

Facilitator Notes for *Set Free!* – A Study in Romans
Lesson 12 ~ Are We There Yet? Romans 8:18-39

**PLEASE DON'T READ THESE NOTES UNTIL YOU HAVE COMPLETED YOUR LESSON.
HEARING GOD FOR YOURSELF IS WAY BETTER THAN MY COMMENTS!**

Questions

1. At the end of Lesson 11, we learned that the Holy Spirit, who lives in us, transforms our relationship with God the Father. Review **Romans 8:14-17** and summarize this new identity.

Children of God are led by the Spirit of God

We are children and not slaves; we can approach God with confidence for the Holy Spirit in us tells us that we are God's children. Because we are God's children, we are heirs and co-heirs with Christ. Everything God gives Jesus is ours too!

- ♥ Do you feel like God's child? Slave? Something in between? How can you know you are God's child?
 - ♥ *Abba* is the equivalent to our English word *Dada* and is one of the first words a Hebrew child learns to speak. It is a title of affection and intimacy reserved for a family relationship. Does this describe your relationship with God the Father? Why or why not? Could it? How? What would be the advantage?
2. What are the privileges and responsibilities that belong to a child of God (**8:17**)?

Privileges – we share in the eternal inheritance (treasures); we inherit God's Kingdom

Responsibilities – we also share in Christ's suffering

- ♥ Why do you think sharing Christ's glory and suffering are linked? What is the suffering of Christ (**John 15:20; 16:33; 2 Timothy 3:12; 1 Peter 5:8**)?

We are heirs of God only because of Christ's suffering on our behalf. As Christ-followers, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him. Following Jesus always exacts some kind of cost because we are at odds with the world system. In our culture, suffering with Christ may only be giving up our own rights, serving others and taking a stand against the evil and wrong in our culture no matter how unpopular that view may be. Throughout history and in other parts of the world, people are sometimes beaten, imprisoned and killed for following Christ. The question we must ask ourselves is: Is my relationship with Jesus genuine enough that I am willing to face suffering for his sake, if necessary. Those who suffer for Christ will reap a great eternal reward.

- ♥ What suffering are you experiencing right now? Do you see this as sharing in Christ's suffering? Why or why not?
- ♥ Do suffering and hardship usually draw you closer to God or drive you farther away? Why?

Read **Romans 8:18-25**

3. Paul does not deny the pain of our present suffering. What, however, is his **purpose** when he compares suffering to future glory (**8:18, 24-25; 2 Corinthians 4:17**)?

Paul compares present suffering with future glory to show that even though our suffering is hard, if we compare it to the reward (future glory) we will one day receive, it won't seem quite so bad. Yes, we suffer in this life, but we won't just get an equal amount of glory in the next. Instead, what we reap in future glory can't even be compared to any suffering we might experience now. We will find ourselves actually saying, "It was SO worth it!" If we keep our focus on what is to come, our present suffering seems more bearable.

- ♥ What are some things Paul had in mind when he mentions "present sufferings" (**8:20-23, 35**)? Creation (nature and the natural laws) is "broken" because of human's sin and creation does not reflect the whole glory of God as it should. It groans to be liberated from the bondage of decay (death) just as we also groan to be free from sin and receive our new bodies that will never die.

4. In the chart below, note the "glory" we will be given after our suffering is over.

Verses	Future Glory
Romans 8:21, 23	glorious freedom from death and decay; release from pain and suffering
Philippians 3:20-21 (1 Corinthians 15:51-52)	citizens of heaven; receive glorious new bodies that are just like Jesus' resurrected body.
2 Timothy 2:11-12 (Revelation 20:6) (Revelation 22:3-5)	We will live and reign with Christ in the new world; we will be priests of God and will reign with him; there will now longer be any curse or effects of the curse (Gen. 3); we will worship God and see Jesus face to face
1 Peter 1:7 1 Peter 5:4	our faith that endured trials and hard times will be rewarded and it will bring us praise, glory and honor when Jesus returns; we will receive a crown on glory (a never-ending share in his glory and honor)
1 John 3:2	we will be like Jesus and will see him as he truly is

- ♥ When was a time when you were able to get through something difficult or unpleasant because you focused on some good things that would come later? How does this relate to **Romans 8:18-25**?
- ♥ How can learning about, thinking about and anticipating your future glory help you make it through your present suffering (**2 Corinthians 4:18**)? Does this "work" for you? Why or why not?
- ♥ How can Jesus' life experiences help us when we suffer (**Hebrews 5:7-8; 12:1-3; Philippians 2:5-9**)? Even though suffering is not from God, he does not allow us to suffer for no reason at all. In other words, he promises to bring good out of our suffering. Jesus suffered, because he accomplished something in his suffering. It was worth it. He learned obedience (how to live life in submission to his Father's will and purposes). Jesus was willing to suffer because of what his suffering accomplished – salvation for us. While he was suffering, he kept his eyes on the JOY that would come after the cross. Hebrews says that this should encourage us so that we don't become weary and give up. No pain, no gain! No guts, no glory!

