

“Secure for Sure!” (Romans 8:31–39)

In 1937 the great Golden Gate Bridge was completed. It cost over \$35 million to build and was completed in two phases: the first slowly and the second rapidly. In the first stage, no safety devices were used. As a result, twenty–three men fell to their deaths. However, for the final part of the project, a large safety net was used as a precaution. At least ten men fell into the net and were saved from certain death. Once the net was installed production increased by 25%. Why? Because the men were assured of their security and they were free to wholeheartedly serve the project.

Security is a critical element in life. Unfortunately, it’s also very elusive. Recent world events in Japan and Libya demonstrate how insecure our world is. On a personal level, perhaps you live in insecurity because you have been the victim of a crime such as robbery or rape. Maybe your spouse has threatened divorce and you lack marital security. Your children may be struggling with physical or emotional issues that have deprived you of security. Perhaps you’ve lost your job and your retirement has plummeted leaving you feeling hopelessly insecure. Reflecting on your life, you realize that you have little or no security in those areas where you crave it most. Fortunately, in the single area that truly matters most—your relationship with God—you can have ultimate security. The Bible declares that God offers believers His unconditional love and acceptance. Yet, you may struggle with this notion. Maybe you have never experienced unconditional love and approval from your parents. Perhaps you have experienced rejection and betrayal from a spouse, from relatives, or from friends. Consequently, you are skeptical and cynical of people because you have been hurt so many times. I hurt for you and that’s why I want you to know that God’s love for you is perfect and He will never let you go. He yearns for you to have complete assurance and security in Him. This peace and confidence is absolutely critical if you are to experience the Christian life the way God intended.

Romans 8:31–39 may be the most comforting and encouraging passage in the entire Bible.¹ These verses definitively declare that: *Security leads to stability and productivity*. Paul offers three hopeful assurances: (1) There is no opposition (8:31–32); (2) there is no condemnation (8:33–34); and (3) there is no separation (8:35–39).²

1. There is no opposition (8:31–32). In spite of who or what comes against you, God is for you. In 8:31a Paul writes, “**What then shall we say to these things?**”³ This is the first of seven questions in this passage. Seven is the number of completion and perfection in the Bible. Throughout this passage, Paul’s goal is to exhaust any and every objection. “These things” (*tauta*) likely refers to the previous contents of his letter (1:18–8:30).⁴ This section is the *Cliff Notes* on Romans 1–8. Since Paul is astounded by God’s unconditional love he writes in 8:31b, “**If God is for us, who is against us?**” Notice Paul doesn’t ask the question, “Who is against us?” Rather, he qualifies the question with the phrase: “If God is for us . . .” The Greek word “if” (*ei*) is not a term of uncertainty, but of certainty. Paul is saying, “If God is working on our behalf (and He is), then who could succeed in opposing us?”⁵ His point is that no adversary or enemy is of any account when God is for us.⁶ Romans 8:31 was John Calvin’s life verse because it brought him much comfort and confidence.⁷ Today you may feel defeated, but Paul’s encouraging truth is that evil will never ultimately prevail. You will always be led to victory in Christ because God is for you.⁸ Today personalize the verse by adding your name: “If God is for _____, who is against _____?”⁹

In the movie, *The Lion King*, the young cub Simba is being surrounded by hyenas, and he gets ready to defend himself, when his father jumps up behind Simba and roars. At that great roar, the hyenas scatter. Now the truth is, sometimes hyenas do gang up on and defeat adult male lions. But, if every created being in the universe were to gang up on God, they still would not be able to defeat Him. With that kind of God for you, who can possibly be against you? Who or what do you have to fear? No one. Nothing. *Security leads to stability and productivity.*

In 8:32 Paul answers the question of 8:31 with a rhetorical question: “**He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him¹⁰ over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give¹¹ us all things?**”¹² Paul argues from the greater to the lesser. If God has done the big thing, delivering up Jesus, will He not do the little thing? For God to give up Jesus to death and then abandon you on the highway to heaven would be like a rich man spending a vast sum on a car and then leaving it on the roadside because he couldn’t afford the gasoline to run it. How absurd!¹³ That is the idea behind Paul’s argument here. Since God gave up His Son to buy your eternal life, He will certainly give you whatever you need to live for Him now.¹⁴ But this phrase “all things” (*panta*) does not include Rolls-Royces, mansions, expensive jewelry, and elaborate wardrobes. The health, wealth, and prosperity gospel teaching is a false doctrine. Paul’s assertion is designed to drive home the unshakable assurance that God will do whatever is necessary to guarantee your ultimate glorification.¹⁵

[Not only is there no opposition, Paul also says that . . .]

