

## UNBROKEN

### "SAFELY IN GOD'S GRIP"

#### ROMANS 8:31-39

#### **This Week's Core Competency**

**Eternity** – I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish his eternal kingdom. John 14:1-4, *Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. 4 You know the way to the place where I am going.*

Romans 8:31-39 raises the question of eternal security. Can a person lose his salvation or is the person who is once saved always saved? Paul begins by making it clear that God is on the side of those who believe (v. 31a), a fact that entails a number of implications that he explicates in the following verses. God will graciously give them all things (v. 32). No one can press charges against them because God himself has acquitted them (v. 33). No one can condemn them because Christ Jesus, who died and was raised to life, intercedes for them at the right hand of God. No one and no "thing" can separate them from Christ's love—no kind of persecution can and no "thing" in all creation can. Charles C. Ryrie gives five good theological reasons for believing in the security of the believer:

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***Eternal security is that work of God which guarantees that the gift of salvation, once received, is possessed forever and cannot be lost.***

– Charles C. Ryrie

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*"First, God the Father has purposed to glorify all those whom He predestined and called (Romans 8:30). Predestined, called, justified, and glorified are all written in the same tense in this verse, indicating that the glorification of all believers is as certain as their predestination, calling, and justification. And remember, we are justified through faith in Jesus, not faith and commitment of life (Romans 3:26).*

*"Second, although most would agree that God's power is fully able to keep the believer secure (Jude 24), some argue that His power can be cut off if a person renounces his faith. But the Lord said that we are secure in His and the Father's hand, and that guarantees that He will keep safe the one who has received the gift of eternal life (John 10:28-29). No one (including ourselves) is able to snatch us out of God's hand. And remember, eternal life is a gift received through faith, not a reward for being willing to follow Christ.*

*"Third, our Lord's continual intercession for us keeps us saved completely and eternally (Hebrews 7:25). When we do sin, we have our Lord to plead our case before God (1 John 2:1-2). And because he has provided total and eternal satisfaction or propitiation for our sins, we stand forgiven. Satan accuses us (Revelation 12:10), and often we accuse ourselves, but with Christ defending us on the basis of His death for our sins, nothing can undo the great salvation which we have received.*

*"Fourth, nothing and no one (including ourselves) can separate us from the everlasting love of God (Romans 8:35-39). In this passage, Paul lists a number of candidates that might seem to be able to separate believers from the love of Christ. They include, among others: adverse circumstances like trouble*

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and poverty; all the circumstances of life, present and future, including death; and the powers of angelic beings (and Satan is one of them). Then Paul concludes by saying no other created thing can separate us from the love of God in Christ. Nothing in all creation, including all the creatures (which includes us), can cause a separation from the eternal love of Christ.

"Fifth, if our salvation is not secure, then our new birth would have to be able to die or we would have to be able to destroy it by some act of sin. But never does the New Testament even hint that such could happen. Regeneration is that work of God that gives to the one who believes new life through the new birth. Further, regeneration is instantaneous-either one is dead in sin or alive in Christ. A process may be involved that leads to the new birth, but the birth occurs at a given moment of time" (*So Great Salvation*, 127-29). Let me add that birth by definition is irreversible.

## For Discussion

Talk about your thoughts regarding eternal security.

# day 1 ENCOUNTER – read God’s word to put yourself in touch with him.

## Romans 8:31-39

31 What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all--how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? 33 Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. 34 Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died--more than that, who was raised to life--is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? 36 As it is written:

"For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered."

37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

## Cf., another translation

31 In view of all this, what can we say? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 Certainly not God, who did not even keep back his own Son, but offered him for us all! He gave us his Son--will he not also freely give us all things? 33 Who will accuse God's chosen people? God himself declares them not guilty! 34 Who, then, will condemn them? Not Christ Jesus, who died, or rather, who was raised to life and is at the right side of God, pleading with him for us! 35 Who, then, can separate us from the love of Christ? Can trouble do it, or hardship or persecution or hunger or poverty or danger or death? 36 As the scripture says,

"For your sake we are in danger of death at all times; we are treated like sheep that are going to be slaughtered."

