

What Does It Mean?

Contra Costa Gospel Church
Adult Sunday School

Romans 8:28

[NIV] *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*

[ESV] *And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.*

[NLT] *And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.*

Small groups:

- 1) Are you familiar with this verse? What is your experience with this verse?
- 2) What is the essence of the verse? In other words, how would you paraphrase this verse?
- 3) There is a popular sentiment that says, "When God closes a door, He opens a window." Similarly, an article from bible.org puts it this way:

We often take "work together for good" to mean that whatever loss we suffer in life will be repaid with interest later on in life. We suffer relational heartbreak, only to later marry a much more suitable person than the one we lost. We lose our job, only to secure a more lucrative position down the line.

How do the saying and passage above relate to Romans 8:28?

What do you think about this concept? Can we say that this is universal truth?

- 4) Another popular sentiment says, "There's a reason/purpose for my suffering." Again, does this saying relate to the passage in Romans 8? If so, how?

All together:

- 5) In order to consider the immediate context of this passage, we have to start at v. 18. Read vv. 18-30. There are several key words in this passage that speak of the turmoil we experience while living on earth. What are some of these words?

- 6) How would you describe the “bondage to decay” Paul speaks of in v. 21?

- 7) For the “children of God” (v. 21), when will we receive the “glorious freedom” of which Paul speaks?

- 8) In v. 28, Paul seems to qualify who this “promise” is for. Who are the people that Paul has in mind here?

- 9) The word that is probably most important for us to understand is the word, “good.” We all have different opinions of what is and isn’t good for us. How does God define “good” in this passage? (Hint: look also at v. 29)

- 10) With a proper understanding of “good” in mind, how then would you paraphrase this verse? What exactly is the promise to us?

From the same article from bible.org:

Maybe you lose the girl and then remain single – like Jesus – the rest of your life. Maybe your stock options fall through and you remain poor – like Jesus – the rest of your life. Maybe you’re convicted of a crime you did not commit and you suffer unjustly – like Jesus, the rest of your life. God’s promise? None of it will be wasted. That is the assurance of Romans 8:28-29. That is as “good” as it can get – becoming like Jesus. Nothing better.