2. There is no condemnation (8:33–34). Although you may feel condemned from time to time, God’s love for you is timeless and He will never condemn you. Paul writes in 8:33, “**Who will bring a charge¹⁶ against God’s elect?¹⁷ God is the one who justifies.**”¹⁸ This is a rhetorical question, equivalent to an emphatic denial. So the question is: Who would dare “bring a charge against God’s elect?” The answer, of course, is no one. This question is from a courtroom setting.¹⁹ No one can charge you with sin crimes because God has justified you. God has acquitted you and declared you righteous before His perfect justice. If God pronounced this verdict, who can resurrect the charges of wrong doing that would bring you before Him again? There is no double jeopardy in God’s legal system! As a believer, you can be sure you are eternally secure because there is no sin that has not already been dealt with by Christ. Therefore, if God the Father went to all this work to save you, it is nonsensical to contemplate the remote possibility that you could somehow be lost. If “God is the one who justifies,” who is able to “unjustify” you? Absolutely no one!²⁰

Verse 33 demonstrates the significance of the doctrine of election. A man I greatly respect, D. L. Moody, once explained his view of election: “God votes for you, Satan votes against you, and you break the tie.” Now I am sure you can see the problem with this view: (1) Satan is on par with God, and (2) your choice is stronger than God’s sovereignty and Satan’s power. Unfortunately, Moody was incorrect on this point. Although I don’t completely understand election and predestination, the Bible teaches that God has chosen individuals for Himself. Although this is a very controversial issue, the biblical writers typically discuss election in the context of suffering and persecution. These men wanted believers down through the ages to know that despite their suffering they had been chosen by God. Theologically speaking, God’s election of believers secures their eternal destiny because God is the one who has made the choice.²¹ If salvation is dependent upon your choice, you could potentially “unchoose” God and lose your salvation. But if God is the one who has chosen you, it is up to Him to determine your eternal destiny. Fortunately, once God chooses you, He never rejects you. This is an incredibly liberating truth. Your heavenly Father brought you into this world, He sustains you in this world, and He will preserve you for the world to come. What assurance! What security! Indeed, *security leads to stability and productivity.*

[Invite my daughter Jena on stage.] “Jena, will you please hold on to my pinky finger? Do you have a good grip? Will you always be able to hold on to my finger? What happens if you get tired or weak?” Jena responds, “I would lose my grip and fall down.” “That’s right! But since I’m your Dad I’m going to hold your hand and never let you go. Even if you let go of me, even if you stumble and attempt to fall, I’m going to keep you because I am strong and I have made a commitment to you.” I wish I could keep this commitment perfectly, but it’s not possible. However, God is able to hold on to Jena and every other believer. He will hold your hand with an everlasting grasp. If your salvation depends upon your hanging onto God, you are in deep trouble. But you are not going to heaven because you are hanging onto God. You’re going to go to heaven because God is holding onto you.

In 8:34 Paul asks, “**Who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.**” Christ Jesus (1) died, (2) was raised, (3) is sitting in power, and (4) is now residing at the right hand of God, interceding for us.²² These four acts have accomplished and secured our salvation. We can be certain! The word “intercedes” (*entugchano*) is also from the courtroom.²³ It refers to the word of a defense attorney or advocate. As your defense attorney, you can count on Jesus Christ to win your case. He now lives in the presence of God, at His right hand, pleading your case before the Father.²⁴ His plea for you is based on the finished and sufficient work He did on the cross. You can be sure you are eternally saved because your sins—past, present, and future—remain paid for by Jesus Christ.

Have you been struggling with a besetting sin and wondering if God will ever forgive you? Maybe there is a sin in your past that you consider to be so heinous that you wonder if your status in the family of God is lost or in jeopardy. Perhaps you’ve been apart of a crime or lived life in such a way that you wonder if the Lord will remove your relationship with Him as a consequence. Cling tightly to the understanding that if you’ve believed in Christ as your Savior He will not condemn you nor abandon you. So don’t be paralyzed by your guilt any longer. Allow God’s assurance and security to motivate you to ensure that you’re in fellowship with Christ.

