

# **Firm Foundations**



## **4 Bible Studies in Romans 8 for Chinese Returnees Members' Guide**

**Prepared for the Return**

# Romans 8:1-4

## 1. Starter Questions:

- a) Imagine yourself in 10 years' time. In the next 10 years, what things might prevent you standing firm as a Christian?
  
- b) For what reasons have you sometimes felt condemned? (by God or by people)

## 2. Big Question: Why is there no condemnation for Christians?

### ◆ LINKING WORDS TOOL:

- a) Highlight linking words (e.g. 'for', 'therefore', 'so that').
- b) How do these help us answer the Big Question?

This gives us some answers, but it seems a bit confusing. We need some context from Romans 1-7!

### ◆ CONTEXT TOOL:

#### a) Why did we need to be set free from sin and death?

See Romans 1:18, 2:5, 3:10-18, 6:23

#### b) Why could the law not set us free from sin and death?

See Romans 2:23, 3:19-20

#### c) How did God set us free from sin and death?

See Romans 3:21-25

**How does this help us understand the reasons given in 8:3-4 for why we are not condemned?**

**What would we think about God if he condemned someone who has faith in Jesus?**

**Sum up the answer to the Big Question: Why is there no condemnation for Christians?**

**Firm Foundation 1:**

**3. How does this passage help you when you feel condemned?**

Meet Q, an (imaginary!) member of your small group. She has just returned home to Shanghai to work, and emails someone in your group:

*Dear X,*

*I'm back in Shanghai now and really enjoying the food! I started work a few weeks ago.*

*I've been to that chch you suggested, but to be honest it's very difficult to live as a follower back here. I keep being impatient and unkind to my parents, and sometimes I get drunk with my colleagues at work. I had a real sense of peace at chch in the UK, but I don't feel the same peace now. I worry that it's because Father's angry with me, and is punishing me in this way.*

*What should I do?*

*Love Q*

**4. How could you use this passage to encourage Q?**

**5. How will this passage help you to stand firm as a Christian in 10 years' time?**

# Romans 8:5-17

## Before the study...

1. What are the differences between life in the Spirit and life in the flesh?
2. Why do you think Paul tells us about these differences?

**1. Starter Question: When does it feel like a struggle to obey God?**

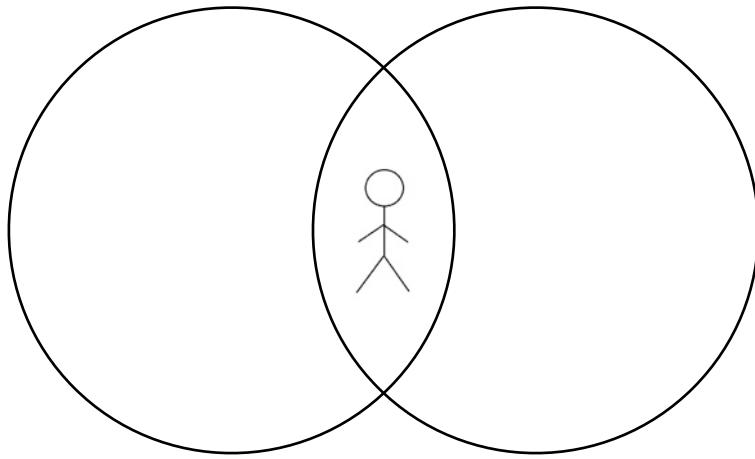
**2. Using the REPETITION TOOL, what is Paul's main topic in this passage?**

**3. What do we learn about these two groups of people?**

Living according to the flesh:	Living according to the Spirit:

