

What God Is Doing in Your Life
Romans 8:28
October 8, 2020

John MacArthur: “For Christians, this verse contains perhaps the most glorious promise in Scripture. It is breathtaking in its magnitude, encompassing absolutely *everything* that pertains to a believer’s life.”¹

Review

Chs 5-8 The gospel and the sure hope it gives

8:18-39 Assurance of hope

8:18-25 Suffering with Christ in the present age is nothing in comparison to the future glorious revealing of the sons of God, that will be accompanied by the liberation of the creation from its bondage to corruption. Like the creation we groan in the pains of childbirth, as we wait eagerly for the redemption of our bodies. We were given this hope when we were saved, and we wait for it with perseverance.

8:26-27 The Spirit helps us, who do not know what to pray for, by interceding for us according to the will of God.

Question: How has the Lord used Romans 8:28 in your life?

“And we know”

Verses 18-25 spoke of “the sufferings of this present time,” and persevering in hope. In the midst of this, the Spirit is interceding for us (26-27), and we can know a very important truth.

Can know with absolutely certainty

“for those who love God”

All Christians, and only Christians

1 John 4:7 “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.”

¹ MacArthur, *Romans 1-8*, page 471.

1 John 4:19 “We love because he first loved us.”

Only those who love God can understand and appreciate what the rest of the verse says.

“all things work together for good”

Question: What does it mean that “all things work together for good” for those people spoken of in this verse?

This happens because of the providential working of our God, sovereignly controlling all things that happen in our lives.

The Greek verb translated “work together,” is the source of our English word, ‘synergism,’ the working together of various elements to produce an effect greater than, and often completely different from, the sum of each element acting separately.²

God causes all things to work together for our good, including...

1. Both pleasant things and sufferings (8:17, 18)
2. Both blessings and discipline
3. Both righteous things and sinful things
4. Both sins committed against us and the sins we have committed

Deut. 8:15–16 “who led you through the great and terrifying wilderness, with its fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water, who brought you water out of the flinty rock, who fed you in the wilderness with manna that your fathers did not know, that he might humble you and test you, to do you good in the end.”

“All things” is utterly comprehensive, having no qualifications or limits

Paul wrote this as someone who suffered severely

- **2 Cor. 4:8–10** We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies.

Does not mean all things *are* good, but that God *uses* all things that occur in our lives to accomplish His good purpose.

The good for which all things work together, is explained in **verses 29-30**

² MacArthur, 473.

The corollary of this verse is that *nothing* can ultimately work against us (8:39).

“for those who are called according to his purpose”

Another designation for believers

This is why believers can know that all things work together for their good

The believer has been effectually called by God

1. It is not that the believer was the recipient of an invitation that was up to him to accept or reject. Rather, it is that the believer has been effectually summoned by God to come to Him through Jesus Christ.
2. **Acts 2:38–39** “And Peter said to them, ‘Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God **calls to himself**.’”
3. Romans 8:30

God calls with a particular “purpose” in mind—to conform the individual to the image of Christ and glorify him with Christ (8:29-30), unto the praise of God’s glorious grace (11:33-36; Eph 1:5-6).

Thomas Schreiner: The foundational reason why all things work for believers’ good is that “God’s unstoppable purpose in calling believers to salvation cannot be frustrated, and thus he employs all things to bring about the plan he had from the beginning in the lives of believers.”³

Leon Morris: Believers “may be depressed at the harsh conditions of their lives, but they should bear in mind that through it all God is working out a great purpose. No matter what the circumstances that purpose will not be overthrown, and it culminates in final glory.”⁴

The message of Romans 8:28 that *everything in our lives* is in our Heavenly Father’s sovereign and loving hands, and will without a shadow of a doubt be used by Him to fulfill His purpose to do us good.

Romans 8:28 tells us that our Heavenly Father is at work in our lives right now, preparing us for glory!

Application

This verse gives the Christian courage to face any situation, comfort in his sufferings, and hope!

³ Schreiner, *Romans*, 451.

⁴ Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 330.