Steve Winger writes about his last college test, a final in a logic class known for its difficult exams. To help students complete the final, the professor told them they could bring as much information to the exam as we could fit on a piece of notebook paper. Most students crammed as many facts as possible on their 8 ½ x 11 inch sheet of paper. But one student walked into class, put a piece of notebook paper on the floor, and had an advanced logic student stand on the paper. The advanced logic student told him everything he needed to know. He was the only student to receive an “A.”²⁵ Much like this advanced student, Jesus Christ is our intercessor. He preserves our salvation through His continual intercession. *Security leads to stability and productivity.*

[Paul indicates that there is no opposition and no condemnation. Now he clinches his argument by exclaiming that . . .]

3. There is no separation (8:35–39). Since God set His love upon you in eternity past, He will continue to love you for all eternity. Paul makes this point inextricably clear by emphasizing the love of God or Christ three times in this section (8:35, 37, 39; cf. 5:5–8).²⁶ Furthermore, the verb “separate” (*chorizo*) bookends this section (8:35, 39), confirming that there is no separation in your relationship with God. Paul begins with the question that is potentially the most critical question a Christian can ask: “**Who will separate us from the love of Christ?**” (8:35a) Of course, the answer is: No one can separate us from the love of Christ.²⁷ However, you may say, “But I don’t feel like I love Christ all the time.” No, you misread 8:35a.²⁸ It’s not who is going to separate us from our love for Christ, but who is going to separate us from Christ’s love for us. I don’t know about you, but my love for Christ can fluctuate between hot and cold. If my salvation depends upon the fervency of my love for Christ, I would have already been cast into hell. Thankfully, my salvation does not depend upon my love for Christ; rather, it depends upon Christ’s love for me. His life, death, resurrection, and intercession have secured my eternal destiny. The only reason that I will spend eternity with God is because of the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Paul knows his original Roman recipients are suffering, so he brings up a list of potential obstacles to his claim that there is no separation with God: “**Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?**” (8:35b)²⁹ Paul emphasizes both the deprivations and insecurities of life. He includes a list of seven. Interestingly, it is likely that the list itself reflects the very difficulties Paul went through in his ministry (see 2 Cor 11:26–27; 12:10).³⁰ He experienced the first six items, and the seventh was always threatening him. Paul seems to imply that you can expect some of these trials as well. They may rock your faith, but God will see you through as He did with Paul.³¹

In 8:36 Paul does indeed affirm that the sufferings in 8:35b do strike believers: **“Just as it is written, ‘FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG;’³² WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED.”** Paul quotes from Psalm 44:22 (LXX 43:23) where the sons of Korah lament the death of those who belong to the Lord at the hands of evil men. The context of Ps 44 is instructive because the psalmist laments the suffering of the righteous, who have not abandoned God’s name, and yet are subjected to humiliation, defeat, and mockery. What Paul affirms in Romans is that such mockery and suffering are inevitably the lot of Christians.³³

Fortunately though, Paul has some good news in 8:37: **“But³⁴ in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.”** Paul is so excited that he coins a Greek word (*hupernikao*).³⁵ The word translated “overwhelmingly conquer” is a word that contains the prefix “above” (*huper*) and the verb “conquer” (*nikao*). The root of this verb is the word *nike*. I share this with you so that when you see the Nike emblem or watch a Nike commercial, you will remember Romans 8:37. Through Christ, we are not just victorious, we “overwhelmingly conquer!” And notice that this phrase is in the present tense, which means right now this is true. Once again, the reason that you can have such confidence in your present and future experience is because of God’s sovereign choice and actions. The tense of the phrase “through Him who loved us” is a past tense. It is not simply that God loves you, although that is true. Paul’s point is that God has already done everything that needs to be done for your total security!³⁶ This is a wonderful mixed metaphor, “conquering sheep.” Believers are conquerors through Christ.³⁷

In 8:38–39 Paul pulls out all the stops. In his emotion he even switches to the first person: **“For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”** Please notice the passionate phrase, “I am convinced . . .” Paul chooses a Greek perfect tense verb that conveys an existing condition brought about in the past with present realities. This means something like, “I was convinced in the past and I am fully convinced in the present.” When Paul says he is convinced, he speaks as a man who has staked his life upon certain unchanging realities.