5. Christians are not the only ones who must wait for suffering to be over. **What** is creation (our earth) waiting for and **why** must it wait (**8:19-22**)?

Creation is waiting for humans to be released from sin, decay and death so that it too may be all that God created it to be. Nature is polluted and broken in many ways. Creation shared in the curse, it shares now in the pain and will someday also share in the glory of humans. It groans to be released and liberated from the curse of the Fall of humans. The entire universe is looking forward to the conclusion of God's plan. Creation waits "in eager expectation." The Greek meaning for *eager expectation* carries the idea of creation "waiting with head raised and eye fixed on a point in the horizon from which the expected joy will come." It depicts someone standing on "tiptoe" or "stretching the neck, craning forward" in order to be able to see. Right now, our universe is "running down" and is locked into an unending cycle of conception, birth, and growth followed by decline, decay and death and decomposition. Creation is fine-tuned and beautiful, but it does not operate as it was created to ("natural disasters") and it will be much more beautiful than it is now.

- ♥ Why is creation frustrated and in bondage to death and decay (**Genesis 1:28; 3:17-19**)? When will it be liberated (**8:19, 21**)? What will its liberation look like (**2 Peter 3:10-13; Isaiah 11:6-9; Psalm 96:11-13**)?
- ♥ Give some specific examples of how creation is subject to frustration and in bondage to decay. Consider earthquakes, floods, fire, drought, famine, etc. – these are surely not what creation was meant to be. This is, however, what happens because sin and evil now rule. How does sinful humanity add to the groaning of our planet? What do you imagine our world would be like if there were no sin, death or decay?

♥ How is the suffering and groaning of our lives and our world like the *pains of childbirth* (8:22)? Just as the pains of childbirth end at the birth of the child, so the groaning and pain of the creation will end at the birth of a new heavens and a new earth. The groaning shows eagerness. It is not the groaning of hopelessness, but the sound of total concentration on a painful, but hopeful conclusion. Creation (and we) are waiting for the new birth!

Read **Romans 8:26-30**

Father God knows that we need more than just the hope of heaven to get us through our difficulties now and, thanks be to God, he has amply provided for us! The rest of **Romans 8** is full of supernatural help that is available to us *in the meantime* as we wait for the day when God will make everything new – wiping every tear from our eyes and abolishing death, mourning, crying and pain once for all. *In the meantime*, we are not left to our own devices and resources. *In the meantime*, the Spirit **helps us**, the Father is **for us** and Jesus **loves us!**

6. How does the Holy Spirit help us in our present suffering, weakness and distress (8:26-27)? We don't know what to pray for (in our groaning, suffering and hard times), but the Spirit prays for us with groans that words can't even express. God, who knows everyone's heart, also knows what the Spirit is praying for us. What the Spirit prays for us is exactly what God wills for us!

♥ How is the groaning in 8:26 different from, yet the same as, the groaning in 8:22 and 8:23? What does this reveal about the Holy Spirit and his relationship with you? The Spirit is not groaning out of His own pain and suffering, but is groaning for us and because of our pain and suffering. The Spirit feels our pain and suffering and joins in it and prays to the Father on our behalf. Obviously this speaks of a very close, intimate, trusting relationship. The Spirit knows us and our hearts better than anyone else and even better than we know ourselves.

♥ Prayer is often viewed as something we do to God. Do you ever feel like you are all alone when you pray? Are you? How does 8:26-27, 34 change your view of prayer? Prayer is not something we initiate. Prayer is something that is going on all the time between Father, Son and Spirit. When we pray we are never alone. We join the prayer that is already going on.

♥ How are you weak in prayer? Do you always know what to pray for? Does the Spirit (8:27)? Why is this important (1 John 5:14-15)? This verse tells us that if we ask anything according to God's will, God hears us and whatever we ask, we will have. The Holy Spirit always prays for us according to God's will so we know his prayers are very effective! How will Romans 8:26-27 change your prayer life?

7. What is the result of the Holy Spirit interceding for us according to God's will (8:28)? The result is that in all things (even the painful and bad), God works for our good. Because the Holy Spirit is praying for us, we know that God will cause EVERYTHING to work together for good.

