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# THE LOOKOUT

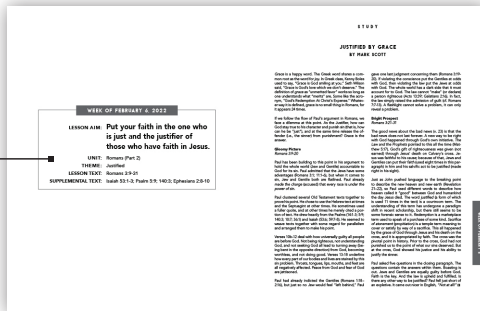
**FEBRUARY 2022**

**Unit: ROMANS (Part 2)**  
**Theme: JUSTIFIED**

**Overview:** To justify something means you make it right—whether it is the margins of a term paper, aligning the front end of a car, or correcting the behavior of an individual. There is no greater book than Romans to discuss being made right with God (justification). Students will learn how they are justified by grace through faith for glory in eternity.

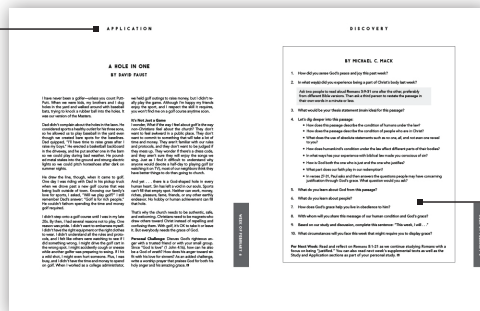
**HOW TO USE**

Each week has a **lesson aim**, **lesson text**, and **supplemental text**.



Tabs indicate the week of each lesson.

Each week features three sections: **Study**, **Application**, and **Discovery**.



Use the **Discovery** questions to study, discuss, and apply the Scripture passages in a group or class.

**WEEK OF FEBRUARY 20, 2022**

**LESSON AIM:** Praise God for the glorious hope that we share as those whom he has called and justified.

**UNIT:** Romans (Part 2)

**THEME:** Justified

**LESSON TEXT:** Romans 8:28-39

**SUPPLEMENTAL TEXT:** Colossians 3:1-3; Ephesians 1:17-19;  
Philippians 2:12-15

## CALLED, JUSTIFIED, GLORIFIED

BY MARK SCOTT

God is in the salvation business, and salvation accomplishes the forgiveness of our sins. But salvation is not limited to forgiveness alone. Much more is involved. Among the larger items: the whole outworking of the plan (mystery) of God, the calling out of a people for his purpose, the efficacy of salvation through justification, the sanctification of those who have been justified, the reconciliation of the entire universe, and the future reality of experiencing God's glory.

Paul's argument about this salvation for both Jew and Gentile advances to another level in chapters 6–8. In part he was answering the issue of how to handle post-baptismal sin (i.e., sanctification). To that issue, Paul made three affirmations: (1) Remember our baptism (chapter 6); this alone will help us live a cut above the world. (2) Remember that we are not "home" yet (chapter 7); the struggle with sin is not completely gone. (3) Remember to live by the empowerment of the Spirit (chapter 8); this will help us deal with the sufferings and groanings of this present world. In fact, if we want to know where the hurts of the world are, listen for the groans. In Romans 8, everyone and everything is groaning—creation, believers, and the Holy Spirit. But through all the groans, believers know they were called, are being justified, and will be glorified.

**What We Know***Romans 8:28-30*

Christians *know* some things intuitively. Believers know God is always working *for the good* of them, even amid their sufferings. [Some "decent" manuscripts do say "all things work together for good." The difference matters, but the sovereignty of God seems to settle those differences.]

God *called* us to accept the gospel *according to his purpose*. In God's omniscience, he knew who would respond to that call (*foreknew* means to "know before the fact"). And those who God *foreknew* would respond to that call he *predestined* (occurring twice in this text; it means "to see before the horizon"). But do not stop reading. He *predestined* these *to be conformed to the image of his Son*. Is God predestining individuals to be saved or is he predestining a believing community to look like Jesus? In light of the next phrase, which completes the sentence, it would seem the latter. Jesus is

the *firstborn* (the one who has the place of supremacy, as in Colossians 1:18) of the *brothers and sisters* that look like him. This believing community (Acts tells how to get into that community) has accepted the call, has experienced justification, and someday will be glorified in the presence of the One who called them.

**What We Say***Romans 8:31-34*

*In response to these things*, we essentially say nothing, for there is nothing to say, except perhaps, "Praise the Lord!" God has acted on our behalf. He is *for* (on behalf of) us. He did not *spare his own Son*, but he *gave him up for us all*. He *graciously gives us all things*. He defends us (no one can bring any charge against us) and does not *condemn* us. Jesus was raised to life for us following his death for us, and now he intercedes for us.

What can we say to all of that? Nothing, as there is nothing to say. Maybe the largest objection to it all is that it seems too good to be true. Paul asked seven questions in this section (when we include v. 35). The answers to all those questions are obvious. There is everything to say and nothing to say.

