

The Intercession of the Spirit

How the Spirit helps us when we don't know how to pray as we ought

Greg Reed, Nov. 9, 2025, ATS Series: Life in the Spirit – A Study on the Spirit as our Helper from Romans 8

“In the same way the Spirit also **helps** our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself **intercedes** for us with groanings too deep for words; and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. (Romans 8:26-27).

“What a statement of the unutterable disorder which reigns throughout all creation. ... Nature throughout all her bounds has a confused feeling of it, and from her bosom there rises a continual lament claiming a renovation from heaven. The redeemed themselves are not exempt from this groaning, and wait for their own renewal which shall be the signal of universal restoration; and finally, the Spirit, who is intimate with the plans of God for our glory (1 Cor. 2:7) and who distinctly beholds the ideal of which we have but glimpses, pursues its realization with ardour” – F. Godet

I. Intro: Setting the Context for today's Passage

- What does it mean to “be led by the Spirit” according to Romans 8:14-17?
- Why does a believer who has the “firstfruit” of the Spirit “groan” according to Rom 8:18-25?

II. God's gift of the indwelling Spirit helps us pray in our weakness (vss. 26-27)

A. Why do we need help in prayer?

Table Discussion 1:

Paul declares that one aspect of our weakness is that we don't know how to pray as we ought. (1) discuss what Paul means by “pray as we ought” and come up with a definition of prayer as a table. (2) Share some difficulties that you have experienced or are currently experiencing in your own prayer life.

B. What does this passage reveal about the indwelling Holy Spirit that helps believers pray?

1) The Holy Spirit “helps” us by offsetting the burden of our limited understanding of ourselves and others (vs. 26)

2) The Holy Spirit “intercedes” for us with groans too deep for words (vs. 26b)

3) The Father’s will is accomplished in and through our weakness (vs. 27)

Table Discussion 2: *How does Jesus’s teaching on prayer in Matthew 7:7-11 (or Luke 11:9-13) highlight how the Spirit’s help always directs us to a greater assurance of our Father’s care?*

III. God’s sovereign love helps us pray with assurance (vss. 28-30)

A. God’s **Inseparable Love** for us is revealed by His sovereign control over every circumstance (vs. 28).

1. True prayer trusts the Father’s purpose.
2. True prayer shares the Father’s heart.
3. True prayer accepts the Father’s answers.

B. God’s **purpose to conform us to the likeness of His Son** should be heard in our prayers (vs. 29).

C. God’s **Unbreakable Chain of Salvation from eternity past to future** secures our hope in prayer (vss. 29-30)

1. He “foreknew” us
2. He “predestined” us
3. He “called” us
4. He “justified” us
5. He “glorified” us

Table Discussion 3: *Prayer aligns our hearts to God’s heart and purposes. Do you pray as children of God? Often the “golden chain” that emphasize the security of your salvation is taught in the context of the doctrines of grace. But how are these truths so important for you to pray rightly in light of what vs 27 declares about how the Spirit helps you pray by never ceasing to intercede for you according to the will of God.*