

Soon... But Not Yet!

Romans 8:18-30

August Memory Verse: Romans 6:23 "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

NOTE: What a great truth to teach our children and preach to ourselves as well! Because of our sin, we have earned death. But God's gift to us through Christ is eternal life.

Opening Activity: Choose one or two that seem most appropriate for your children to start the lesson. Feel free to work them into the lesson if your kids tend to get antsy and need an activity to regroup.

- Practice saying this month's memory verse together, along with other verses you have memorized. Say it in funny voices, say it as loudly or as quietly as you can, say it while standing on one foot. If your kids are writers, have them write it down on a pretty or cool piece of paper to hang in their bedroom. Come up with motions that you can do while saying the verse, too.
- Pray together as a family for any needs you or others have. Remember to thank Him for His blessings and what He is doing in your lives, too.
- Ask, "What is something you're really excited about?" If kids can't think of anything, offer some examples: their birthday, Christmas, a vacation, a play date, etc. Talk about how it is *almost* time for that special thing... but not yet! Consider creating a countdown (such a paper chain or a poster) to that event or special day. Talk about how today's passage in Romans says we have a lot to look forward to if we believe in God!

Lesson: As you teach God's word this week, remember that He is using your faithfulness to accomplish His good purposes... whether it seems like it in the moment or not! Don't lose heart and don't give up. The seeds you are planting NOW will yield fruit.

- Provide a quick recap to your kids: "We are still learning from the book of Romans about how to live in a way that pleases God. Romans was written by a missionary named Paul who loved Jesus and wanted others to love Him, too. We have learned that we are called to obey, to belong to Jesus, and to be holy. We've talked a lot about making righteous (or good) choices instead of sinful (or bad) choices. God rewards righteous choices and punishes sinful choices. Obeying in our hearts matters more than obeying with our hands. It is our faith in God that makes us righteous, not the things we do, just like Abraham's faith made him righteous. Because of what Jesus did on the cross, we can have victory over sin and be reconciled to God (made right with God). Jesus gives us life so that we can serve Him."
- Introduce the passage: "Today, we are reading from Romans 8:18-30. There is a lot of really great information in this passage about things we can look forward to, so make sure your listening ears are on!"
- Read Romans 8:18-30, stopping to explain concepts or verses as you go. Ask questions to keep your kids engaged. Consider reading from The Message to make it more understandable to kids. Alternatively, read a few key verses and explain the rest of the passage.
 - *Key Concept: There are a lot of things we believers can look forward to!*
- Review the passage. Make a list of all the things Paul says we can look forward to and be excited about. Discuss why they matter to us as believers – explain however many you'd like in more detail, perhaps picking the one or two that are most relevant to your children.
 - The glory that we will have in Heaven (vs. 18, 30)
 - Today, we experience a lot of pain, discomfort, sadness, etc.
 - Our bodies are achy, and we get hurt.
 - One day, our bodies will be made new – glorified – and we will not experience any effects of sin anymore.
 - The children of God (believers) to be revealed (vs. 19)
 - God created everything to be good (Genesis 1).
 - When sin entered the world, everything broke.
 - Even creation (trees, mountains, animals, etc.) is excited about when God will call His followers home to be with Him forever.
 - Creation to be freed from death and decay (vs. 21)
 - Just like we suffer because of sin, creation does, too.
 - Wildfires, earthquakes, tsunamis... these are all signs that there is sin in the world.

- God will make a new heaven and earth (Revelation 21:1) that will not fall apart, decay, or be destroyed again.
 - The finalization of our adoption into God's family (vs. 23)
 - Right now, believers have spiritually been adopted and are God's children forever!
 - One day, our bodies will be made new and we will be with God.
 - Then, we will be physically in His presence as His children, too.
 - God working everything together for our good (vs. 28)
 - Sometimes, things happen and we don't know how anything good could come out of it (such as breaking a bone, moving, getting sick, etc.)
 - God promises that He will work all things together for the good of those who love Him.
 - If we love God, we can look forward to Him working everything together for our own good.
 - Being made like Jesus (vs. 29)
 - Right now, we all still sin and make bad choices.
 - God is working in our lives to make us more like Jesus.
 - One day, we will be like Jesus when we are in heaven.
- Connect the Gospel: "When God created people, He made us without a sin nature. But the first people God made, Adam and Eve, disobeyed God when they ate fruit God told them not to eat. They became slaves to sin when they followed their own desires. Now, everyone in the world is born with a sin nature. That means we are all slaves to sin, too. The punishment of sin is death and separation from God forever. But God sent His Son, Jesus, to earth so that we don't have to be punished forever for our sins. Jesus lived a sinless life. He was put to death on a cross, taking the punishment for our sin and guilt. He rose to life three days later, showing that He won over sin and death. If we ask Jesus to forgive our sins, He will. Then we can know Him, be part of His family, serve Him, and spend eternity with Him in heaven. Eternal life with Jesus is our best reward for following and obeying Him. If we have faith in Jesus, we are declared righteous. That makes us want to make good choices and follow Him. The Holy Spirit helps us do that and makes us more like Jesus."
- Close the lesson: "We have so much to look forward to as believers! One day, we will be with God forever. It'll be soon... but not yet! We have some jobs to do here on earth before that day comes."
- Pray, then do some of the activities below, as appropriate for your family.

Activity Ideas: These are designed for use at the end of the lesson or throughout to break up the "sitting still" times. Be in tune with what your kids need in order to make this lesson the most effective for them.

- God has given us each special gifts and jobs to do while we are here on earth to bring Him glory and point others to who He is while we wait to be with Him forever. Explain what a "spiritual gift" is to your kids – a special gifting from the Holy Spirit that you can use to serve others and to serve God (1 Corinthians 12). Tell your kids what you think their spiritual gift is. Talk about how you can use those gifts to serve others *now* while we wait for the things that will come in the future.
 - For example, if you notice that one of your children is really good at encouraging others, talk about how they can use their gift of encouragement. They could say hi to people who are having a hard day, write a note or letter to a friend, etc.
- If you didn't do it during the opening activity, make a countdown to an upcoming event (like a birthday or holiday). Make plans to use it until that day or event comes.
- Pick a friend's birthday or anniversary that is coming up soon. Plan a little surprise for that day, such as flowers, a donut, a card, etc. On that special day, surprise your friend with a treat from your family. Talk with your kids about how it's so fun and exciting to plan special things for other people!
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