♥ The first words of 8:28 are *we know*. What *five facts* in this verse can we *know* for sure?

1 - We know God works

2 - God works for our good

3 - God works for our good in all things

4 - God works for the good of those who love him

5 - God works for the good of those who have been called according to his purpose for them

♥ What is the most important "good" that God wants to work in your life (8:29)? Why? That we might be conformed (shaped and molded) into the image of Christ; God is working in us so that we will be like Jesus. This is the most important good that God is working and it is something that will have great benefits in this life and great dividends in the next.

- ♥ Does **8:28** mean that everything that happens to you is good? Why or why not? What is the difference between "God works all things for good" and "all things work out in the end?"

The promise of 8:28 does NOT mean that everything that happens to us is good. We live in a world where there is evil, suffering and wrong. This is a promise from God that no matter what happens to us, he will use it for good in our lives. He does not make it happen, but he will work it all together so that will effect us for good instead of destruction. This is not the same as "it will all work out I the end." It would NOT work out for good unless God was intentionally causing it to.

8. Read **Romans 8:29-30** in the *NLT*. What are the tangible things God has done to prove that he is *for* us? God knew us in advance (planned us) and he chose us to belong to him. He then called us to himself and gave us a right standing with him and shared his glory with us.

- ♥ What is God's purpose in choosing and calling you (**8:29**)? **To make us like Jesus** How are you responding? How important is this goal in your life? How can you cooperate with God's call and purpose for you?
- ♥ How does it make you feel to know that God knew you before you were born and that he chose you, called you, gave you a right standing with himself and will someday share his glory with you?
- ♥ How are *foreknown* (pre-known) and *predestined* (chosen) different from *predetermined*?

The below commentary might be helpful:

"What does predestination mean? What keeps foreknowledge and predestination from being determinism? How can belief in predestination avoid leading someone to despair over the futility of any human choice? God's foreknowledge does not imply determinism – the idea that all our choices are predetermined. Since God is not limited by time as we are, he "sees" past, present, and future at the same time. Parents sometimes "know" how their children will behave before the fact. We don't conclude from these parents' foreknowledge that they made their children act that way. The plan of predestination begins when we trust Christ and comes to its conclusion when we become fully like him. Receiving an airline ticket to New York means we have been predestined to arrive in New York.

To explain foreknowledge and predestination in any way that implies that every action and choice we make has been not only preknown, but even predetermined, seems to contradict those Scriptures that declare that our choices are real, that they matter, and that there are consequences to the choices we make."

Read **Romans 8:31-39**

In this section of verses, Paul wants to let his audience know, in no uncertain terms, that God's *love* and *help* are *sure* and *secure* and that God *will* accomplish his purpose in us, even in the midst of the groaning and suffering of this life. Paul makes this point by asking a series of rhetorical questions – questions whose answers are obvious, but the point is made by asking them. And, just in case we miss the point, Paul even provides the answers! As we let the questions resonate in our hearts, we too, will have no doubt that God is for us!

9. What is our biggest guarantee that God will, indeed, do everything that he promises to do (**8:32**)? God has already given us his most precious and valuable gift – the gift of his Son and his death to redeem us. He did not withhold the one thing that would buy our redemption. Because he has already made the supreme sacrifice, of course he is going to take care of us and give us what we need! God WAS for us and he will continue to BE for us!

- ♥ Is this a convincing argument for you? Why or why not? If not, what would convince you?
- ♥ What, in your life, makes you sometimes doubt that God is really *for* you? Which of Paul's questions and answers (**8:31-35**) helps you most? Why?

♥ Paul began **Romans 8** with the forceful statement, “There is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus.” If you ever feel condemned by God, what in **8:34** should convince you otherwise? **If we were condemned before God, it would be Jesus doing the condemning. Instead, we see that he is at God's side, praying for us. For any accusations that are made against us, he reminds the Father that he already paid for our failure and that we are now clothed in His righteousness.**

Ask the Holy Spirit to let you “see” the action of **8:34** with the "eyes of your heart". What do you see?

10. As an exercise to strengthen your faith, read **8:35, 38-39** in both the *NIV* and *NLT* and then write in the space below all the things that *cannot* separate you from Christ's love.

Trouble, hardship, calamity, persecution, famine, hunger, lack of shelter or clothing, danger or threatened with death – death, life, angels, demons, fears for today or worries about tomorrow, whether we are in the heights or the depths – nothing in all creation can separate us from the love of Christ.

Why don't these things have the power to separate you from the love of Christ?

Because none of these things are more powerful or stronger than Jesus' love for us.