There are three pairs in 8:38–39: (1) Death/life: Nothing in this life and nothing in death can separate a believer from God’s love. The two things we fear most, living and dying, are not threats to our eternal life. Whether we live or die, we are in God’s love. (2) Things present/things to come: Nothing in our present experience, nor anything to come, can separate us from God’s love in Christ. (3) Height/depth: If we were to travel to the “highest” or “lowest” points in the universe, or anywhere in between, we would never arrive at a place where we could escape Christ’s love. There is nowhere we can go where anyone or anything can take our eternal salvation away from us. By using these three pairs Paul could not be any plainer or clearer. Eternal life is *eternal*: Nothing in life or in death, nothing in our present or in our future, nothing in the entire universe, no matter how “high” or “low” we might go—nothing can separate us from His love. Paul selected these pairs because each represents the extreme of something dear to us (i.e., existence, time, and location). Just like we can’t cease being the children of our earthly parents once we are born, so we can’t cease being children of God once we are born again. We can no more be unborn spiritually than we can go back and be unborn physically. When we trust in Christ for salvation, by His grace, at that very moment, we become members of God’s family forever.

Paul also used two non-pairs of expressions. One is a triplet and one is a single image: (1) Nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers. This triplet refers to angelic and demonic powers. Paul has already made it crystal-clear that nothing can separate us from Christ’s love. However, he decided to mention a specific concern that his readers might have had. Angels and demons are more powerful than we are. They are unseen. Yet, there is nothing that can separate us from God’s love—including angels and demons. While the Devil and demons can make believers’ present lives miserable if we yield to their influence, they cannot take away our eternal life. “Greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world” (1 John 4:4).

(2) Nor any other created thing. Let me ask you a question: Are you a creature? Well, of course you are. There are only two classes of beings in existence: The Creator and the creatures. If you are not God, the Creator, then you are one of His creatures, a part of His creation. Therefore, this phrase includes you.³⁸ Paul has struggled to be as comprehensive as possible. Every conceivable chasm has been filled. All theological bases have been covered. Nothing can separate us from His love. That includes anything that we as believers might do, think, or say. Paul's reason for including this last element is to fill out the list. God is clear that nowhere, no way, at no time can we be removed from His love. The moment we place our trust in Christ alone to save us we can and should know that we are completely forgiven and secure in the love of Christ. So the question is not, "Can I lose my salvation?" but rather, "Can God lose me?" The only way you can lose your salvation is if you are more powerful than God! This chapter begins with "no condemnation" (8:1) and ends with "no separation" (8:39). Moreover, the phrase "Christ Jesus our Lord" occurs at the end of chapters 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 (4:24; 5:1, 21; 6:23; 7:25; 8:39). Security comes from Christ!

But won't this teaching that we are secure promoting ungodliness? There is no teaching, no matter how correct, that will bring back all of God's wayward children—or keep all of God's children from becoming wayward. Prodigals are a regrettable, but unfortunate reality.³⁹ However, *security should lead to stability and productivity*. Suppose a young woman becomes engaged to a man. She knows that he is trustworthy. He will keep his word to marry her. Does she then use this promise as an excuse to sleep with other men, knowing that her fiancé will marry her no matter what? Of course not! She loves her suitor. His commitment to marry her makes her love him more. Secure in his love, she wants to please him in everything.⁴⁰ Similarly, the Christian life should lead to gratitude and obedience, not waywardness.

So how can we apply this great doctrine? *First, claim the promises of God's Word.* Memorize Scriptures such as Romans 8:38–39; John 5:24; and 1 John 5:11–13. Stand on them! Knowing that you are saved is the most liberating, life-changing doctrine you can ever grasp. Security acts as a fortress of strength against the condemnation of Satan and our own fleshly doubts, and it adds zeal and vitality to Christian service. An uncertain salvation is a sad one, which repels rather than attracts others. Do not waste years in self-introspection and doubt. Move forward with confidence that you are secure in Christ.

Second, love others with God's unconditional love. If you are secure, you will be able to love others. If you are insecure you will be introspectively concerned about yourself. Yet, God's love for you should compel you to have His love for others. Has one of your children adopted a rebellious lifestyle? Has your spouse been unfaithful? Why not unconditionally love them just as God unconditionally loves you? When those around you stumble and fall, when they act unloving and unmerciful, don't wash your hands of them. Show them the love of Christ by being ready and willing to forgive and to restore them always.