**4. How do these two groups differ in their relationship to sin?**  
(What has already changed? What is changing?)

**5. What is the future for each of those two groups?**



**6. How should this passage make Christians feel? How should it help us battle sin?**

**Firm Foundation 2:**

**7. Why should we praise God for the Holy Spirit?**

*Dear X,*

*Your email really helped me - I love those words 'no condemnation'.*

*But it's still not easy to live as our Father wants me to. My boss puts a lot of pressure on me to tell lies at work - it just seems to be what everyone does here. And it's such a struggle to be kind to my parents: I feel like I have to really fight to not shout at them. And when I'm rude to them, they attack my faith and say "If you're a follower now, why have you not become a better daughter?" It feels very depressing; my sin is still such a big problem. Please help!*

*Love Q*

**8. How could you use this passage to encourage Q?**

**9. In what areas might you struggle to obey God after going home?**

**10. How does this passage help you to battle with sin, now and in the future?**

# Romans 8:18-30

## Before the study...

1. What does this passage tell us about Christian experience in the past, present and future?
2. Why is the image of childbirth (v22) such an appropriate one to use?

## 1. Starter Question:

8:17 mentioned 'suffering'. What sort of suffering might you face after returning home(big or small)? Why might such suffering undermine our confidence in the gospel?

## 2. Which of the following do you think this passage is mostly about?

Why do you think that?

- a) Suffering      b) Glory      c) Confidence      d) Something else...?

## 3. Complete the table:

Who is groaning?	Why are they groaning?	How should this make Christians feel?

4. a) Draw a timeline of events:



b) So how does this make us feel about the present and the future?

5. How do v28-30 give us confidence we will get to this future glory?

**Firm Foundation 3:**

6. Why do we sometimes find it hard to believe that future glory outweighs present suffering?

*Dear X,*

*Thanks for the encouragement - it's still not easy at work, my boss still puts pressure on me to be dishonest, but I'm trying to 'live by the Sp!r!t' and do what pleases our Father. My boss doesn't understand though and makes it clear I'm letting him down; sometimes I even worry I might lose my job.*

*Also, I have some more bad news to share with you: my Dad's health has got worse and worse recently, and now he mostly stays in bed. The doctors don't know how to treat him and I'm so worried about him. You know, it just feels like life's got worse since I became a follower. Do you think I'm doing something wrong?*

*Love Q*

7. How could you use this passage to encourage Q?

8. How will this passage help you face the suffering you mentioned at the start?  
How might God use this suffering for our good?

# Romans 8:31-39

## Before the study...

1. What sort of language does Paul use in this passage? How do you think he wants us to feel as we read it?
2. Look up Psalm 44:11-22, which Paul quotes from in v36.
  - What is the situation of the people in the Psalm?
  - So what point is Paul making by quoting the Psalm?

1. Starter Question: How do you know that God loves you?

2. Using the TONE AND FEEL TOOL, how does Paul want us to feel as we read this passage?

3. Fill in the table below:

Paul's question	What is the answer?	How does this give us confidence that God loves us?
v31		
v32		
v33		



v34		
v35-39		

4. Using the QUOTATION/ALLUSION TOOL, as suggested in the preparation questions:

a) Why does Paul quote from Psalm 44 in v36?

b) How should this passage encourage Christians who are suffering?

5. How does this passage help us to answer the question “How do you know that God loves you?” with greater confidence?

**Firm Foundation 4:**

Dear X,

*I can't believe this has happened. I've been prying so hard that things would get better at work, but my company has been doing badly recently, and yesterday my boss told me that I will have to leave at the end of the month. I just don't understand - without my salary, how will my parents afford the medical bills for my Dad's treatment? His health is still getting worse.*

*I tried to share my belief with my Mum but she said "You tell me that your G\*d loves you, but if that's true, why is your Dad ill, and why have you lost your job?" I didn't know how to answer her, and deep inside I'm beginning to worry that she might be right.*

Love Q

6. How could you use this passage to encourage Q?

**7. What things might make you doubt God's love after you return home?**

**8. How does this passage give you confidence that you will get to future glory?**

**9. Looking back over the whole of Romans 8:**

**a) What things can you praise God for?**

**b) How will this chapter help you to stand firm as a Christian in 10 years' time?**  
(See Study 1, Question 1)