37 No, in all these things we have complete victory through him who loved us! 38 For I am certain that nothing can separate us from his love: neither death nor life, neither angels nor other heavenly rulers or powers, neither the present nor the future, 39 neither the world above nor the world below--there is nothing in all creation that will ever be able to separate us from the love of God which is ours through Christ Jesus our Lord. (GNT)

## EXAMINE – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

- \* Number the question marks in vv. 31-39.
- \* Circle "this" in v. 31.
- \* Highlight v. 31b.
- \* Circle "spare" and "gave him up" in v. 32.
- \* Box "but" indicating *contrast* in v. 32.
- \* Underline "right hand of God" in v. 34.
- \* Underline "interceding for us" in v. 34.

- \* Bracket "love of Christ" in v. 35.
- \* Circle "these things" in v. 37.
- \* Underline "more than conquerors" in v. 37.
- \* Box "neither" and "nor" indicating *contrast* in vv. 38-39.
- \* Bracket "love of God" in v. 39.
- \* Underline "in Christ Jesus" in v. 39.

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## day 2

**EXPLORE** – the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help.

1. To what does "this" in verse 31 refer?
2. First, put the point of the rhetorical question in verse 31b in your own words, and then, explain its *relationship* to verse 31a?
3. Explain the *relationship* of verses 32-39 to verse 31b.
4. Paul argues from "greater" to "lesser" in verse 32. How so?
5. Explain the *logical* relationship between the statement and the question in verse 33.
6. Explain the *logical* relationship between the statement and the question in verse 34.
7. Put the point of the rhetorical question in verse 35a in your own words.
8. According to verse 37, Christians are "more than conquerors" through Christ. In what sense is this so?
9. **Discussion:** Talk about whether Christians can lose their salvation or not based on verses 38-39.

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## day 3

# EXAMINE – an explanation of the message to better understand the meaning of the passage.

Paul's familiar celebration of believers' eternal security contained in Romans 8:31-39 is beautiful yet profound and surprisingly easy to understand. In the words of one commentator, this passage presents "the triumphant conclusion to the consolation which had been unfolded in the preceding verses, especially from verse 18. In Philippi's words it is 'the highest rung in the ladder of comfort which, from ver. 18 onward, writer, like reader, has been mounting'" (John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT, 322). While commentators have divided these verses in various ways, the simplest and most natural way to divide them is into two parts: 1) verses 31-34 and 2) verses 35-39. The message of each part may be summarized this way: "With the proofs of God's love before him, the Christian has nothing to fear. God, the Judge, is on his side, and the ascended Christ intercedes for him (vv. 31-34). The love of God in Christ is so strong that earthly sufferings and persecutions—nay, all forms and phases of beings—are powerless to intercept it, or to bar the Christian's triumph (vv. 35-39)" (William Sanday and Arthur C. Headlam, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, ICC, 219).

Paul opens part one with two questions. First, he asks for the inference or conclusion that logically follows from "this" (v. 31a), which likely refers to not only what he just said in verses 28-30, but also to what he has said in earlier chapters. No doubt "this section transcends the context and forms the conclusion to the whole division (chs. 5-8)" (Ernst Kaseman, *Commentary on Romans*, 246). Then, he puts the answer to his first question in the form of a second, the point of which is captured by the simple statement: "Since God is for us, no one can be against us." The apostle's point is not that believers have no adversaries, only that they have none they need to fear. Nobody and no "thing" can ultimately endanger or frustrate their ultimate glorification (v. 30), because God is on their side. As one writer so aptly puts it, "The question is not whether we are on God's side, but whether he is on ours. If he is, we may be exposed to perils and pains of every kind, but none can ever endanger our salvation" (C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, HNTC, 172). Thankfully, we

know that he is, because he has acted definitively on our behalf.

