

## Romans: Verse-By-Verse

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### Romans 8:28

#### Study Notes

*“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.”*

A favorite verse of many believers – but how many know the context of that great verse – what comes before it and after it?

Verses 28-39: Paul tries to give us a “bird’s-eye” view of what God has done, is doing, and intends to do for us. What we have already seen:

- The power of our peace with God: 5:1–11
- Our union with Christ: 5:12–6:23
- Our freedom from the law: 7:1–25
- Our life in the Spirit: 8:1–27

The next section: God’s great plan for salvation — eternity past to eternity to come.

What we have seen so far in Romans 8:

- We’ve seen our current sufferings and groanings.
- We’ve seen this Hope that keeps us moving forward.
- We’ve seen how creation and believers are waiting for the revelation of God’s children in their full redeemed state.

Paul’s next outline:

- **Verse 28:** Five unshakeable convictions about God working all things together for the good of his people.
- **Verses 29-30:** Five undeniable affirmations of God’s salvation plan.

- **Verses 31-39:** Five rhetorical statements which cannot be effectively challenged by any adversary.
- **Five Unshakeable Convictions:**

### **1. We know that God works, or is at work, in our lives.**

Some versions say, "We know that all things work together for good". It sounds as if things are working themselves out. Note: All things do not automatically work themselves together for our good.

A better translation: We know that in all things God is working for our good." That puts God at the center of our lives. It is God who is working out all things – not all things working on their own.

### **2. God Is At Work For The Good Of His People**

Throughout Scripture ... God's essential character is goodness. God is good. God is good at his core.

An essential conclusion: God is good, therefore, all of God's works are expressions of his goodness. His actions and decisions are calculated to work for the good of his people.

God does everything for two reasons: 1. To work for the good of his people. 2. To bring honor to his name.

### **3. God Works For Our Good In All Things**

NIV: "... In all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."

Two possible views: 1. God is making "all things" work to our good. 2. "In all things" God is working for our good.

In the context of Romans 8, The "all things" that Paul is talking about are:

- Suffering – both as persecution and the toils of life.
- Groanings – both creation and humans waiting on God's future revelation of his children.
- Weaknesses – both physical frailties and spiritual challenges.
- The Spirit's assistance in our prayers and praying for us.

In all these things, God is working towards our good.

#### **4. God Works In All Things For The Good Of Those Who Love Him**

“Of Those Who Love Him”. -- This verse has a built-in limitation. This is not a “catch-all” statement about everyone who is on this planet.

Not everyone loves God. Paul is pointing to a relationship factor. Not everyone is in the frame for the good that God intends. This verse refers to God's children – not to those who are not under his sovereignty. They belong to another.

- A Unique Factor: The majority of Paul's phrases about love and God have to do with God loving us – not us loving God. (See: Romans 5:5, 8; 8:35, 37, 39)

All of this “working in all things” is for the benefit of those who love Him. Those who do not know Him yet cannot be described as being in a loving relationship towards Him.

Romans 5:10: “For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!”

#### **5. Those Who Have Been Called According To His Purpose.**

There is a dual description in this verse ... “Those who love Him” and “Those who have been called according to his purpose”. Some

scholars note that, "Their love for God is a sign and token of his prior love for them".

Love for God is a reciprocal reaction to love by God. Those who love God – have been called according to His purposes.

God is at the center of that statement – and not on the receiving end of it. John says, Because God loved us, we love Him. God is at the center.

"According to his purposes" -- God is at the center of this relationship – and so his purposes are at the center of this statement.

Paul is not expressing predestination here. He's describing the work of God in all things for those who have come under the umbrella of his sovereign workings.

We do not always know how suffering, groaning, and waiting with eagerness and patience work to our God. Sometimes we do not understand what God is doing – and sometimes we do not enthusiastically embrace what He is doing!

But we can know this: He is, in all things, working for our highest good and his highest glory. God wants everything to eventually bow to His honor and produce the greatest glory for His kingdom. Of that we can be certain.

When we doubt God's purposes, we should remember this:

- **Joseph told his brothers**, "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good ... the saving of many lives."
- **Jeremiah, speaking for God, said**: "I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."