

God's Unfailing Purpose

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Can we still believe in Romans 8:28? Do all things really work together for good? Even when things go bad? This Bible verse speaks of the providence of God working in connection with our lives as Christians. Providence means that God allows certain events to come into our lives which are designed to fulfill His purpose for us.

The promise of Romans 8:28 declares: "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." The fact that we "know" speaks of the CERTAINTY of God's providence. We accept by faith what God is doing in our lives. The "all things" speak of the SCOPE of God's providence. It includes everything that occurs in our lives. The phrase "work together" points to the CONTINUITY of God's providence or how God is weaving together all the events of our lives to bring about His ultimate purpose. Of course, "them that love God" are the RECIPIENTS of God's providence – Christians who believe on Jesus Christ. And it's all "according to his purpose" which speaks of the GOAL of God's providence which is to ultimately make us more like Jesus Christ.

Romans 8:29-30 explains what the "good" is referring to in Romans 8:28 when it speaks about being "conformed to the image of his Son" (Romans 8:29) and "glorified" (Rom. 8:30). The "good" of Romans 8:28 is referring to the Christlike transformation that is occurring in our hearts and lives. Paul is teaching that what is happening today in our lives (Romans 8:28) is in a small way helping us to move toward the final goal of perfect Christlikeness, which occurs when we get our new body in the resurrection. Until then, we pass through suffering and difficult circumstances, but these times are in some mysterious way being used by God to produce Christlike character and conduct in our lives, to bring about His virtues and likeness in us and through us.

Please note that the Bible does not say everything is good that happens to us (a car accident, illness, relationship problem, losing the security of our retirement). It teaches that all the events of our lives work together for our

good in that they bring about greater Christlike transformation in our lives. Both the good and bad times, the ups and the downs of life, the bitter and sweet are designed to develop greater Christlike living.

So here come the application questions. Have you accepted what the sovereign God has recently allowed to come into your life? Are you ready to bow the knee and submit to His purpose for your life, so you can become more like Jesus? Are you running away from what God wants you to do, what He wants you to be and become? How much do you really love Him today? Romans 8:28 is a handbook for hard times. We must claim this promise by faith (God works all things together for our good) as we pass through our trials and heartaches in life.