

The Word of Truth

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ALL THINGS

Romans 8:28, *“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”*

There has been much emphasis in much of the Christian religious circles concerning this one verse. It is unfortunate that most of the interpretations of this scripture have been misleading, to say the least. We live in a time where the works of man, whether good or bad, have been justified and cleared of any accountability of their own actions. We are truly living in perilous times. The word “perilous” in **2 Timothy 3:1** means troublesome, or dangerous. When we deviate from God’s word to justify evil deeds or to conclude that all things, actions, in our lives are working for our good we are standing on dangerous grounds. Let us first consider the thought of “all things”. All things will always mean all things, not some things. But we must also put the “all things” into its context.

Psalms 119:128 says, *“Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way.”* If all things, without exception, are in consideration why would the psalmist then say, “I hate every false way”? would that not also be included in the all things? The all things are speaking of his precepts, his law. The psalmist concluded that the all things were speaking of the law of God, for they are right!

1 Corinthians 3:21, *“Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours;”* Are all things without exception ours? Of course not. The context is speaking of those things that are for our benefit concerning the preaching of God’s word.

2 Corinthians 5:18, *“And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;”* Are all things, without exception, from God? Is God the author of sin? Does God control the deeds of evil men? Of course not!

We could go on and on illustrating that “all things” don’t always mean all things without exception. We must always put God’s word into its proper context to determine what the “all things” are.

Let me ask you. Do all things, without exception, work for our good? I believe if we consider this thought with a pure heart we would have to submit that the answer is no. Another question. Do some things work together for our good? I believe that you would have to agree that some things do in fact work for our good in this life, but not all things.

Paul said in **Romans 5:3-5**, *“And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.”*

Paul tells us that something is working for our good. When we suffer for Christ's sake that works for our good because the result is the love of God that is shed abroad in our hearts during times of persecution and tribulation. But we can't say that ALL things are working for our good.

Galatians 5:17 tells us, "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." The Apostle Paul clearly states that the flesh and Spirit are contrary and that you cannot do the things that you would. That doesn't sound to me like the flesh and the Spirit are in harmony, neither does it show that they are working together for your good!

I have a cousin who suffered a bad fall and as a result she is paralyzed from the chest down. She has a lot of complications due to her current condition and is unable to enjoy life as she did before. I was at the dinner table of my Aunt, who is her caregiver, and someone else that was there said to all of us concerning my cousin, "well, the bible tells us all things work together for your good". I almost jumped up! How could someone who was totally healthy say to someone that is now paralyzed that it was working for their good? I couldn't see, nor still can I see how that terrible tragedy is working for her good. Yet in this great tragedy God has providentially given them a peace and comfort during their affliction. God is a very present help in time of need.

We must not become confused with the providence of God and absolutism. God is active daily in the lives of his people. But God does not cause ungodliness and sin to work for our good. What God does in his providence can't be confused with all things working for our good. **James 1:13-14** reminds us, "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed."

Did God cause Adam to sin in the Garden of Eden? Of course not! God saw the fall from before the foundation of the world, but because God saw it does not mean that God caused it! But God did make a provision for his people in the person of Jesus Christ. In Jeremiah, the tribe of Juda had gone far into sin and removed themselves from God. They had begun to practice pagan worship religion offering their children to Baal. The Lord said in **Jeremiah 19:5**, "They have built also the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings unto Baal, **which I commanded not, nor spake it, neither came it into my mind:**"

This new age culture is being indoctrinated with the idea that your bad deeds are really not your fault. There is a moving away from being held accountable from our bad decisions in life. Many times, the "easy out" is to just blame God for everything and then reconcile the thought that it is working for your good.

I have heard others say, when someone was going through a very difficult time because of their bad decisions, that God was working it out for their good. My friends, there are things that happen in this life that don't work together for your good! I refuse to believe that if a child of God decides to live in sin that God is working that out for their good. And I refuse to believe that some things

are working for your good, using the scripture in the header, for it says, “all things”. Why would God create sin in our lives so that we can grow by it? The bible is clear, page after page we are admonished to, “abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul”. We are told to, “Abstain from all appearance of evil.” **1 John 2:1** tells us, “My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not.” Why so much admonition against sinning if God was pleased in producing it?