You may not accept my understanding of this passage. If so, that is your prerogative, but I ask you to consider this: I love my three children with a passion. I would lay down my life for any one of them. Yet, I know that they may not always respond with love toward me. Any or all of my three children could grow to despise me. They could potentially express their disdain for me by disobeying me, cursing me, hitting me, spitting in my face, running away from home, and changing their last name. Nonetheless, no act of sin or rebellion will ever change the fact that I love my kids. They will forever be my children. Now, regardless of how much I love Joshua, Justin, and Jena, my love for my children could well be called hatred when measured against the love our heavenly Father has for His kids. I am an arrogant, selfish, impatient, and sinful man. God, on the other hand, is selfless, patient, gracious, and perfect. If He can allow me to remain committed to my children, how much more so can He continue to love you in spite of yourself? Paul said it well, "If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself" (2 Tim 2:13). When God says that His love for His children is unconditional and eternal, you can be sure He means it!

Closing prayer: There are three kinds of security:⁴¹

(1) *Sure, but not secure.* These people believe that they have confirmed reservations in heaven. But they are self-deceived. They are like the legalists of Christ's day who mistakenly thought that God would accept them on the basis of their own good efforts (Luke 18:9–14).

(2) *Secure, but not sure.* Such a person has trusted in Christ as Savior and is held firmly in the protective hand of God (cf. John 10:27–29). But, when failure occurs and guilt comes in like a flood, or when mental, physical, and emotional exhaustion set in, such a person becomes confused by feelings.

(3) *Sure and secure.* This person has trusted in Christ and continues to affirm his/her security is based upon the promises of God's Word. It is as if you were to ask me whose son I am, I would respond, "I am the son of Richard and Pat Krell." I have proof that would stand up in a court of law—a birth certificate. A piece of paper assures me that I am their son. God has given us a piece of paper—the inspired Word of God. It assures us that once we've trusted Christ, we are His. Our salvation is based upon a promise that cannot be broken. It comes from a God who cannot lie.⁴²

I sincerely pray that you are both sure and secure. If not, I urge you to make sure you have believed in Jesus Christ as your Savior. Recognize that there is nothing you can do to escape the penalty of your own sin. Throw yourself on the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ. Trust in His death and resurrection for your sins. He will give you new life, immediate assurance, and eternal security.

Scripture References

Romans 8:31–39

John 3:36; 5:24; Acts 16:31

1 Corinthians 1:8–9; 3:10–15

Ephesians 1:13–14; 4:30

Colossians 2:13–14

2 Timothy 1:12

1 John 5:9–13

Study Questions

1. Have I ever felt like God is not for me (Romans 8:31–32)? How has God demonstrated that He is for me? What spiritual/emotional forces or persons have I felt were against me? How do my circumstances tempt me to doubt God's love? How has God revealed His love to me?
2. What charges have come against me since I have been a Christian (Romans 8:33–34)? In what ways have I felt condemnation as a Christian? How does this square with the teaching of Romans 8:1? Why is it so important to recognize that I have been chosen by God? What difference does this reality make?
3. What person(s) or force is stronger than/able to separate me from Christ (Romans 8:35–37)? Why then don't I live my life as a person who is more than a conqueror? How can I address the threats that tend to keep me from the victorious Christian life?
4. When have I felt like I jeopardized my eternal salvation (Romans 8:38–39)? What made me feel this way? In light of this text, were my feelings/beliefs biblically legitimate? Why or why not? When these faulty thoughts or beliefs enter my mind again how will I respond?
5. How can my attitudes, actions, and words reflect the eternal security promised in God's Word? When called upon, how will I counsel a new believer who is struggling with the assurance of his or her salvation? How will I choose to exude unity when discussing this controversial matter with other believers?

Notes

¹ Mounce writes, “Nowhere in the annals of sacred literature do we find anything to match the power and beauty of this remarkable paean of praise.” Robert Mounce, *Romans*. The New American Commentary series (Nashville: Broadman, 1995), 173.

² Osborne suggests, “There are two main sections, each with two subsections, verses 31–34 on judicial victory in Christ (with vv. 31–32 on the gift of God’s Son and vv. 33–34 on the victory in Christ) and verses 35–39 on the inseparable love of the Godhead (with vv. 35–36 on the love of Christ and vv. 37–38 on the love of God).” Grant R. Osborne, *Romans*. The IVP NT Commentary series (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2004), 225.

