

Do All Things Really Work
Together For Good?

Romans 8:28

Do All Things Really Work Together For Good?

- Rom. 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.”
- We read it in the following manner: “All things work out for the good for those who love God.”

Do All Things Really Work Together For Good?

- But, we have a hard time reconciling this with what really happens.
 - Precious, devout children of God become ill; we pray, and they do not recover, and we wonder where the good is.
 - We pray for safety and happiness for our children and then watch them suffer and wonder where the good is.
 - We pray for war to end, for cancer to be cured, for poverty to be eased, and to all appearances these things get worse, and we wonder where the good is.

Do All Things Really Work Together For Good?

- Did God forget or fail to keep His promise?
- Is He really there for us and able to help?
- Is there a hidden explanation as to why He did not work all things out for our good?
- Or have we misunderstood His promise?

The Bible Pattern

- David loved God and was a man after God's own heart (1-2 Samuel).
- All of David's children died in infancy, died in rebellion, or turned to evil as adults, in spite of how much David prayed for them.
- So, where is the good for David?

The Bible Pattern

- Abraham was blessed because of his faith and obedience (Genesis 12-25).
- Abraham's family was rife with tension, jealousy, scheming, and lying, in spite of the fact that Abraham tried to do everything right.
- So, where is the good for Abraham?

The Bible Pattern

- Joseph was the favorite son of Jacob, the firstborn of his beloved Rachel, and Jacob had cleaned up his home by cleansing it of idolatry and vowed to serve the Lord only - Gen. 37-50.
- Joseph's brothers took him, intended to kill him, ended up selling him into slavery, and deceived Jacob into believing he was dead.
- Joseph was sold to Potiphar, whose wife tried to seduce him, and when she failed, he is cast into prison, where he languished for years because an ungrateful person did not appeal on his behalf.
- So, where is the good for Joseph?

The Beginning Of Wisdom

- Gen. 45:4-8 - “And Joseph said to his brothers, ‘Please come near to me.’ So they came near. Then he said: ‘I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. 5 But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. 6 For these two years the famine has been in the land, and there are still five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvesting. 7 And God sent me before you to preserve a posterity for you in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. 8 So now it was not you who sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.’”

The Beginning Of Wisdom

- Though Joseph personally suffered harm from others, God used his hardships for the good of all men.
- Yet Joseph had to continue to love God and to follow His will in spite of the pain he had to endure.
- He had to trust God that others would be blessed because he passed through the fire.

The Bible Pattern

- Job suffered without just cause. He lost his children, his income, his health, the regard of his wife, and spent days arguing with friends who tried to convict him of some sin.
- His suffering, while not for his own good from his perspective, was for his spiritual good; he learned humility and more about God through the things he suffered.

The Bible Pattern

- Job 42:1-6 - “Then Job answered the LORD and said: ‘I know that You can do everything, And that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You. 3 You asked, “Who is this who hides counsel without knowledge?” Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. 4 Listen, please, and let me speak; You said, “I will question you, and you shall answer Me.” I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, But now my eye sees You. 6 Therefore I abhor myself, And repent in dust and ashes.’”

The Bible Pattern

- And Job's suffering continues to bless us with instruction.
- Remember that throughout his suffering, he did not curse God - Job 2:9-10.

The Bible Pattern

- The Apostles suffered many things for Christ.
 - Acts 5:40 - “When they had called for the apostles and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.”
- They rejoiced because they suffered for the name of Christ.
 - Acts 5:41 - “So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.”

The Bible Pattern

- Paul was sent to prison because of the sins of others.
 - Acts 16:17-24
- It resulted in the Philippian jailer obeying the Gospel.
 - Acts 16:25-33

Understanding Romans 8:28

- It is true that all things work together for the good of those who love God?
- Three mistakes are made that create this erring perspective:

Understanding Romans 8:28

- A misreading of the text
 - It does not read all things work together for the (inserted article) good of (altered preposition) those who love God.
 - It reads all things work together for good to those who love God.
- Good means the general good of all those who love God, not necessarily the individual benefit and comfort of the single lover of God.
 - It reads TO those who love God, meaning from their faith based viewpoint,
 - Not FOR those who love God, meaning for their individual benefit.

Understanding Romans 8:28

- An invalid assumption: The general good or benefit for all lovers of God also means my own personal benefit and comfort.
 - God did not spare His own Son, but spent Him for the general good of all lovers of God.
 - What makes us think God is going to spare us from some hardship if by putting us through the hardship will be to the general good of all lovers of God?
 - He didn't spare the apostles, prophets, preachers, etc., so that we could have the Gospel; He spent them for our good.
 - Joseph, Job, Jeremiah, Daniel, Stephen, Antipas the martyr were not spared from suffering and death.

Understanding Romans 8:28

- We define good by our own standards and values, rather than by what God calls good.
 - Paul considered his thorn in the flesh a hindrance; Christ said it magnified Him - 2Cor. 12:7-10
 - We consider the deaths of the righteous tragic; God calls it precious - Psalm 116:15
 - We view the suffering of the fallen world as a cause to doubt God's care; God said it is a cause for joy to refine us - James 1:2-3

Practically Speaking

- Suffering, temptations, etc., work out for the spiritual good of the Christian, even though we may not think it very pleasant at the time.
 - Heb. 12:1-12
 - James 1:2-4 - “My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. 4 But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.”

Practically Speaking

- Suffering helps us to keep our perspective of this world and to better appreciate the prospect of Heaven.
 - 2Cor. 4:17 - “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.”

Practically Speaking

- 1Peter 1:3-9 - “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, 8 whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9 receiving the end of your faith--the salvation of your souls.”

However, The Bottom Line Is...

- We cannot fathom the depth of the wisdom of God's plan.
- We can only trust His wisdom that somewhere, sometime, in some place, lovers of God will derive good from what we must endure.
- And we must find the faith and will power to say "that's good enough for me."