

**Romans 8:18-31 – the Holy Spirit Working for Us**  
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Romans 8 is the high point of the discussion in Romans of the work of God in the scheme of Salvation. Indeed, the statement “God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose” in verse 28 nicely sums up the building points Paul has been making about the need for justification by faith in Jesus Christ; God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit have worked together to save us. The first part of Romans 8 speaks to the characteristic of the Holy Spirit dwelling by faith in a believer. The second part now speaks to the working of the Spirit, and the hope we have in Christ.

**The Creation Groans:** In verses 18-23 Paul speaks about a “groaning” of creation for the redemption of the children of God. Creation can mean one of two things. We know that the created earth was cursed when Adam sinned (Gen. 3:17). It could be that Paul speaks of the natural world’s desire to end the futility of decline. However, it could also mean not the natural world but all of mankind. In Mark 16:15 and Colossians 1:23 the word creation refers to the human race as a whole. If this is the case, the creation refers to the idea that all men seek to overcome death, and only through Christ can this be accomplished (1 Cor. 10:13). In this sense, we can consider that even the lost desire the redemption of the sons of God (Luke 16:27-28). God’s desire is that men would overcome the vanity of life (Eccl. 1:2).

**The Holy Spirit in Prayer:** Paul’s continues this idea by describing the hope we have in prayer. He tells us that the Holy Spirit works in our prayer like. This can be a very confusing passage. We are told that Jesus is the sole mediator between God and man (1 Tim. 2:5), and that it is in Jesus’ name and authority that we can pray (John 15:16, etc.). Yet here Paul describes the work of the Holy Spirit in prayer. He tells us that the Holy Spirit makes a form of intercession by making our prayers known to God.

We might consider that one way the Holy Spirit works in our prayer life is through His manifestation in Scriptures. He teaches us what we should say (Matthew 6:9-13) and how we ought to be to be heard of God (James 5:16). There is another work that He does – He identifies those who are saved before God (Ephesians 1:13-14, 4:30, 2 Corinthians 1:22, 5:5). In this work (which might also be seen as one done by Faith, 1 John 5:13) He identifies us as sanctified (set apart) and special to God.

This work of sanctification comes when we are obedient to the Gospel in baptism (1 Cor. 6:11). This is why, when we are baptized, we receive the Gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38), which is the very gift that Paul has been describing in Romans (Rom. 6:23). This sanctification turns our bodies into a temple of the Holy Spirit. Thus, our sanctification that begins in baptism is maintained by our abstinence from sin. This pattern is seen in the Old Testament temple. In 2 Chronicles 6:20 Solomon, when commissioning the temple, told the people that this would be a place where prayers would be heard of God, because it was a sanctified edifice. In 2 Chronicles 7:1 we see the Holy Spirit enter that place in His OT manifestation. When we become Christians, the Holy Spirit sanctifies us as a temple, a place where the prayers of God can be made. When we sin, the temple is desecrated and the Spirit does not sanctify us (identify us to God) as separate from the world. This is why the prayers of sinners are not heard (John 9:30).

**Predestined:** Paul continues to describe the work of the Holy Spirit as one that God had pre-ordained. This speaks to the eternal purpose of God (Ephesians 3:8-12), which was to create the church as a group that is in the pre-determined image of the Firstborn, Jesus Christ. Thus it is the church that is predestined to be saved, and we choose to enter into the church by conforming ourselves to that predetermined image. The plan of salvation, the church, the purpose of the Christ were all determined beforehand. This is the predestination of the saved.