³ *Ti oun* (“What then”) is used eleven times in Romans. This phrase is often used by Paul to divide sections. “What then shall we say to these things” is a favorite phrase with Paul which reflects his diatribe form of presentation (cf. 3:5; 4:1; 6:1; 7:7; 9:14, 30).

⁴ The antecedent of *tauta* is neuter while the pronouns and substantives of the preceding verses are masculine. Therefore, grammatically it appears that Paul is reaching farther back than Rom 8:29–30. Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 334–35 takes this view. However, Moo and Schreiner prefer to take this passage back only to Rom 5:1. Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*. New International Commentary of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 539; Thomas Schreiner, *Romans*. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 455. Schreiner does allow for the possibility that Paul refers all the way back to 1:16 (457).

⁵ Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 335; John R. W. Stott, *Romans: God’s Good News for the World* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1994), 254–55.

⁶ Barnett claims that Paul echoes David’s confidence in God (see Ps 23:4; 56:9, 11). Paul Barnett, *Romans: The Revelation of God’s Righteousness* (Scotland: Christian Focus, 2003), 199.

⁷ Knight states: “That ‘God is for us’ is the distilled essence of the gospel. That realization will give us courage to continue day by day.” George R. Knight, *Exploring Romans: A Devotional Commentary* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2010), 187.

⁸ Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 335: “He [Paul] means that with God ‘for us’ it makes not the slightest particle of difference who is against us.”

⁹ R. Kent Hughes, *Romans: Righteousness from Heaven*. Preaching the Word (Wheaton: Crossway, 1991), Electronic ed.

¹⁰ The verb *paradidomi* (“to deliver over”) is used six times in Romans (1:24, 26, 28; 4:25; 6:17; 8:32). Barnett, *Romans*, 199 n. 13: “Paul echoes the Greek text of Isaiah 53:6: ‘the Lord gave him up to our sins.’”

¹¹ The verb translated “freely give” (*charizomai*) is the verb for “grace.”

¹² Rom 8:32 is an allusion to Abraham giving up Isaac in Gen 22:16 LXX. See also Schreiner, *Romans*, 458.

¹³ Christopher Ash, *Teaching Romans, Volume 1* (London: Proclamation of Trust, 2009), 307.

¹⁴ See 2 Pet 1:3.

¹⁵ As Paul writes in Ephesians 1:3, “[He] has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.”

¹⁶ This is the only use of the verb *egkaleo* (“to bring a charge”) in Paul’s letters.

¹⁷ The verbal adjective *eklektos* appears six times in Paul’s letters (Rom 8:33; 16:13; Col 3:12; 1 Tim 5:21; 2 Tim 2:10; Titus 1:1).

¹⁸ This is an allusion to Isa 50:8 where the reference is singular; Paul applies this to all believers (“God’s *elect*” is plural here).

¹⁹ Notice the legal terms in Rom 8:31–34: “against” (8:31); “a charge” (8:33); “justifies” (8:33); “condemns” (8:34); and “intercedes” (8:34).

²⁰ Although there are severe warnings in the NT, there are no warnings about loss of justification, loss of regeneration, or loss of adoption/sonship. The warnings pertain to a loss of physical life, temporal blessings, and eternal rewards.

²¹ Tozer wrote, “We pursue God because, and only because, He has first put an urge within us that spurs us to that pursuit.” A. W. Tozer, *The Pursuit of God* (Camp Hill: Christian Publications, 1993), 11.

²² Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 542–43 observes, “The language of Jesus being at ‘the right hand of God’ is taken from Ps. 110:1, one of the most often quoted OT verses in the NT. The language is, of course, metaphorical, indicating that Jesus has been elevated to the position of ‘vice-regent’ in God’s governance of the universe. But it is not with the universe, but with Christians, that Paul is concerned here. Because Christ lives and has ascended, he is able to ‘intercede’ for us, acting as our High Priest in the very presence of God.”

²³ A form of the word *entugchano* (“intercedes”) is used in Acts 25:24; Rom 8:27; 11:2; and Heb 7:25.

²⁴ Robert Murray McCheyne (1813–1843), pioneer missionary to America, testified, “If I could hear Christ praying for me in the next room, I would not fear a million enemies. Yet distance makes no difference. He is praying for me!”

