

The Spirit “helps” and “intercedes for” (as Paul describes) only one group of believers—those who remain on the earth. That conclusion can be drawn from Paul’s use of the pronouns “us,” “our,” and “we” in Romans 8:26. Thus, the words “helps” and “intercedes” are in the present tense in the Greek, pointing to ongoing, linear action that occurred in Paul’s day. No need exists for the Spirit to intercede (as prescribed in Romans 8:26) for believers already in heaven, for they are “face to face” (1Corinthians 13:12) with the Triune God—Father, Son, and Spirit. Neither would the Spirit intercede in this manner for persons who are lost and living on the earth—even the lost who later choose to repent and believe. Why would the Spirit intercede (in the sense that Paul addresses in Romans 8:26) for individuals who have never desired to pray? The Holy Spirit convicts the depraved according to John 16:8. Only after the depraved choose to pray (and ask Christ into their hearts—and God makes them new) does the Spirit intercede as Paul describes. Hence, although the specific context of Romans 8:26 applies to believers of Paul’s day, we know that what Paul teaches here applies to present-day believers as well. In fact, it applies to any and all church saints so long as they live in their earthly bodies—as is verified in Romans 8:27. The Holy Spirit convicts unbelievers and believers alike of sin, but He “intercedes” in the manner described in Romans 8:26 for believers only—so long as they live on the earth.

Jesus, our high priest, also intercedes for the redeemed:

Hence, also, He is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.
(Hebrews 7:25)

How encouraging!

Conclusion: The Spirit of God “intercedes for” (and “helps”) New Testament believers from the time they are justified/saved until they are released from their earthly bodies and enter heaven. However, the particular context of Romans 8:26 points to the Spirit interceding for believers in Paul’s day alone.

Paul continues discussing the “Spirit” in Romans 8:27:

and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.
(Romans 8:27)

“The Spirit” possesses a “mind,” verifying once again that “the Spirit” is a Person. The fact that the Father “searches the hearts” should not cause concern. As the Father “searches” a New Testament believer’s heart, He finds it desiring to do “good” alone (substantiated by Paul’s words in Romans 7:15-16 and 19-20)—although the New Testament believer sins at times. He takes pleasure in the holy, perfect, blameless saint He has made us into—not once condemning us when we sin (Romans 8:1).

Paul states: “...the Spirit...intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.” The “Spirit” delights in interceding for holy saints! Based on our present findings, why wouldn’t He!

“*Intercedes*” is a significant term, especially since it carries the present tense. Thus, “*the Spirit*” was interceding for believers (“*saints*”) in Paul’s day. Factoring in our discussion surrounding the pronouns “*us,*” “*we,*” and “*our*” of Romans 8:26, the context of the term “*saints*” implemented in Romans 8:27 must point to the “*saints*” (believers) on the earth when this epistle was penned. This information plays a major role in how Romans 8:28-30 is to be interpreted. This truth, by no means, discounts the fact that the Holy Spirit intercedes for us today.

Yes, when we pray, “*the Spirit...intercedes for*” us according to the Father’s perfect plan. Wonderful! Paul supplies more valuable input regarding “*the Spirit*” in 1Corinthians 2:11-12:

For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man, which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God, (1Corinthians 2:11-12)

Paul states that “*the Spirit...knows...the thoughts of God.*” He also communicates that “*the Spirit*” was given “*that we might know the things freely given to us by God.*” Yes, the Holy “*Spirit*” not only leads us into a deeper understanding of God’s heart but reveals what He (God) has “*freely given*” to all New Testament believers subsequent to their exercising repentance and faith while depraved. 1Corinthians 2:10 ties in well here:

For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. (1Corinthians 2:10)

The fact that “*the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God,*” does not mean that the Spirit reveals everything about God’s being and essence to the redeemed during their stay on earth. “*Secret things belong to the Lord our God*” (Deuteronomy 29:29) that we will not understand this side of heaven, maybe even throughout eternity:

“The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law. (Deuteronomy 29:29)

Conclusion: God’s Spirit “*intercedes for*” all New Testament “*saints*” (in the manner prescribed in Romans 8:27) from justification/salvation until the day of physical death. However, as was the case with Romans 8:26, the particular context of Romans 8:27 points to the Spirit interceding for believers in Paul’s day alone.