I am amazed at those who believe that all things, without exception, work for your good and yet they become burdened and in great grief when something unfortunate happens to them. Should they, according to their own belief, not be rejoicing in their affliction? I submit that they really don't believe that for themselves but only use that as a crutch for others.

The scripture in **Romans 8:28** is not speaking of all things without exception. Let's put it in the context of what is being said.

Romans 8:28 starts with “and”. That means it is in consideration of what has already been said. In fact, the large majority of verses in Romans chapter 8 are in consideration of what has been said prior and is a continuation. Most of these verses start with “for”, “and”, “because”, and “moreover”. All these words tie together what is being said as a whole.

Romans 8 speaks of the travail that the new creature suffers (vs.23). Then it speaks of us, and not only those in the past, who groan within ourselves as a waiting people. We are waiting for the redemption of our body.

Then the Apostle Paul speaks of the precious doctrine of hope (vs.24-25). It is in the next two verses (vs. 26-27) that we are assured that even when we are groaning and know not what to pray in our anguish, it is the Holy Spirit that aids the suffering child of God in prayer.

Paul, through the inspiration of God, then reminds us that while we are living by hope during our troubled times that through the gospel we know that all things work together for your good! What a precious thought! If we take these “all things” to mean something other than what is being presented, we lose the blessedness of these verses! In those times of turmoil and trials we need to be reminded of the good things. These good things are for those that love God and to them that are called according to his purpose.

Let's consider this thought for a moment. “that love God”. Why do we love God? We love him because he first loved us. Those who love God are “the called”. The called are those for whom he has called out of nature's dark night and into the marvelous liberty and light of the Lord. We love him because he planted his Spirit into our hearts and we became a new creature in Christ Jesus. Without His Spirit in our heart there is no love for God, our minds would be at enmity with God. But why did he call us. He tells us, “according to his purpose”. That is all we have! He planted his Spirit into your heart and it was not according to your desires, but according to his purpose.

It is to these that love God that all things are working together for good. The next two verses (vs. 29-30) tell us what the all things are! They are foreknowledge, predestination, calling, justification, and glorification.

It is important to notice that in Verse 29 of Romans 8, the Apostle Paul goes from foreknowledge to being conformed to the image of his Son. Let me ask you. When will you be conformed to the image of his Son? Will it be in this life? No! We should work in this life to be a true Christian (Christ like), but we won't be conformed to his image! That is pure absolutism! There are ample other scriptures to show that we should be holy even as he is holy. This is important to consider and understand. If this verse is speaking of what we must do to be conformed in this life, then we have just destroyed those things working together for our good. Man loves to have his "good deeds" included in the sovereign work of God. But there is no room for man. If man has anything to do to accomplish these all things, then we would see failure in those things working for our good.

The great mercy and grace of God is demonstrated in this passage. He foreknew us, that is, he had an eternal and everlasting love for us. God predestinated a people before the foundation of the world set the bounds of his people. Predestination is not speaking of acts or deeds, but it speaks of a work he did for those he loved. He predetermined our destination. What is that destination? That we, one day, will be conformed to the image of his Son. That day will be when we go home to be with the Lord in heaven. The word predestination, predestinated and predestinate are all the same word in different forms. The word, in the Greek, is "prooridzo". It is a compound word. "pro" means "before" and "horidzo" means "to mark out the boundaries or limits (of any place or thing), to determine, appoint. God, before the foundation of the world marked out the boundaries of our destination or place. That destination is heaven!

But God also called us. This is speaking of the effectual call, regeneration. God is the sovereign in regeneration. He calls his elect to a life in Christ at his appointed time (**John 5:25**). Then the scripture tells us we are justified. This justification is speaking of our legal standing in the court room of heaven. We are declared righteous, justified, through the blood of Christ (**Romans 5:9**). And finally, Paul ends up with glorification. He speaks in the past tense because it is sure and definite for God's people.

Paul then says in **Romans 8:31**, "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?" Notice Paul goes back to "these things" these are the "all things" that are working together for our good!

If we make the "all things" to mean something different then we have just destroyed the blessed truth of what this scripture is telling us. It is when we are groaning within ourselves that we are saved by hope and waiting for the adoption to wit the redemption of these bodies. How can we have such a strong hope in the redemption of these bodies? Because of the work of God from foreknowledge to glorification! Amen! Let God be true and every man a liar.