♥ What would be some of the consequences if these enemies *could* separate us from the love of Jesus? **We would live under condemnation and would always feel great shame and failure every time we failed. We would be in a shame/pride cycle. Shame when we failed; pride when we didn't (and pride of course is sin). We would never be sure of our relationship with God. Never be sure if he loved us and was for us. The list goes on . . .**

♥ Of all the enemies listed in **8:35, 38-39**, which is most real to you? Why? If you were writing this letter, what are the fears and enemies you would have listed? Can these things separate you from Jesus' love?

♥ Meditate on (spend some time thinking about) the fact that, even though these things may try, *nothing* in the natural or supernatural world is able to separate you from Jesus' love. What does this mean to you personally? What difference will it make in your relationship with God and how you live life?

Response

If we have ever doubted the absolute necessity of prayer, **Romans 8:26-27, 34** should convince us once and for all of its incredible importance because in these verses we see that **Father, Son and Spirit** are all involved in prayer. The Father receives the prayers of the Spirit and Son as they intercede for **us**. We dare not take this for granted! It's amazing to think that the Spirit and Jesus are praying to the Father for us!

Prayer is not a job God gives us to do; prayer is an activity of the **Triune God** that we are invited into! And, in the midst of struggle and suffering, **prayer is a crucial activity**. We know that our world is a far cry from the perfect, sinless earth that God originally created. Creation is groaning – and we are groaning and it doesn't take us long to figure out that we live in a world where God's will is *not* always done.

Prayer is important because prayer is the **primary, God-given way** in which we can help ensure that God's will **IS** done in our world. This is why Jesus taught us to pray, “Father, may your will *be done on earth* as it is *done in heaven*” (**Matthew 6:10**). James tells us that the prayer of a righteous person is **powerful and effective** (**James 5:16**). Prayer makes a difference – in our lives, in the lives of those we pray for and in our world. In the midst of a creation groaning to be released, prayer is an **all important** activity!

The Spirit promises to help us in our weakness when it comes to prayer. However, he cannot do that unless we pray! In the days and weeks to come, *will you join with the Spirit in praying that God's will be done in your life and the lives of those you love? Discuss with your group how you can do this.*

BELOW IS THE SUPPLEMENTARY SCRIPTURE FOR THIS LESSON THAT CAN BE PRINTED OUT FOR SMALL GROUP TIME.

NIV

John 15:20 Remember the words I spoke to you: ‘No servant is greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also.

John 16:33 “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

2Timothy 3:12 In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,

1Peter 5:8 Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

2Corinthians 4:17 For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.

Philippians 3:20 But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, **21** who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

1Corinthians 15:51-52 Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed— **52** in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.

2Timothy 2:11-12 Here is a trustworthy saying: If we died with him, we will also live with him; **12** if we endure, we will also reign with him. If we disown him, he will also disown us;

Revelation 20:6 Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.

Revelation 22:3-5 No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. **4** They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. **5** There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

1Peter 1:7 These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

1Peter 5:4 And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

1John 3:2 Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

2Corinthians 4:18 So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

Hebrews 5:7-8 During the days of Jesus’ life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. **8** Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered . . .

Hebrews 12:1-2 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. **2** Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. **3** Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

Philippians 2:5-9 Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: **6** Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, **7** but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. **8** And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! **9** Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,

Genesis 1:28 God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

Genesis 3:17-19 To Adam he said, “Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You must not eat of it,’ “Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. **18** It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. **19** By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.”

2Peter 3:10-13 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. **11** Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives **12** as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. **13** But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.

Isaiah 11:6-9 The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. **7** The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. **8** The infant will play near the hole of the cobra, and the young child put his hand into the viper’s nest. **9** They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

Psalms 96:11-13 Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let the sea resound, and all that is in it; **12** let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them. Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy; **13** they will sing before the LORD, for he comes, he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in his truth.

1John 5:14-15 This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. **15** And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.

NLT

John 15:20 Do you remember what I told you? ‘A servant is not greater than the master.’ Since they persecuted me, naturally they will persecute you. And if they had listened to me, they would listen to you!

John 16:33 I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.”

2Timothy 3:12 Yes, and everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

1Peter 5:8 Be careful! Watch out for attacks from the Devil, your great enemy. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for some victim to devour.

2Corinthians 4:17 For our present troubles are quite small and won’t last very long. Yet they produce for us an immeasurably great glory that will last forever!

Philippians 3:20-21 But we are citizens of heaven, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives. And we are eagerly waiting for him to return as our Savior. **21** He will take these weak mortal bodies of ours and change them into glorious bodies like his own, using the same mighty power that he will use to conquer everything, everywhere.

