

When You Feel Troubled & Weak

7 Days Without Prayer Makes One Weak



*"26 And the Holy Spirit helps us in our **weakness**. For example, we don't know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words. 27 And the Father who knows all hearts knows what the Spirit is saying, for the Spirit pleads for us believers in harmony with God's own will."* Romans 8:26-27

- When do you feel weak?
- Do you find it hard to pray in today's troubled world?

Someone has criticized Christianity by calling it a crutch. But we need the crutch - because we are all crippled and weak. In Romans 8, Paul shows us WHY we can face life's weaknesses and problems.

Central Lesson:
God will help us when we feel weak and troubled.

WHY We Can Face Life's Weaknesses

1. The Holy Spirit helps our **WEAKNESS** (8:26).

*"26 And the Holy Spirit helps us in our **weakness**...."*

The New Testament Greek word translated "helps" is a word rich with meaning. It pictures someone carrying the heavy load of another. Also, it is in a Greek tense that conveys a *continuous* action. The Holy Spirit *continuously* helps us carry the heavy loads of life - if we let him.

2. The Holy Spirit helps us pray and **PRAYS** for us (8:26).

*"26 ...For example, we don't know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit **prays for us** with groanings that cannot be expressed in words."*

When life is at its hardest - people often find it hard to pray. When we need to pray the most - we find it a struggle and do it the least. But when we are too discouraged or weak to pray, the Holy Spirit prays for us.

A. B. Simpson writes: "We have two advocates. We have an Advocate with the Father, who prays for us at God's right hand (see 1 John 2:1); but the Holy Spirit is the Advocate within, who prays in us, inspiring our petitions and presenting them, through Christ, to God." *The Christ in the Bible Commentary*, Vol. 5, p.88.

Also, Paul states that the Holy Spirit "**prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words.**" Bible teacher, John Stott, explains: "In the context, these wordless groans must surely be related to the groans both of God's creation (v.22) and of God's children (v.23), namely 'agonized longings' (JBP) for final redemption and the consummation of all things." "It must be, therefore, that the Holy Spirit identifies with our groans, with the pain of the world and the church, and shares in the longing for the final freedom of both. We and he groan together." Romans, p.245.

A father, walking past his 10-year-old daughter's room one night, proudly noticed she was on her knees praying. Listening in, he heard this curious prayer- "abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz"- repeated several times. When she was finished, he asked her why she was saying the alphabet in her prayer. She answered, "When I don't know what to pray about, I just say the alphabet and He puts the words together." When we struggle to pray, the Spirit puts the words together for us, too.

3. The Father knows (**SEARCHES**) all hearts (8:27).

*"27 And the Father who **knows** [searches] **all hearts**...."*

The NLT translates the word "searches" as "knows." God knows everything that is on our hearts. He knows our worries, fears, questions, frustrations, etc. He "knows" because He is actively searching our hearts continuously (also see 1 Samuel 16:7; Hebrews 4:13).

"But the Lord said to Samuel, 'Don't judge by his appearance or height, for I have rejected him. The Lord doesn't see things the way you see them. People judge by outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.'" 1 Samuel 16:7 NLT

"Nothing in all creation is hidden from God. Everything is naked and exposed before his eyes, and he is the one to whom we are accountable." Hebrews 4:13 NLT

4. The Father knows the Spirit's prayer **REQUESTS** (8:27).

*"27 And the Father...knows what the Spirit **is saying**...."*

If the Father knows the mind of His own Spirit, there is never any good reason to think that God does not know the struggles we experience in our lives. He knows because He searches our hearts and because He hears the intercessory prayers of His Spirit on our behalf.

5. The Spirit prays in **HARMONY** with God's will (8:27).

*"27 ...for the Spirit pleads for us believers in **harmony** with God's own will."*

We can be guilty of praying for things that are not God's will for our lives - things from heaven's perspective that are harmful to us. Yet, the Holy Spirit always prays for us with requests that are in God's will for our lives.

Bible teacher, Warren Wiersbe, writes: "We do not always know God's will. We do not always know how to pray, but the Spirit intercedes so that we might live in the will of God in spite of suffering." *The Wiersbe Bible Commentary*, 431.

Central Lesson:
God will help us when we feel weak and troubled.

Suggested prayer: "Heavenly Father, I am thankful that You search my heart and fully know my struggles. I am also thankful that Your Spirit reads my heart and prays for me even when I don't know what to say or how to pray. Help me to trust You when life gets hard and confusing. I surrender myself to Your will and trust You for Your strength, guidance, and protection. In Jesus' Name, I pray. Amen."

- ▶ Accept Christ as your Savior.
- ▶ As a Christian, dedicate your life to Christ.
- ▶ Invite someone to next Sunday's study.
- ▶ Attend a small group.
- ▶ Read the Bible this week & journal meaningful verses.
- ▶ Pray for friends that need Jesus.