**What We Experience***Romans 8:35-39*

At this point in this glorious text, it is as if Paul challenges anything in the universe to try to separate him from the love of Christ. Nothing can. In similar form to his seven questions, Paul next offered seven potential things that could separate God from his people—*trouble* (being pressed down from without), *hardship* (stresses from within), *persecution* (being hunted down), *famine*, *nakedness*, *danger*, or *sword* (war). But we experience victory even during these difficulties. The quote from Psalm 44:22 and other texts, such as John 16:33, underline this.

We experience not just victory, but "hyper" victory (for *we are more than conquerors*). Paul was *convinced* (persuaded) that the physical world, the spiritual world, the world of time, the world of power, and the dimensional world could not separate him from *the love of God*. When one is called, justified, and glorified it is hard to imagine what could undo us. ■

## APPLICATION

### GOD IS GOOD WHEN THINGS LOOK BAD

BY DAVID FAUST

Appearances don't determine reality. A fresh coat of paint can spruce up the outside of a building, but what if the foundation is crumbling and termites have weakened the walls? A tall tree eventually will fall if it has a hollow trunk and shallow roots.

A woman might look stylish and self-assured, yet low self-esteem makes her groan inside when she looks in the mirror. A man might have a high-paying job and a stellar reputation, but despite appearing successful, he's never truly satisfied.

A church might have an impressive public image and a full parking lot every Sunday, but that doesn't guarantee its spiritual health. The Christians in Laodicea bragged about their wealth and self-sufficiency, but Jesus saw their true condition and said, "You are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked" (Revelation 3:17).

The opposite can be true as well. Unimpressive-looking things can have significant impact. Without fanfare, a family-owned company grows into a prosperous business. A small church sends and supports missionaries who reach the lost for Christ. A shy teen surprises everyone with her athletic prowess or musical talent. Often, God stores valuable treasures in ordinary clay jars.

Appearances can be deceiving. When we look at our personal problems and the world's conditions, it's tempting to think God has forsaken us. Things looked grim to the sons of Korah, the Hebrew poets who penned the song of complaint we know as Psalm 44. God had blessed in the past, but now the Israelites were scorned and mocked by their enemies, and their armies lost battles they used to win. Why was God hiding his face? Had he fallen asleep on the job? The psalmists felt like they were dying and God was doing nothing to help them.

By putting into words the failure and frustration we often feel, Psalm 44 provides an important backdrop for Romans 8. The apostle Paul quoted Psalm 44:22 in Romans 8:36 when he said, "As it is written, 'For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.'"

Psalm 44 ends with this appeal to God: "Rise up and help us; rescue us because of your unfailing love" (v. 26). Romans 8 gives God's response—a resounding declaration of his "unfailing love."

Even in dire circumstances, when we face "trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword" (v. 35), the Father doesn't abandon us. "No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life" (*our entire life span from conception to final heartbeat*) . . . "neither angels nor demons" (*who influence the world for good or for evil*) . . . "neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth" (*no force anywhere in time or space*) . . . nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (vv. 37-39).

Psalm 44 rings true because the world is a mess and sometimes it looks like God isn't doing anything to help. But appearances don't determine reality. There's more going on than meets the eye. "In all things God works for the good of those who love him" (Romans 8:28).

**Personal Challenge:** In a private place, pray out loud to God. As the psalmists did in Psalm 44, tell the Lord what is bothering you. Then, as Paul did in Romans 8, thank the Lord for his unfailing love, which gives you purpose and hope in all circumstances. ■

## DISCOVERY

BY MICHAEL C. MACK

1. What suffering did you face last week, and what glory resulted from it?
2. To whom did you boast about God's grace through your faith last week?

Ask two people to read aloud **Romans 8:28-39** one after the other, preferably from different Bible versions. Then ask a third person to briefly restate the passage in their own words.

3. What encourages you most in this passage?
4. Let's dig deeper into the passage:
  - What is God's plan and progression for those he calls?
  - In his study material for this lesson, Mark Scott suggests that verse 29, "For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son," may best be understood as God "predestining a believing community to look like Jesus." How does this help you understand and apply this verse?
  - What life issues are addressed in the questions and responses in verses 31-36?
  - Paul obviously wanted his audience to have no doubts about the magnitude of God's love and our relationship with him. What do his passionate statements tell you about people's need to know or be reminded of these things?
5. What do you learn about God from this passage?
6. What do you learn about people?
7. How do all the ways God is providing for you, interceding for you, loving you, protecting you, and empowering you help you to obey him, even when you face trouble?
8. With whom will you share the encouragements from this passage? Which parts of the passage would you focus on with this person?
9. Based on our study and discussion, complete this sentence: "This week, I will . . ."
10. As you serve God this week, what trouble or hardship might you face?

**For Next Week:** Read and reflect on **Romans 10:1-15**. You can also read next week's supplemental texts as well as the Study and Application sections as part of your personal study. ■