

KEY SCRIPTURE:

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. Romans 8:28 NIV

I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. Romans 8:18 NIV

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. ... Romans 8:26 NIV

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 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. Romans 8:38-39 NIV

¹⁵I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. ¹⁶And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good.¹⁷ As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. ¹⁸For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature.^[a] For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. ¹⁹For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. ²⁰Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it. Romans 7:15-20 NIV

“For as he thinks in his heart, so is he. “Eat and drink!” he says to you, But his heart is not with you.” Proverbs 23:7 NKJV

“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” Romans 12:2 NKJV

“We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ,” 2 Corinthians 10:5 ESV

Start Thinking. Ask a question to get your group thinking.

- Read Romans 8:28, 8:18, and 8:38-39. Have you ever thought of optimism as a spiritual or biblical principle?
- With Romans 8 in mind, what do you think about spiritual optimism as the expectation that God will work every situation for our future good rather than a personality trait that some people have and others do not?
- Does Romans 8 imply that God wants people to grow more optimistic? Explain your perspective.
- How does the context of Romans 7 and 8 enhance our understanding of the message in Romans 8:28? Reflect on the transition from struggle to assurance in Paul's letter.
- Do you think there is sometimes a difference between what is good for you and what you want for yourself? How does that impact your understanding of Romans 8:28?

Start Sharing. Choose a question to create openness.

- Reflect on Paul's perspective on suffering in Romans 8:18. How does understanding the temporary nature of our sufferings compared to eternal glory change how we face challenges?
- Have you ever seen God work a difficult situation for the good of someone who loves Him? What happened?
- How can we differentiate between biblical optimism and worldly optimism? Share personal experiences where your faith led you to optimism in a challenging situation.
- What practical steps can you take to feed your faith and starve your fears? Share how specific scriptures or spiritual practices have helped you shift your focus from fear to faith.
- Discuss how the statement "what consumes your mind, controls your life" applies to your spiritual and everyday life. How have you seen your mindset affect your actions and outlook?
- Share about a time you had to distance yourself from negativity or change your media consumption to protect your peace and optimism. What impact did this have on your spiritual health?
- How does your spiritual community influence your optimism? Share experiences where fellowship helped lift your spirits or change your perspective.

Start Praying. Pray this prayer in your own words with your group.

Father in Heaven, thank you for being so good to us – better than we deserve. Your mercies are new every morning. Help me to be more optimistic about the world you created and the life you've given me. Help me to always assume the best of you and every situation you allow me to experience. I love you and thank you for all of it! In Jesus' name, amen!

Start Doing. Commit to a step and live it out this week.

- Begin building a habit. Find a way to share something you saw God do in your life or the life of someone you know every day.

Taking it to the next level through habit stacking: This is a technique to make starting a habit easier. Think of something you already do every day like brush your teeth or eat supper (be creative). Whenever you do that thing, add your new habit to the existing habit. Example: place a journal next to your toothbrush and every time you brush your teeth you also stop to journal about what God did today.

I'M OPTIMISTIC

Optimism is not a DENIAL of reality.

Optimism is not blind FAITH.

Optimism is CONFIDENCE about the future or a successful outcome.

Optimism is the UNWAIVERING expectation that our loving God is working in every situation for our future good.

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. Romans 8:28 NIV

What consumes your MIND, controls your life.

The quality of your life will never exceed the quality of your THOUGHTS.

Pessimists tend to view negative events as personal and PERMANENT.

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The struggle I'm in today is producing the strength I need TOMORROW !

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REFLECTIONS

Have you ever thought of optimism as the expectation that God will work every situation for our good? What do you think about that?

Read Romans 8:38-39. What would your life be like if you completely trusted that God was always with you and for you?

How can you shift your mindset so that you trust, in every situation, that God is working for our good?

Consider your thoughts this week. If any are negatively affecting your quality of life, ask God to direct those thoughts to Him instead.

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