

I KNOW part 12: "God Is On My Side" 03.04.12

Scripture: Romans 8:31-33 NIV

Intro: God is on my side! That's the good news for this week. If you are a Christ-follower you need never wonder or waver - God is on your side! Write it down. Take it to the bank. It's true and it's powerful!

As great as that news is for us, there are times when we need to reinforce this idea. If ever there was a week when we need to have reinforcements to the premise that God is on our side, it's this week. Monday morning 5 students are shot, 3 mortally, in a high school way too close to here! Another student, just a little older, attending Georgetown University, is slurred unnecessarily - and to be blunt - with malicious intent - by a popular, conservative radio talk show host. Then on Friday one of the largest storms ever to hit the U.S. results in 28 dead - 2 here in Ohio.

When someone commits a crime against us, how do I remember that God is on my side? When someone speaks evil of my character, how do I remember that God is on my side? When even nature - what some name as "Acts of God" destroy everything I own or take away life, how do I remember that God is on my side? Today we study 8:31-33. And more than just affirm the great truth that **if God is for us, who could ever be against us**, I plan to give you 3 God-petitive Reinforcements!

3 GOD-petitive Reinforcements

Often we are competitive - with one another and with our thinking and philosophy. I want to change the competitive to GOD-petitive - replacing our thinking with God's thinking - exactly at those moment we need most.

Reinforcement #1: The REVERSE REMINDER

"What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?" Romans 8:31 NIV

Let's break down this verse first into its 3 parts and then consider the reverse reminder. "In response to these things..." What are we talking about? All the great truths we have learned in our first 11 lessons. We call this the "I KNOW" series because we are basing our Christian faith on what we know, not just on what we feel. Paul is referring to everything he has written about so far in Romans 8: (1) God set me free. v.2 (2) God's Spirit gives me life. v. 10. (3) God leads me. v. 14 (4) God is Abba "daddy" to us. v. 15. (5) God makes us his heirs. v. 17 (6) God's Spirit helps us in our weakness. v. 26 (7) God works in ALL THINGS for my good. v. 28 (8) God planned for my salvation. v. 29-30.

Second, "...if God is for us..." What would it mean for God to be on my side? **Illustration** - Imagine if you will that you are in elementary school and you are picking up sides for a basketball game. You are one of the two leaders who get to pick. And you look across the other students, all about your age and height. Then your eyes come across the one who is so tall, you can really only see his feet. That's God. And you say, "I'll pick him to play on my side." That's what it's like to have God on your side! That's what it's like to have God be FOR US!

Third, "... who can be against us?" Here at CR, we don't have to go to the newspapers to see examples of life seeming to be against us.

(1) Rachel lymph node. (2) Dick cancerous nose, shingles. (3) Sonnie's Lincoln born 3 months early. (4) Connie's Nicky serving in Afghanistan.

What do we do when we face challenges like these? I suggest the **REVERSE REMINDER**. Take this verse. Memorize it. Meditate on it. Know it like the back of your hand. Then, **play it backwards!** Start with whatever challenge you face. Give examples. That's the "who's against me." Then affirm to yourself, "God is for me!" That's the middle part. But don't stop there - move to the first part - remember all the things that God has already done for you! Go back over the "in response to these things" list. Allow that list to GIVE YOU CONFIDENCE. Confidence after all is nothing but being filled with faith. CON "with" FIDENCE "faith or belief."

I face life's CHALLENGES with Godly CONFIDENCE.
The truth is we all need confidence whenever we face any challenges.
But especially those challenges that threaten our very life or the life of one's close to us. Don't go it alone. Know God is For YOU!

Reinforcement #2: The RIDICULOUS RATIO

"He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?" Romans 8:32 NIV

We come to verse 32 and Paul reinforces the idea that God gave you and me THE MOST PRECIOUS THING to Him... his very Son! Think of the love that must exist in the Trinity between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Then think of the love that must also exist for you for the Father to allow His Son to be crucified so that you may share in the Trinity! The odds, it seems to me, of something like this ever really happening have got to be... RIDICULOUS!

