the term *heir* is used, leading to a fuller understanding of that term.

Studying the Passage

Verse 17. fellow heirs with Christ. For Paul, the believer's status as an adopted son or daughter also includes the idea of being an "heir," that is, one who will also be the recipient of an inheritance. Paul made clear that our inheritance will be shared *with Christ*. Thus, part of the

encouragement for the believer who suffers is knowing that he will have a part in this inheritance. **we suffer with Him.** In an interesting twist, Paul linked the present situation of suffering for the faithful with the future reality of their being heirs. In fact, Paul expected suffering to be written on the job description of every believer. Again, our suffering is a family matter, and according to Paul, when Christians suffer, they do so *with* Christ and with a view toward our future inheritance. **glorified with Him.** Because we suffer with Christ, believers will also be glorified with Christ. In the progression of salvation, the Bible teaches that believers experience justification, then sanctification and finally glorification. Thus, glorification is the believer's final state of existence. In a newly resurrected body, the believer will experience all the benefits of the "new earth"—no more pain and no more suffering (see Revelation 21:1–5). Glorification will be the believer's inheritance.

Verse 18. glory that is to be revealed. Paul made the case that no experience of present suffering can be (or should be) compared to the believer's future inheritance.

Assignment Three Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment Three** during the week may now share how the use of a Bible encyclopedia added to the understanding of the term *glory* in the context of Romans 8:17–18.

Discussion Questions

When disciples suffer, what typically happens to their faith? Without any pain or suffering, what might happen to the faith life of a disciple? How should the response of disciples to personal suffering differ from that of a nonbeliever?

On Your Own

Imagine you have a Christian friend who is enduring prolonged suffering. With Romans 8:14–18 as background, write in the space below some of the things you might say to that friend.

Heart and Hands

8 minutes

Read again the **Real-Life Scenario** near the beginning of the lesson. Consider whether your answers have changed during the session.

Be silent for two or three minutes. Thank Jesus for His sacrifice and for the gospel. Adore Him for His glorious reign on the throne of heaven. Then ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you:

1. A way the Scriptures you studied today will change your heart for the glory of Christ.
2. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to stop doing something for the glory of Christ.
3. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to do something for the glory of Christ.

Write what the Spirit reveals to you below and then be ready to share what you have written with the group.

Since Last Week

5 minutes

Give the group this update: "In our last session I made a commitment to. . . . I want to let you know how that turned out. On that same issue I think the Holy Spirit now is leading me to . . ."

Grace-Filled Accountability

5 minutes

Disciples can agree on a way to hold one another accountable. Confessing faults with other disciples allows them to offer grace, insights, and encouragement. Even more important is confession to Christ, the source of true forgiveness and cleansing.

Planning for Evangelism, Missions, and Service

5 minutes

Groups of disciples always are making preparations for evangelism, missions, and service. Use these minutes to work on the next plan.

Prayer

7 minutes

Every disciple will pray aloud, offering praise to Jesus, thanking Him specifically for His gracious acts, making heartfelt confession, committing to actions flowing from the Bible study, praying toward evangelism locally and globally, and interceding for others as prompted by the Holy Spirit.

At Home: Nail It Down

Recall the **Real-Life Scenario** in this lesson. Having examined Romans 8:14–18 with several Bible study tools, you now would be prepared to give your friends in the cafeteria a biblical answer to their question, Why would a good God allow His own people to suffer?

First, a believer is a member of the family of God. When we suffer, we have the wonderful support of our Christian family. We also have the amazing help of our Heavenly Father. Here is a good opportunity for you to share your faith in Christ with your friends. Tell them how Jesus and your church family have helped you in hard times.

Second, our sufferings help us identify with what Christ suffered here on earth. Explain to your friends about the atoning death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. He suffered and died to make payment for our sins and then resurrected and is now in heaven.

Third, God uses these difficulties to help us grow into Christian maturity. We learn more in hard times than we do in easy situations. In the same way, difficulties can deepen our faith.

Fourth, suffering helps a believer look forward to future glorification. One day we will go to heaven where there is no sin, pain, death or suffering.

If your friends are not Christ followers, ask if they want to make a commitment to follow Christ as you did. If so, lead them in a prayer of commitment to Christ. The Bible is clear: “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” (Romans 10:13). Then explain to your friends about assurance of salvation for a Christian. “And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life” (1 John 5:11–13). Next, guide them in discipleship, including getting involved in the church where you are an active member.

The Bible is powerful and can even lead the lost to salvation. Disciples who use Bible dictionaries, cross-reference tools and Bible encyclopedias as part of their careful study of the Scriptures will discover even more of its truth and power.

Follow up Question

How are you personally encouraged by Paul’s proclamation that suffering with Christ also means being glorified with Him as well?

The Making Disciples curriculum is a gift from Southwestern Seminary to those who, for the glory of the Father and in the power of the Spirit, will spend a lifetime embracing the full supremacy of the Son, responding to His kingly reign in all of life, inviting Christ to live His life through them, and joining Him in making disciples among all peoples.