



Part 1: God's Formation Project

Romans 8:18-30

God's destiny for you in Jesus is to make you like Jesus.

I. **Guessing in the Dark**

"Men lust, but they know not what for; they wander and lose track of the goal; they fight and compete, but they forget the prize; they spread seed, but spurn the seasons of growth; they chase power and glory but miss the meaning of life." George Gilder, *Men and Marriage*

"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life."
Jesus (John 8:12)

"For we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters." Romans 8:28-29

II. **Things We Can Know** (Romans 8:18-30)

- A. We know that our present sufferings cannot compare to our glorious future.

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

Paul is speaking of the reality that we live in the overlap of two ages: this present age marked by sin, weakness, decay and death and the age to come marked by life, joy, and glory.

Our sufferings come through our own physical and moral frailty as well as the world's opposition to us as people living the Way of Jesus.

He uses two metaphors to describe our reality in Jesus Christ at the moment: childbirth (v.22) and the harvest (v. 23).

We are saved now, and we have the Holy Spirit as a guarantee of our glorious future, but our salvation is not complete until King Jesus returns to make all things new (Matthew 19:28; Acts 3:19-21; Eph. 1:10; Col. 1:20; Rev. 21&22).

So now we groan. . .but we also have joy knowing our glorious future.

B. We know that we can trust in God's love and providential care for us.

“For 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

This promise is a great foundation for us as we face trials and sufferings of all kinds. The universe is not run by blind chance or brute forces, but by our loving Heavenly Father.

A couple of things to note:

- Not all things are good, but God is working all things for our good: “You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good” (Genesis 50:20).
- The promise is for those who are God's adopted children through Jesus Christ (verses 23, 30).
- Those God “foreknew” (*proginosko*) = those God has “known” in a covenant relationship = those on whom God has set His steadfast love in Jesus.

C. We know God's ultimate goal for us is to make us like Jesus.

“For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.” Romans 8:29

“God knew what he was doing from the very beginning. He decided from the onset to shape the lives of those who love him along the same lines as the life of his Son. The Son stands first in the line of humanity he restored. We see the original and intended shape of our lives there in him. Romans 8:28-29 (The Message)

We are all being formed into a certain kind of person by all kinds of influences – our families, the stories we believe

about reality, our habits, our relationships, our experiences, our environmental influences like media etc. – what Jesus and the New Testament writers call the “world.”

“Therefore, I urge you brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.” Romans 12:1-2

God’s goal in Christ is to counter-form us into the likeness of Jesus so that we increasingly reflect his desires and loves, his character traits, attitudes, convictions, and commitments.

“My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you...” Galatians 4:19

“Christian spiritual formation is the process of being shaped by the Holy Spirit into the likeness of Christ, filled with love for God and the world.” – “A Call to Spiritual Formation,” San Antonio, 2009

III. The Miracle of Spiritual Formation

Example video: “Monarch Metamorphosis” by Joshua Russo (youtube/2:06).

“His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that we may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.” 2 Peter 1:3-4

Through Jesus and the Holy Spirit, God has planted His DNA in us, and we now have the power and knowledge to grow to become like Jesus.

This short series is an introduction to the ways we become like Jesus.