1Corinthians 15:51-52 But let me tell you a wonderful secret God has revealed to us. Not all of us will die, but we will all be transformed. **52** It will happen in a moment, in the blinking of an eye, when the last trumpet is blown. For when the trumpet sounds, the Christians who have died will be raised with transformed bodies. And then we who are living will be transformed so that we will never die.

2Timothy 2:11-12 This is a true saying: If we die with him, we will also live with him. **12** If we endure hardship, we will reign with him. If we deny him, he will deny us.

Revelation 20:6 Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection. For them the second death holds no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him a thousand years.

Revelation 22:3-5 No longer will anything be cursed. For the throne of God and of the Lamb will be there, and his servants will worship him. **4** And they will see his face, and his name will be written on their foreheads. **5** And there will be no night there—no need for lamps or sun—for the Lord God will shine on them. And they will reign forever and ever.

1Peter 1:7 These trials are only to test your faith, to show that it is strong and pure. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—and your faith is far more precious to God than mere gold. So if your faith remains strong after being tried by fiery trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world.

1Peter 5:4 And when the head Shepherd comes, your reward will be a never-ending share in his glory and honor.

1John 3:2 Yes, dear friends, we are already God’s children, and we can’t even imagine what we will be like when Christ returns. But we do know that when he comes we will be like him, for we will see him as he really is.

2Corinthians 4:18 So we don’t look at the troubles we can see right now; rather, we look forward to what we have not yet seen. For the troubles we see will soon be over, but the joys to come will last forever.

Hebrews 5:7-8 While Jesus was here on earth, he offered prayers and pleadings, with a loud cry and tears, to the one who could deliver him out of death. And God heard his prayers because of his

reverence for God. **8** So even though Jesus was God’s Son, he learned obedience from the things he suffered.

Hebrews 12:1-3 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily hinders our progress. And let us run with endurance the race that God has set before us. **2** We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, on whom our faith depends from start to finish. He was willing to die a shameful death on the cross because of the joy he knew would be his afterward. Now he is seated in the place of highest honor beside God’s throne in heaven. **3** Think about all he endured when sinful people did such terrible things to him, so that you don’t become weary and give up.

Philippians 2:5-9 Your attitude should be the same that Christ Jesus had. **6** Though he was God, he did not demand and cling to his rights as God. **7** He made himself nothing; he took the humble position of a slave and appeared in human form. **8** And in human form he obediently humbled himself even further by dying a criminal’s death on a cross. **9** Because of this, God raised him up to the heights of heaven and gave him a name that is above every other name,

Genesis 1:28 God blessed them and told them, “Multiply and fill the earth and subdue it. Be masters over the fish and birds and all the animals.”

Genesis 3:17-19 And to Adam he said, “Because you listened to your wife and ate the fruit I told you not to eat, I have placed a curse on the ground. All your life you will struggle to scratch a living from it. **18** It will grow thorns and thistles for you, though you will eat of its grains. **19** All your life you will sweat to produce food, until your dying day. Then you will return to the ground from which you came. For you were made from dust, and to the dust you will return.”

2Peter 3:10-13 But the day of the Lord will come as unexpectedly as a thief. Then the heavens will pass away with a terrible noise, and everything in them will disappear in fire, and the earth and everything on it will be exposed to judgment. **11** Since everything around us is going to melt away, what holy, godly lives you should be living! **12** You should look forward to that day and hurry it along—the day when God will set the heavens on fire and the elements will melt away in the flames. **13** But we are looking forward to the new heavens and new earth he has promised, a world where everyone is right with God.

Isaiah 11:6-9 In that day the wolf and the lamb will live together; the leopard and the goat will be at peace. Calves and yearlings will be safe among lions, and a little child will lead them all. **7** The cattle will graze among bears. Cubs and calves will lie down together. And lions will eat grass as the livestock do. **8** Babies will crawl safely among poisonous snakes. Yes, a little child will put its hand in a nest of deadly snakes and pull it out unharmed. **9** Nothing will hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain. And as the waters fill the sea, so the earth will be filled with people who know the LORD.

Psalms 96:11-13 Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice! Let the sea and everything in it shout his praise! **12** Let the fields and their crops burst forth with joy! Let the trees of the forest rustle with praise **13** before the LORD! For the LORD is coming! He is coming to judge the earth. He will judge the world with righteousness and all the nations with his truth.

1John 5:14-15 And we can be confident that he will listen to us whenever we ask him for anything in line with his will. **15** And if we know he is listening when we make our requests, we can be sure that he will give us what we ask for.