

The Greatest Promise For A Christian

Romans 8:28

Verse 28 is the **pinnacle** verse of Romans 8. It has been referred to by many as the greatest promise in the Bible for a Christian. R.A. Torrey called this verse “a soft pillow for a weary heart.” Many a saint have pil- lowed their head on Romans 8:28 during times of trial and suffering.

➡ This is a **CONDITIONAL PROMISE** that can only be claimed by...

1. Those who **LOVE the Lord**— *"To them that love God."* This condition will exclude much of society. You don't see many who love God today. Taking God's name in vain shows a lack of love for God, and profanity abounds. If one loves God, he will honor Him.
2. Those **LED by the Lord**. *"To them who are the called according to his purpose."* Those who are doing God's will, fulfilling the purpose to which God has called them. If you are disobedient to God's calling (His will for your life), the promise of this text is not for you.

➡ So, this promise is for **obedient Christians**.

I. **A FAITHFUL PROMISE** (“And we *know*...”).

- Contrast with verse 26— *“...we know not...”* You may not know all the intricate details of God's will in your life, but you **DO KNOW** that God has a plan for what happens in your life and it is **GOOD**.

A. It is a **SURE** truth. Does **NOT** say “we understand...”

➡ Two Greek words translated “know” in the New Testament.

- Ginosko – To learn; to get to know
- Eido (oie-da) – To be fully persuaded; to know without any need of explanation; to understand completely.

John 13:7– *What I do thou **knowest** not now [eido—to understand completely without the need of an explanation]; but thou shalt **know** hereafter [ginosko – learn or get to know].*

➡ The word Paul uses in Romans 8:28 is “eido”—to be fully persuaded; to know without the need of an explanation or understanding.

1. Many things I do not understand, yet I know (electricity; atomic energy; technicalities of a computer). I cannot explain how a brown cow can eat green grass and produce white milk and yellow butter. Yet I know and enjoy it.
2. Things have happened in my life that has left me asking “God, WHY?” God could have answered me the same way He answered Peter— *“What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.”*
 - I can’t explain why some people never get sick, while others are born with frail bodies and are sick all the time!
 - There are little children in intensive care units that have never done anything wrong, but will live the rest of their lives in pain and suffering. I can’t explain that.
 - I can’t explain why some people who are very wicked yet have so much, while others who work hard and live for God all their lives yet have so little.

B. It is a **STABILIZING** truth.

1. While this promise is certain, it may also elude us. It is an established fact, but a truth that is sometimes not realized. It has not gripped our heart. It has not become part of our lives thereby changing our lives.

ILLUS: John 8:32—*“Ye shall KNOW the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”* That is, the truth shall make you free when you KNOW the truth. The word “know” is the same word that indicates intimacy/sexual relations (Gen 4:1; Luke 1:34).

2. When is this promise most likely to be claimed? In times of trouble. But when trouble comes, it often brings with it a bucket load of emotions (despair, discouragement, depression, anger, self-pity). **Feelings can dominate, distort and disorient us from the truth we should KNOW.** Romans 8:28 does **NOT** say “Ye shall FEEL that all things work together for good...”

3. The Bible **links** the times we suffer trouble to what we should know (Rom. 5:3; James 1:2-3). The truth will only bring stability to your life when you KNOW it experientially.
 - Emotions are like quicksand that will pull you under. But an intimate knowledge of God's truth is a solid rock you can stand upon.
 - We must move from how we FEEL to what we KNOW. Only then will the reality of this promise bring peace to a troubled heart.

II. **A FRUITFUL PROCESS** (*"...that all things WORK TOGETHER for good..."*).

The reason some people have a problem believing Romans 8:28 is they are trying to make the verse say, "all things ARE GOOD." The Bible does not say that all things are good. When the doctor comes into the examination room and tells you, "I have some bad news for you... You have cancer." THAT IS NOT GOOD. Or, you get that dreaded phone call or knock on your door in the middle of the night that someone in your family has been killed - THAT IS NOT GOOD.

A. It is a **COMPREHENSIVE** process—"All things."

1. Verses that talk about "all things" are sometimes hard to accept or understand. For example:
 - Phil. 2:14- *"Do ALL THINGS without murmurings and disputings."*
 - Eph. 5:20- *"Giving thanks ALWAYS for ALL THINGS unto God..."*
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It is easy for me to give thanks for my wife, children, and grandchildren... for a healthy body and a roof over my head. But, how do you thank God for sickness; a car wreck; the death of a loved one?

2. God works together in the good... the bad... and the ugly to perform His purpose in our lives.

"All things" — good and bad... bright and dark... sweet and bitter... easy and hard... happy and sad... plenty and poverty... health and sickness... calm and storm... comfort and pain... life and death.

