

Do All Things Work Together for Good to You?

Romans 8:28

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

When one suffers an unpleasant event, someone else may try to console the victim by saying “That’s okay – because Romans 8:28 says ‘All things work together for good.’”

NO, THAT IS NOT WHAT ROMANS 8:28 SAYS!

Rather, that is only a *part* of what Romans 8:28 says. And as surely as a *part-truth* is an *untruth*, so is a *part-quote* a *misquote*. Or, as we sometimes hear, “A text removed from its context is a pretext.”

Romans 8:28 says “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.” If you love God, be assured this blessing is for *you*. But if you do not love God, be assured this blessing is *not* for you. Ample proof of this is found in the fact that lovers of God are delivered from God’s wrath and received into everlasting bliss in heaven, while those who do not love God are barred from heaven and consigned to everlasting punishment in the Lake of Fire.

Let us consider this blessing in its various points.

I. What are “all things”? “All things” are *every thing*. Yes, this statement expresses redundancy. But it nevertheless must be said. Included in “all things” are things contrary to each other – both gains and losses, both joys and bereavements, both promotions and demotions, both afflictions and recoveries, and even death.

Most people think all things work together for good to them when all those things are *good*. But *few* people know that even *bad* things work together for good to them.

There are times when all of us are tempted to say with Jacob “All these things are against me” (Genesis 42:36). Jacob here referred to the bereavement he suffered because of having lost two sons and now facing the loss of a third. Additionally, Jacob and his extensive family, residing in Canaan, were suffering hunger during a time of great famine. But in the end, Jacob experienced this great blessing – “that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.” What Jacob did

not then know was that Joseph, the first son he had lost, was now a ruler in Egypt, and had stored great stocks of food, and was preparing to save his father’s family by bringing them to Egypt. Not only was Joseph restored to Jacob, but also were his other two sons.

II. In what way do “all things work together for good”? They are like the making of a tapestry portraying someone’s life, woven in both warp and woof with threads of many different colors by a master weaver.

Some colors indicate all that is *good*: *white* for the day of salvation and cleansing; *red* for rosy days; *orange* for skies at promising daybreaks; *yellow* for days of bright sunshine; *green* for times of growth and health; *blue* for days when the heavens are cloudless; *indigo and violet* for days ending with pleasant sunsets and peaceful nights; and other bright colors also.

But some colors indicate all that is *bad*: *gray* for darkening clouds and devastating storms; *black* for death and mourning.

But when all these colors are woven together by a master weaver, a beautiful tapestry is made. In this instance, God is the master weaver. He is weaving together all that happens to certain people. At the end of their lives, they will look upon the tapestry of their time on earth and exclaim “Surely all things – both good and bad – worked together for my good!”

III. To whom do “all things work together for good”? They are identified in a two-fold manner: “those who love God” and “those who are the called according to His purpose”.

First, “all things work together for good to *those who love God*.” They are all who obey the first and greatest commandment in God’s law: “You shall love Jehovah your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength” (Deuteronomy 6:5 & Matthew 22:34-38 / Mark 12:28-30). This commandment requires everyone to love Jehovah with every fiber of their being, and to love Him more than any other person or thing, and to prove that love by reverencing and worshiping Him, and by walking and living according to all the rest of His law.

If you love Jehovah in this manner, then be assured that “all things work together for good” to you. But if you do not love Jehovah in this manner, then be assured that you are working all things together for bad to yourself.

Second, “all things work together for good to ... *those who are*

the called according to His purpose.” These are all who are called by God to salvation in this present life and to glory in the life to come. They are called in consequence of God’s foreknowledge and predestination of them before the foundation of the world.

This truth is set forth in the following two verses (vv.29f): “29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.”

It is God’s eternal purpose that all things will work together for good to all whom He foreknew, predestined, called, justified, and glorified. It is no wonder that they love Him!

But if you deny God’s eternal purpose in foreknowing and predestining His chosen people, you do not love God, He has not called you, and all things are not working together for your good.

IV. Why can lovers of God say “we know” that all things work together for good to them? They can say so because of both Scriptural examples and personal experience.

First, *Scriptural examples* prove that “all things work together for good to those who love God.” We here cite two examples.

1. Consider the man described in Psalm 119. He loved God, for he included himself among “those who love Your name” (v.132), which is the same as saying “those who love *You*”. His love for God is also expressed in his declarations “I love Your *law*” (vv.97, 113, 163; also v.165), “I love Your *commandments*” (v.127; also vv.47, 48,), “I love Your *testimonies*” (vv.119; also v.167), “I love Your *precepts*” (v.159). But he also confesses: “It is *good* for me that I have been afflicted, that I may learn Your statutes” (v.71); “Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep Your word” (v.67). Here is the man – perhaps you or me – who can look upon his afflictions and their result and declare “I *know* that all things work together for good to those who love God.”

2. Consider *Jesus Christ* preeminently. Surely you know that He loved God perfectly. And surely you know that He suffered adversities beyond those suffered by any other man. He suffered trials of faith beyond those of Job. He suffered hatred and persecution beyond those of Joseph. He suffered betrayal by one of his apostles, denial by another, desertion by the other ten, and

rejection by His own countrymen. Worse still, He was justly forsaken by God when He died in the place and stead of His people, for their sins. He suffered martyrdom in such a way as to make Him the Exemplar for all God’s witnesses. But His love to God never flinched. Consequently, all things worked together for good to not only Himself, but also to all those for whom He suffered and died. He was exalted to God’s throne, and made ruler over all things. His people were, through His death, saved from God’s wrath, reconciled to God, justified from their guilt, sanctified from their pollution, and glorified forever. They furthermore will rule and reign with Him over everything. Jesus Christ is the foremost proof that “We *know* that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.”

Second, *personal experience* proves that “all things work together for good to those who love God.” Paul refers to this when he introduces this blessed promise with “And we know” The conjunctive “and” connects this text with what precedes it in verses 1-27.

1. We know that “There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.” (vv.1-11).

2. We know that “The [Holy] Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs – heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ” (vv.12-16).

3. We know that “the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (vv.18-25).

4. We know that “the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered” (vv.26f).

Surely the experience of all these things proves to lovers of God that all things work together for good to them, and according to His purpose for them.

Do all things work together for good to you?

– Daniel E. Parks (February 12, 2017; #967)