

## Romans 8:18-28

<sup>18</sup> I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. <sup>19</sup> For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God, <sup>20</sup> for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope <sup>21</sup> that the creation itself will be set free from its enslavement to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. <sup>22</sup> We know that the whole creation has been groaning together as it suffers together the pains of labor, <sup>23</sup> and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. <sup>24</sup> For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope, for who hopes for what one already sees? <sup>25</sup> But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

<sup>26</sup> Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness, for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with groanings too deep for words. <sup>27</sup> And God, who searches hearts, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

<sup>28</sup> We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.

## 2 Corinthians 11:24-30

<sup>24</sup> Five times I have received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. <sup>25</sup> Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I received a stoning. Three times I was shipwrecked; for a night and a day I was adrift at sea; <sup>26</sup> on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from bandits, danger from my own people, danger from gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers and sisters; <sup>27</sup> in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, hungry and thirsty, often without food, cold and naked. <sup>28</sup> And, besides other things, I am under daily pressure because of my anxiety for all the churches. <sup>29</sup> Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I am not indignant?

<sup>30</sup> If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness.

▲ **THEME:** "Align your Experiences to Serve the Story of God."

## ▲ DISCUSSION:

You have a unique story. Your story is filled with the good, the bad, and the ugly of life. Many of these experiences have been outside of your control. And yet, out of our greatest hurts can come our greatest ministry. The point is, when you offer your story in the hands of Jesus, **God can use that for good.**

1. It might sound obvious, but you have a unique story. Although all your experiences haven't been caused by God, Jesus wants to transform your experiences to be used for God's good cause. As you have discovered your SHAPE, share with one another how a good experience has shaped your life.
2. Paul was met by Jesus on the road of life. This encounter changed everything. Describe a time (or times) where you experienced Jesus meeting you and how that has changed your story.
3. Read Romans 8:18-28 together.
4. The Apostle Paul (who wrote Romans) is seen today as a Hero of the Church. But it hasn't always been this way. He was known by the early church as a pretty bad guy. And yet, God redeemed Paul and used his story for God's good purposes. In courage, share an aspect of your life that God has transformed for good.
5. In Acts 9:10-17, Jesus sent Ananias to be a Hope Carrier for Paul. God chose to use Ananias, with his hurt, habits and hang-ups, to change Paul's life. Who has been an "Ananias" in your life? Share your story with the group.
6. Read 2 Corinthians 11:24-30 as a group. Followers of Jesus are not immune to the ugly of life and neither was the Apostle Paul. What, then, does Paul mean by Romans 8:28? Take some time to discuss how God might transform your experiences to serve the story of God.
7. Pray for and encourage one another.

## ▲ SUPER SET

Need help discovering your experiences?  
For God to use the fullness of our SHAPE, we all need to  
**Align our Experiences** to serve the story of God.



Scan the QR Code to take your SHAPE assessment today!