

Growing Groaning

If you've got kids, maybe you're familiar with their moans and groans from the back seat of the car on a particularly long road trip. Each time ask, "Are we there yet?" their eye-rolls and impatient sighs grow louder and louder. In Romans 8, Paul uses those same groaning sounds to highlight our discontent with *"the sufferings of this present time"* (Rom. 8:18).

Creation Groans

"For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now" (Rom. 8:20-22).

When God created the world in six days, at every point, He called His creation "good." There was peace and harmony between God, nature, and humanity. But things changed when we chose to sin. Pain, work, and death entered the picture. Humankind began worshiping the creature rather than the Creator. Though the natural world continually pointed to God, humanity groped around aimlessly to understand the meaning of life.

So creation cries out for something more — something better!

The Faithful Groan

"And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies" (Rom. 8:23).

We're groaning too! Living by faith in the promises of eternal life, finally free from the pains of sin and death forever, heaven can't come soon enough. But for now, we wait. Surrounded by pain and evil, bombarded with hatred and insults, will it never end? Like David, we ask, *"How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me?"* (Psa. 13:1).

So we cry out for something more — something better!

The Spirit Groans

"Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God" (Rom. 8:26-27).

As we cry out to God in prayer, the Spirit intercedes for us with a deep and intense longing too. Why do we need help in prayer? Paul says that since we don't understand what to ask for, the Spirit helps translate our requests. And nothing gets lost in that translation since the Spirit's groanings for us are beyond description!

While we wait patiently to be freed from the pains and troubles of life, do we "groan" too? Are we looking for something more? Are we hopeful for someplace better?

Let's find comfort through our suffering today, knowing that there's something better on the horizon. And let's never forget that our cries for help are all heard by the Creator of the world!