The following verses elaborate on this fact. In words that allude to what the Old Testament says about Abraham and about the Servant of the LORD, Paul declares that God did not "spare" his incarnate Son but "delivered" him up for us all (v. 32a). Happily, he doesn't stop there. He goes on to argue from "lesser" to "greater" that because God has given us this incomparable gift, we can be sure he will "graciously give us all things" (v. 32b). One commentator explains, "So great is that gift, so marvelous are its implications, so far-reaching its consequences that all graces of lesser proportion are certain of free bestowment" (Murray, 326). Think of it this way. A man who gives his fiancée a priceless diamond will without a doubt freely give her the ring box also. Furthermore, speaking in forensic terms, Paul assures us that no one is in a position to press charges against believers because "God himself declares them not guilty" (v. 33 GNT) and no one is in a position to condemn them—certainly "not Jesus Christ who died, or rather, who was raised to life and is at the right side of God, pleading with him for [them]!" (v. 34 GNT). In a nutshell, if God justifies those who believe and the risen Christ intercedes for them, their salvation is indeed secure!

Paul opens part two with a question that sets the tone for the next five verses (v. 35). Although it is formally parallel to those in verses 33 and 34, it materially makes a new start. "Left behind is the forensic image of 'God for us'; begun is the more personal and relational emphasis on the love of God in Christ for us" (Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT, 543). The point of the rhetorical question is captured by the simple statement: "No one and no 'thing' will ever separate us from Christ's love for us." When it comes to trouble, hardship, persecution, famine, deprivation, and danger—the kinds of things God's people typically face—believers inevitably come out on top through Christ. Paul's personal conviction in this regard expressed in a list of *merisms*, i.e., figures of speech making use of contrasting extremes to express totality or completeness, follows in verses 38 and 39. He states unequivocally that death nor

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life, angels nor demons, the present nor the future, height nor depth, nor "anything else in all creation" can separate believers from God's love expressed in his provision of salvation through Christ Jesus. Commenting on the apostle's *catch all* phrase, "anything else," one commentator writes, "Lest a picky reader think that Paul has

omitted something that could threaten the believer's security in Christ, Paul concludes with the comprehensive 'any created thing'" (546), which appears to include the decisions of believers themselves after the fact. Salvation is irrevocable.

## *The Message of the Passage*

*God is for us, so nothing in heaven or on earth can ever separate us from his love, which is ours in Christ through faith.*

day **4** **EMBRACE** – how God spoke to you in his word.

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James teaches in James 1:22. Reflect on 3 "living questions" to apply what you have learned this week.

- **Journal your thoughts on the passage:**

–Write about how God is making himself known to you . . .

–Write about how God wants to change you . . .

–Write about how God is calling you to change your world . . .

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# notes **N** STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