Illustration. 32 years ago last month there was a hockey game played. One side was the heavily favored Soviet Union. Oddsmakers put the Soviet victory over the other 12 teams at a 77% likelihood! The U.S. team? Seeded 7th. Based on key hockey statistics and expectations, and using a Monte Carlo simulation to study the odds of the U.S. winning, the odds were astronomically against the U.S. Many say 1,000 to 1! And yet in Feb. 1980, in Lake Placid, the young American team of amateurs beat the Soviet team of professionals. It's known as the greatest upset in sports history - The Miracle on Ice!

Yet that miracle is NOTHING compared to what God YOUR Father was willing to give up for you! 1,000 to 1 odds? That's nothing. Think of the million to one shot! That's how ridiculous the ratio is of God's love for you and for me. So if God was willing to give His Son for you, Christ-follower, what will He hold back?

I face life's DEPRIVATIONS with Godly CERTAINTY.
So what deprivations are going on in your life? What are you doing without? In Jesus' great Sermon on the Mount, he told us that we should not worry about anything! He said that **if God clothed the flower that is here today and gone tomorrow, how much more will He clothe you?** All too often we seek the wrong things - worried about the minor gifts of our material world, when God our Father wants to give us the greatest possible gifts of His Spirit and love. That's why Jesus told us to **seek first His kingdom and His righteousness and ALL these things will be given to you as well. (Matt. 6:33.)** This is something you can count on. Bank on it. The odds are in your favor! They are certain!

Reinforcement #3: The RELATIONSHIP REBUTTAL

"Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies." Romans 8:33 NIV

There are times when we are falsely accused. Times when we stand up for our beliefs and we are criticized. Often the criticism comes from a direction we least expect. Our character is called into question. When that happens I want you to remember this verse. If you are a Christ-follower, GOD HAS CHOSEN YOU! Remember from our previous study that God has also made you His child - His son or daughter - AND His heir. Ultimately it is the judgment of God that really counts, right?

When you are criticized - either rightly or wrongly - but especially when the charge against you is UNJUST, I want you to remember the RELATIONSHIP REBUTTAL. Imagine in your mind the angst in your accusers' mind when they realize that the ultimate judge of their accusations is Your Heavenly Father. The RELATIONSHIP REBUTTAL will bring to mind that it is God who counts because it is God who justifies. Remember that means that it is God who makes any wrongs right based on Christ's perfections and not your own! When it comes to the courtroom of life, you have your Father as your judge. And so...

I face life's INJUSTICES with Godly CONVICTION. We all face injustice at one time or another. Sometimes it's a harsh word spoken in the heat of argument. Sometimes it's made by someone in authority over you - a teacher or a boss - and you are hurt by it. Some literally serve prison sentences because they were in the wrong place at the wrong time. **Illustration - According to the Innocence Project there have been 289 post-conviction DNA exonerations in the U.S., 17 of these served time on death row!** When you are "convicted" of any injustice, be reminded of your Godly conviction. You are chosen by God. It is God who justifies.

Conclusion and Final Question: How can I know for sure that God is on my side? When I know I am on CHRIST'S side!

Remember that this teaching is not for all men and women, boys and girls. It is for those who follow Christ. Who love God's Son, Jesus. Really the question is not so much whether or not God is on YOUR side, as much as the question should be: "Whose side are YOU on?" Are you on God's side? Are you living for Him? Is He YOUR Savior? Are you listening to Him and doing what He tells you to do? When Jesus and some of His disciples went to worship on the mountaintop, they heard from God the Father! Imagine that! What would God the Father say to you and to me? Probably the same thing he told the disciples:

"A voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!" Matthew 17:5b NIV

Are you listening? If so then you are regularly and often thinking and saying and lifting up the great name of Jesus - your Lord. The worthy lamb. The Son of God. High and Lifted Up! And at that great name of Jesus the lost are saved, the condemned need feel no shame, the fearful find courage and our enemies of challenges, deprivations and injustice are forced to leave... at the great name of Jesus!

Brandi sings, "Your Great Name" by Natalie Grant

Communion and Prayer