²⁵ *Leadership*, Vol. 15, no. 4.

²⁶ Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 539.

²⁷ Karl Barth, a world renowned German theologian, was invited to deliver one of the distinguished lectureships at a theological seminary in the East, and while he was there a group of ministers, theologians, and dignitaries of one kind or another sat down with him in a kind of question-and-answer period. Someone asked the question, “What is the most profound thought that you know, Dr. Barth?” This is what he said: “Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so.”

²⁸ The genitive phrase “the love of Christ” can be understood “our love for Christ” or “Christ’s love for us,” depending on whether we see the genitive as subjective or objective. But, it is generally agreed that it is Christ’s love of which Paul writes (see Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 338).

²⁹ *Contra* Schreiner, *Romans*, 466 who states, “Paul is not only saying that Christ still loves believers when persecution arrives, . . . He is also saying that the love of Christ is so powerful that believers will not forsake him despite the sword, persecution, famine, and so on.” The problem with this concluding remark is that Schreiner fails to acknowledge that some believers do fail in their faith when persecution comes. Eaton correctly argues: “The danger that he had in mind was that we ourselves might turn away from God’s love in Christ Jesus because of the tribulation or persecution or whatever that might come upon us. This is the very thing that Paul is denying is possible. He is not denying that we can ever fail or fall. He knows too well that we can fail badly. He is not denying that we can fail, but he is denying that the love of God will ever be taken away. Even if we fail, the love of God will not be taken away. We shall still never be separated from the love of God in Christ.” Michael Eaton, *Romans*. Preaching Through the Bible (Kent, UK: Sovereign World Trust, 2010), 150.

³⁰ Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 543 notes Paul’s own experience of the sufferings and persecutions that follow: “The list of difficulties that follows requires little comment, except to note that all the items except the last are found also in 2 Cor. 11:26-27 and 12:10, where Paul lists some of those hazards he himself has encountered in his apostolic labors. All these, then, Paul himself has experienced, and he has been able to prove for himself that they are quite incapable of disrupting his relationship with the love of Christ. And the last — the ‘sword,’ death by execution — Paul was to find overcome for him in the love of Christ at the end of his life.”

³¹ Barrett comments, “Suffering and persecution are not mere evils which Christians must expect and endure as best they can; they are the scene of the overwhelming victory which Christians are winning through Christ.” C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (New York: Harper & Row, 1957), 173.

³² The expression is a hyperbole (exaggeration for effect) meaning that we are constantly in danger of death (1 Cor 15:30). Notice the treatment of God’s people as described in Heb 11:36–38.

³³ Schreiner, *Romans*, 462.

³⁴ Paul uses the conjunction *alla* (“but”) to negate the thought that suffering and death implies defeat (cf. 8:35–36).

³⁵ BDAG s.v. *hupernikao*: “We are winning a most glorious victory.”

³⁶ Eaton, *Romans*, 150. Harrison and Hagner correctly state, “By saying ‘loved us,’ Paul does not intend to restrict Christ’s love to the past; rather, he is emphasizing that historic demonstration of this love on the cross that gives assurance of its continuing under all circumstances. Nothing in all of life, with its allurements and dangers and trials, can separate the believer from that love.” Everett F. Harrison and Donald A. Hagner, “Romans” in the *Revised Expositors Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 144.

³⁷ Cf. John 16:33; 1 John 2:13–14; 4:4; 5:4.

³⁸ Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 546–47; Schreiner, *Romans*, 465. Some scholars argue that Rom 8:39 does not include the believer, for the lists in this section are all pressures outside the person. E.g., I. H. Marshall *Kept by the Power of God: A Study of Perseverance and Falling Away* (Minneapolis: Bethany, 1969), 93–94; Osborne, *Romans*, 232; Knight, *Exploring Romans*, 190.

³⁹ John Hart, “The Letter to the Romans,” unpublished class notes (2010 ed.), Moody Bible Institute.

⁴⁰ Erwin W. Lutzer, *How You Can Be Sure That You Will Spend Eternity With God* (Chicago: Moody, 1996), 102.

⁴¹ These three points are taken from Martin R. De Haan II, *Safe & Secure: The Permanence of Salvation* (Grand Rapids: Radio Bible Class [1989], 1998), 32.

⁴² R. Larry Moyer, *21 Things God Never Said* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2004), 83.