

# Community Study

## Session 7 Questions

Ice-breaker: What's the nicest thing someone has done for you? What's the best gift you've ever received?

1. Think back on a time in your life when someone was really *for* you. What concrete actions on their part made you feel that way? Be as specific as you can.

What impact has that had on your life?

2. A wise theologian was asked to summarize the gospel in just one sentence. Pausing for only a moment, he chose one single phrase—*God is for us!* Romans 8 is the pinnacle of Paul's teaching on being *for us*. Read through the entire chapter. Then note below all of the diverse ways that God is *for* those who have trusted Christ.

In what ways have you felt God being *for* you in any of these specific ways in recent months?

3. Romans 8.31-39 has been called a statement of "truly reverent defiance." In a way, each of us needs to bring an attitude of "truly reverent defiance" against anything that would diminish our personal confidence in God's being *for us*. For example:

A false sense of guilt or inadequacy

Failure

Human opposition

Disapproval from others

Suffering

All these must be ruthlessly countered by a sanctified spirit of defiance that insists on clinging to the unyielding promises of God. What tempts you to feel distant or separated from God? Where do you especially need “truly reverent defiance” these days?

4. In Romans 8.33-34, Paul is using the picture of a courtroom. In U.S. law there is a tradition that once a person has been tried and found innocent they cannot be accused and retried—no possibility of “double jeopardy.” Paul says that God himself has declared us innocent, loved, and free in Christ. There is simply no power able to overturn that verdict—no “spiritual double jeopardy?” The trial’s over. The verdict’s in. You’re free.

How might it affect your prayer life and your confidence with God if you were to live in full assurance of God’s final verdict of “innocent” for your life?

5. There is a strong temptation to judge the extent to which you feel God is for you by how smoothly your life is going at any particular time. How tempted are you to do that?

Romans 8.28 reads,

*And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*

What do you think enabled Paul to make the bold statement that he did in Romans 8.28?

Paul really believed that God was for him, even in the worst of times. It wasn’t just head knowledge or theological truth. It was a belief that shaped the way Paul did life. In the same vein, C.S. Lewis once said,

*Ask yourself, 'If I were sure that I loved God, what would I do?' When you have found the answer, go & do it.*

How would your life be different if you really believed that God was *for you* through all of life’s circumstances? What effect would it have on your confidence, anxiety level, and attitudes?

6. Encouragement has many faces in the New Testament. Consider the following forms that encouragement takes:

*To believe in someone, to see their giftedness and ability to contribute.*

*To exhort someone, to build their character by confronting them even when it may involve saying hard things.*

*To comfort, console, give courage to.*

*To challenge, to urge, to entreat one to greater heights, deeper growth.*

*To express support and affirmation through tangible gifts.*

Which of these do you consider yourself best at giving?

Which do you prefer to receive?

7. How is your walk with Christ different today because someone took the time to encourage you in the above ways? In what ways were those acts of encouragement spiritually transforming?