- v. 31 **this** "Since Paul has been enumerating these blessings from virtually the first verses of the letter, this paragraph could be the climax of the letter up to this point. At the other extreme, 'these things' in v. 31 could refer only to those blessings enumerated in the immediately preceding verses (28, or 29-30). But the similarity between the language and contents of this passage and Rom. 5 suggests rather that this paragraph, while responding immediately to what Paul has been saying in chap. 8, and especially 8:18-30, is intended to cap Paul's many-sided discussion of Christian assurance in chaps. 5-8 as a whole" (Moo, 537-38).
- v. 31 **if God . . .** Paul answers his first question by asking a rhetorical question, the point of which is "since God is for us, all opposition from others is of no account." "When it is said 'if God is for us', there is no suggestion of doubt; this clause simply states the basis of the confident assurance implied in the succeeding question. 'Who is against us?' does not mean that there are no adversaries. Verses 35, 36 refer to the most violent kinds of opposition. The thought is simply that no adversary is of any account when God is for us" (John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT, 322-23). "The conclusion of the chapter is a recapitulation of all his former arguments, or rather the reduction of them to one, which comprehends them all in their fullest force; God IS FOR US" (Charles Hodge, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 287).
- v. 32 **spare, delivered** Paul's words likely allude to the story of Abraham, who did not "spare" his beloved son, Isaac (Ge 22:12, 16 LXX), as well as to the Suffering Servant of Isaiah, whose soul was "delivered" to death" (Isa 53:12 LXX) (Barrett, 172).
- v. 32 **own** "Calling Christ God's 'own' Son distinguishes him from those many 'adopted' sons that have come into God's family by faith (8:14-16); but it may also suggest a parallel with Abraham's giving of his 'beloved' son Isaac (Gen 22)" (Moo, 540).
- v. 33 **Who . . .** There are at least six possible ways to punctuate verses 34 and 35 (see Moo, 541, who prefers the punctuation in the NASB). While each of the four clauses can be taken as a question (see Barrett, 172), most English versions render the second and fourth as statements (cf., NIV, NET, GNT, ESV, NRSV).
- v. 33 **justifies** The Gk word [*dikaion*] means "to justify, vindicate, treat as just" (*BAGD*, s.v., *dikaioo*), to "declare righteous, or vindicate" (*GEL*, s.v., 34.46, *dikaioo*), "justification being the legal and formal acquittal from guilt by God as Judge, the pronouncement of the sinner as righteous, who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ" (W. E. Vine, *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, s.v., *dikaioo*, 285). "The Judge Himself declares the accused person righteous on the basis of his faith in Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:24; 5:1). As a result all accusations are dismissed and no one can bring an accusation that will stand" (John A. Witmer, "Romans," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*, 475). "To justify, is to declare the claims of justice satisfied. If God, the supreme judge, makes this declaration, it must be true, and it must stop every mouth" (Hodge, 289).
- v. 34 **right hand . . .** Cf., Ac 2:32-36; Eph 1:20-23; Heb 1:3-4, 13. "The language of Jesus being at 'the right hand of God' is taken from Ps. 110:1, one of the most often quoted OT verses in the NT . . . indicating that Jesus has been elevated to the position of 'vice-regent' in God's governance of the universe" (Moo, 543). "The apostle's appeal to the exalted glory, authority, and dominion is related directly to the assurance of the security belonging to the elect of God. Since he has all authority in heaven and in earth, no adverse circumstance or hostile power can wrench his people from his hand or separate [them] from his love" (Murray, 329).
- v. 34 **interceding . . .** Cf., vv. 26-27. "While the high priestly activity of Christ must not be restricted to intercession (cf. Heb. 2:18; 4:14-16), yet the latter is a clearly established phase of the heavenly ministry of Jesus. And the evidence will demonstrate that every need of the believer and *every grace requisite to consummate his redemption* are brought within the scope of Christ's intercession (cf. Heb. 7:24-25)" (329-30, italics added).
- v. 35 **love of Christ** I.e., Christ's love for us, not our love for Christ; cf., "love of God" in v. 39.
- v. 37 **these things** See verse 35.
- v. 37 **more than conquerors** Cf., "we have complete victory" (GNT); "overwhelming victory is ours" (NEB); "we win an overwhelming victory" (Phillips); "we come through all these things triumphantly victorious" (NJB).
- v. 38 **demons** Lit., "rulers" (ESV); "heavenly rulers" (NET, NIV margin). The use of contrast in verse 38 suggests good "angels" versus bad angels, i.e., demons.
- v. 39 **in Christ Jesus** "This love of God . . . through Christ Jesus [GNT] may be expressed in some languages as 'God's love which he has shown by means of Christ Jesus our Lord,' 'God's love which we experience because of Christ Jesus our Lord,' or 'God's love which Jesus Christ our Lord has caused us to experience'" (Barclay M. Newman and Eugene A. Nida, *A Translator's Handbook on Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 1750).

### Family Talk

Encouragement from one parent's heart to another

It was a moment of sheer panic. Several years ago I was in Mervyns with my preschooler, toddler and baby. The boys were in a stroller as Hannah walked beside me. When we arrived in the shoe department, I took Aaron out of the stroller to try a pair of shoes on him. At that moment I was distracted by the cries of Noah. The next thing I knew, Aaron had wandered off. After a quick search I enlisted the help of a store manager and soon everyone was looking for a blond headed toddler boy without shoes. For what seemed like an eternity I was separated from him, not knowing where he was or if he was coming back. Thankfully a sweet lady had seen him exit the store into the mall and brought him back in to find me. After crying and thanking God for his safe return, I vowed to never let them out of my sight. Years later, these 3 teenagers are out of my sight a lot! I find great comfort in knowing, however, that they are never out of God's sight or care. If God is for them, who can be against them? Nothing can separate them from the Father's great love. I think I will remind them of this again tonight at dinner. Thank you Lord for your great love for us!