3. Some things happen in our lives that are beyond our control. But, Romans 8:28 assures me that God is in control. Nothing happens to the Christian accidentally or coincidentally. All we can do is accept these events in the light of Romans 8:28. That's how you deal with it.
 - God is bigger than any **circumstance** that crosses my path... bigger than any **trial** I walk through.. bigger than any **sickness** I endure.
 - God is even bigger than **my mess-ups** in life. He can take all my stupid mistakes and straighten them out to fit His overall purpose!
- B. It is a **COLLECTIVE** process— *"ALL THINGS work **TOGETHER** [not individually] for good to them that love God..."*
1. Beware of isolating the individual events of life. We must view them as a collective whole. Each event is like a puzzle piece that fits into God's all-inclusive purpose.
 - ILLUS – I've never eaten a raw egg. I'm not going to eat cup of shortening by itself. I wouldn't like to eat two cups of flour by itself. If you gave me a half a cup of baking soda, I wouldn't particularly like to eat it. I'm not very eager to eat a plain teaspoon of salt. But if you mix them all together; form them into small portions, and bake them for 15 minutes at 400°, you have delicious biscuits.
 - Ordinary table salt is composed of two poisons, sodium and chlorine. You wouldn't want to eat either one separately. However, the right combination of otherwise harmful chemicals can produce substances that are extremely beneficial — or at least flavorful.
 2. God mixes ALL the events of life together to produce what He wants in our lives. He takes some tears and mixes in some

laughter... He puts in some sorrow and mixes in a little joy... He takes some darkness and adds some light. He **BLENDS** it **ALL TOGETHER** and it is **GOOD!**

III. **The FINISHED PRODUCT** (“...according to his purpose.”).

What is the **GOOD** that **ALL THINGS** are working together to produce? **What does “good” mean?** It doesn't say that all things work together for what we call good. **It's God's idea of good.** God's idea of good may not be our idea of good.

➡ What is **God's ultimate objective** in your life? What is **God's design** for your life?

- To be a good husband / wife / father / mother?
- To sing songs for His glory?
- To play the piano for His glory?
- To be a missionary / Pastor?
- Those may be a few pages in the book, but that is not what the book is about. God has a greater design for my life than being a Pastor.

A. VERSE 29 (“for” is a conjunction that joins v. 29 with v. 28) You cannot understand Romans 8:28 without Romans 8:29—God's ultimate purpose for everyone of us is to **produce Christ's image in us—To make us LIKE HIS SON!**

God only had two sons. You say, “But I'm a son of God.” Yes, but you an adopted an adopted son.

➡ Only two men ever walked on the face of the earth **without the aid of an earthly father:**

1. **ADAM** (The **created** son of God)—Made in God's image. When God looked at Adam, He saw Himself in Adam. But when Adam sinned, he lost God's image. God no longer could see His reflection in Adam. Something died.
2. **THE LORD JESUS CHRIST / The Last Adam** (The **only begotten** son of God) — He is the express image of God's person (Heb. 1:3). He never sinned.

➡ God is working to restore His image in you that Adam lost.

- B. How does God conform us to the image of His Son? Through *"ALL THINGS WORKING TOGETHER FOR GOOD..."* The "good" is not to make you wealthy, successful, pain-free, or happy. The "good" is producing Christ-likeness in you.

SUMMATION: Several years ago I was at a Bible Conference at Galilean Baptist Church in Livonia, Michigan. Dr. Peter Ruckman was also in that Conference. Bro. Ruckman is a great artist as well as a preacher and teacher. Between services he was painting a large mountain scene for behind the baptistery. It was huge. We watched as he began to work. He began splashing on various shades of paint, in what appeared to be an haphazard manner. Some gray here; some green there; a little blue in another place. After about an hour he asked, "What do you think, Brother Hughes?" I said, "I'm sorry, but it doesn't make much sense to me... All I see is several blotches of paint on the wall." Then he said, "Oh, yes. When you look at the painting you see only what is there; but when I look at it, I see what is GOING TO BE THERE." Before the artist ever picks up the brush, he knows what the picture is going to look like.

God is painting a picture of His Son in your life and He is using "ALL THINGS" to do it.

- Can you ever be like Christ apart from sorrow (He was the "Man of Sorrows")?
- Can you ever be like Christ without ever suffering grief (He was acquainted with grief)?
- Can you ever be like Christ unless you have your friends desert you?
- Can you ever be like Christ apart from pain?
- Can you ever be like Christ without being lied about?

Those things may not make you happy, but they will make you more like Jesus!