

# All Things Work for Good—You're Kidding, Right?!!

*Romans 8:28-30*

**Thought for the Day:** In all the circumstances of our lives, God is working to bring us into conformity to the image and likeness of His Son.

In Romans 8:18-27 Paul has described how sin with all of its terrible consequences has contaminated and polluted the entirety of God's creation, including ourselves. Frustration, emptiness, futility and vanity characterize all of life under the Sun without God and His blessing on our lives. Without God, life is meaningless and without ultimate purpose. But when we invite Jesus Christ to come into our lives as our Savior and Lord, we are set free from the penalty of our sins! We have new hope as we look forward to the day when God will deliver us and His entire creation from the bondage, decay and corruption of sin.

One of the key principles that we see in this passage is that we can patiently persevere through suffering and even persecution by fixing our eyes on the Lord Jesus Christ who is the Author and Perfecter of our faith and by focusing on the glory that we will experience in His presence in heaven. We can endure the temporal by focusing on the eternal.

As a down payment and guarantee of the glorious things to come, God has given us His Holy Spirit who has sealed us unto the day when our bodies will be redeemed, transformed and set free from the very presence of sin. This will happen when we rise to meet the Lord in the air at the Rapture of the Church. In the meantime, the Holy Spirit helps us in all our weaknesses. As we struggle with all the issues of life, we may find ourselves asking, "Can God really bring anything good out of my circumstances?" Paul's faith-filled declaration is, "Yes, He can!" and "Yes, He will!"

## **I. THE PROMISE:** "And we know that in all things God works for the good..."

- This is a joyful recognition that we are not the center of the universe. There is a personal, all-knowing, all-powerful, everywhere-present God who loves us and takes a merciful, compassionate, loving interest in all the affairs of our lives. He is intimately, effectively and purposefully at work in all our circumstances to bring about our good and our blessing.
- "This comforting conviction is strengthened by experience and observation, but it is founded upon faith in the constant care of a loving Father... No experience incident to human life should be regarded as beyond the permission and power of God, or incapable of being used by him to promote our truest 'good.'" (*Charles Erdman, Romans, p. 93*)

## **II. THE CONDITION:** "...of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."

- This promise is only for those who love God, whom He has called into personal relationship with Himself according to His purpose.
- God owes us nothing and He certainly has no obligation to bless us when we are rebelling, disobeying or just simply ignoring Him in our indifference.
- The promise is for those who love God, who have responded to and accepted His call, His invitation to enter into a personal, saving relationship with Himself.

- Do I love God? Am I devoted to Him above all else? Do I have any concern about the matters that are important to Him? If not, what right do I have to expect Him to bless and use all of my circumstances for my good?
- "All things worth mentioning are *against* those who do not love him: all his holiness and his justice and his power and his changeless law and his eternal judgment. But those who seek to do his will, those who accept his salvation, those who rest in his grace, can be sure of his loving care in the darkness as well as in the light, and can know that through all the mysteries of life he is perfecting a plan of eternal glory." (*Erdman, Romans, p. 93*)
- No person comes to God whom He has not called to Himself.
  - "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." (Acts 2:21; Romans 10:13)
  - "God is not willing [or wishing] that any should perish but that all should come to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9; cp. John 3:16)
- Let us humbly recognize that in our sin and spiritual deadness to God, our "total depravity," we would never come to Him if He did not first call us to Himself.
  - 1 Thessalonians 2:12; 5:23-24; John 6:44, 63-65; Acts 16:14
  - "If anything of eternal significance happens, it's because the Lord has done it!" Our spiritual depravity and wickedness prevent us from coming to God on our own. Therefore, God the Father must call us and enable us to come to Himself.
  - We cannot discover God on our own; He must reveal Himself to us. (Matthew 11:25-27; 16:15-17)
  - The Lord's invitation to come to Him is real and valid; we must respond to His call. (Matthew 11:28-30; John 12:32)
- God's work of salvation in our lives extends from eternity past to eternity future. (Romans 8:29-30)
  - There is no question that this involves a great deal of mystery—there is much that we do not fully understand! (Deuteronomy 29:29)
  - But it should also be abundantly clear to us that God took the initiative in our salvation and that it is His work from beginning to end.
  - Our response, above all, should be one of humble gratitude for all that He has done, is doing, and will do on our behalf.
  - The question we must ask ourselves is, "Do I love God? Am I committed to Him, to His purpose, to His plan, to His kingdom?"

### **III. THE OUTCOME:** "...God works for the good of those who love him..."

- We want "the good" to be our comfort but the truth is, "the good" God is working for is not our comfort but our conformity to the likeness of His Son. (Romans 8:29)
- God does not promise that we will avoid all of the trials and tribulations of life but He does promise that He will use them to make us more like Jesus. (James 1:2-4)