

10. God's Triumph

For over a thousand years Roman conquerors returning from the wars enjoyed the honour of a triumph, a tumultuous parade. In the procession came trumpeters, musicians and strange animals from the conquered territories, together with carts laden with treasure and captured armaments. The conqueror rode in a triumphal chariot, the dazed prisoners walking in chains before him. Sometimes his children, robed in white, stood with him in the chariot or rode the trace horses. A slave stood behind the conqueror, holding a golden crown and whispering in his ear a warning: *all glory is fleeting*.

In Romans 8 Paul describes Christians as conquerors, who by God's love and grace overcome all forces that are hostile or harmful to us. But the glory we receive can never be taken from us! Our triumph is God's triumph in us!

Discussion starter:

Sometimes it is easier for Christians to feel more like the conquered than the conquerors. Do you agree? Why / why not?

Read Romans 8:18-39

1. How would you describe the movement of this passage?

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2. In verses 18–25 both we and creation are described as groaning under a situation of 'tension' in this present time. How does the passage explain this?

3. In verses 26–27 we read about the Holy Spirit's role in our prayer life as we experience this tension. How have you experienced this role of the Spirit in your prayer life?

4. In verses 28–30 Paul speaks about all things working for 'the good' of Christians and 'his purpose' for Christians. What is God's good purpose for us?

5. [optional] The two most important words in verses 29–30 are 'God' and 'he'. Of secondary importance are words such as *foreknew*, *predestined*, *called*, *justified* and *glorified*. How do all these words help us understand how God accomplishes his purpose for us?

Pause and read verses 28-39 again quietly for yourselves.

6. Verses 28–39 claim that God is working through *all things* to make us *more than conquerors*. How is God's victory secured?

7. What hardships or obstacles do you fear most will have the power to separate you from inclusion in God's triumph? How does Paul address those fears in this passage?

8. [optional] In a world of uncertainties we are used to expressions like, *don't count your chickens before they hatch* and *it ain't over 'til the fat lady sings*. However, Romans 8 tells us that God's victory in our lives is certain, even if it is not yet complete. What can we do in our lives now in order to give expression to God's triumph?

Pray for each other as you seek to show God's triumph in your lives this week.