



# 2:42LifeGroups

GROWING TOGETHER IN THE GOSPEL

## Life Group Growth Sheet

### The Spirit's Help

Romans 8:26-27

#### Introduction and Review

Someone has said that suffering happens whenever we have what we don't want, or want what we don't have. When we experience this, our impulse is to pray that the Lord would take away what we *don't* want and give us what we *do* want.

But here's where we face a problem. We don't always know whether these prayers are in line with God's will. The Apostle Paul, for example, was given something he did not want: a "thorn given me in the flesh" (2 Corinthians 12:7). Three times he asked the Lord to take it away, but that was not God's will.

This is where we need the Spirit's help. When suffering hits us so hard we don't even know what to pray for, "the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words" (Romans 8:26).

Consider how the Spirit's help fits into the context of this section on present suffering and future glory. Paul has been arguing that "the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us." This glory—our future Christlikeness—is so immense that all creation and we ourselves groan for it. While we know that is our future destiny, we often are confused about how to pray for it, in the middle of our suffering. The Holy Spirit within us takes our troubled groaning, and translates it into requests that align with the will of God, which is that we would be "conformed to the image of his Son." In that way, the Holy Spirit gives us further hope for our future glory.

#### Discussion & Application

1. Read Romans 8:26-27. The "weakness" is our inability to "know what to pray for as we ought." If you made it a practice of praying as a child or teenager, discuss what your life would look like *now* if God answered every wish and prayer you had *then*.
2. Name some reasons why we are unable to "know what to pray for as we ought." Discuss a difficult time in your life when you had no idea even how to pray.
3. Read 2 Corinthians 12:7-10. Paul thought he needed the "thorn" to be removed. What did he actually need? In what ways did the persisting "thorn" become part of the answer?
4. Read Romans 8:26-30. Recall that the ultimate "good" (8:28) is that we "be conformed to the image of [God's] Son" (8:29). How can your knowledge of this shape your prayers for yourself? for others?
5. Someone has said, "God will only give you what you would have asked for if you knew everything he knows." This matches the idea in Romans 8:26-27—that, in light of our ignorance, the God's Spirit takes our agonized, baffled prayers and translates them into God's will. Use your imagination to describe the prayer life and attitude of a person who truly believes this.