#### What Does The Bible Say

Read: Read Romans 8:31-39

1. Can anything separate us from the love of Christ?
2. Fill in the blank. "No, in all things we are more than \_\_\_\_\_ through him who loved us." Ro 8:37

#### What Do You Think

Draw a picture to show how you feel about the truth that nothing can separate you from the love of God.

#### What R U Going To Do

Cut out a large heart on a poster board. Work together with your family to write out Romans 8:38-39 on it. Post it close to the dinner table and work on memorizing it this week.

### MEMORY TIME

**Core Comp** Eternity - I believe in heaven, hell and one day Jesus will come again.

**Memory Verse** Ro 8:38-39 - *For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor death, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

### KIDPIX COUPON

I memorized CC \_\_\_\_\_ and Verse \_\_\_\_\_. Family completed **Say** \_\_\_\_\_ **Think** \_\_\_\_\_ **Do** \_\_\_\_\_

Child's name \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Parent's signature \_\_\_\_\_

Earn tokens by completing the Bible study portion of this page.  
Questions: Kids@pantego.org

# 30 CORE COMPETENCIES

## 10 CORE BELIEFS

### **Trinity** 2 Corinthians 13:14

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

### **Salvation By Grace** Ephesians 2:8-9

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

### **Authority of the Bible** 2 Timothy 3:16-17

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

### **Personal God** Psalm 121:1-2

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

### **Identity in Christ** John 1:12

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

### **Church** Ephesians 4:15-16

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

### **Humanity** John 3:16

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

### **Compassion** Psalm 82:3-4

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

### **Eternity** John 14:1-4

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

### **Stewardship** 1 Timothy 6:17-19

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

## 10 CORE PRACTICES

### **Worship** Psalm 95:1-7

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

### **Prayer** Psalm 66:16-20

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

### **Bible Study** Hebrews 4:12

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

### **Single-mindedness** Matthew 6:33

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

### **Spiritual Gifts** Romans 12:4-6

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

### **Biblical Community** Acts 2:44-47

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

### **Giving Away My Time** Colossians 3:17

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

### **Giving Away My Money**

2 Corinthians 8:7

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

### **Giving Away My Faith** Ephesians

6:19-20

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

### **Giving Away My Life** Romans 12:1

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

## 10 CORE VIRTUES

### **Joy** John 15:11

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

### **Peace** Philippians 4:6-7

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

### **Faithfulness** Proverbs 3:3-4

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

### **Self-Control** Titus 2:11-13

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

### **Humility** Philippians 2:3, 4

I choose to esteem others above myself.

### **Love** 1 John 4:10-12

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

### **Patience** Proverbs 14:29

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

### **Kindness/Goodness** 1 Thess. 5:15

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

### **Gentleness** Philippians 4:5

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

### **Hope** Hebrews 6:19-20

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

## About the Authors

**Tom Bulick** (M.A. in Educational Leadership, Eastern Michigan University, Th.M. in Old Testament, and Ph.D. in Bible Exposition, Dallas Theological Seminary). For more than forty years, Tom has served as pastor, faculty member, and administrator. Tom was Vice President for Student Life and Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Trinity Western University (Vancouver, B.C.) for twelve years before accepting the position of Spiritual Formation Pastor at Pantego Bible Church in 1998. He and his wife Ruth have one son, Zach.

**Wendy Hollabaugh** (B.S.W. University of Texas at Arlington) is the Children's Minister at Pantego Bible Church. Wendy has over ten years of experience in Children's Ministry. She has a passion for leading families to connect with God and each other. She enjoys creating compelling environments where kids fall in love with God and His Truth. Wendy and her husband, Greg, are also involved in their own personal youth ministry as they are training their three teenagers, Hannah, Aaron and Noah.



8001 Anderson Blvd.  
Ft. Worth, TX 76120  
1-866-PANTEGO  
Fax 817-275-6403  
www.pantego.org

The mission of THE SCROLLS is to help you Belong, Become, and go Beyond as follower of Jesus Christ through your own active reading of the Bible. Send any questions or comments you may have about this lesson to Tom Bulick. His e-mail address is [tbulick@pantego.org](mailto:tbulick@pantego.org).