

ALL TOGETHER FOR GOOD

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Ever been hungry?

Imagine a situation where one of your friends comes to your home and asks if you are hungry...

- Would you give him a big bowl of flour?
- Would you give him a big cup of Crisco?
- Maybe a spoonful of baking powder?
- What if we mixed it all together?
- Flour, Crisco, Milk, Eggs: all work together for biscuits!

Computer: only about a dozen parts or so - Processor, RAM, Heat Sink, Motherboard, etc.
All those things work together for a computer!

What about your car? The engine, transmission, wheels, axels: all work together for the car!

You see, individual things in our lives work together for good, if we love the Lord.

[Romans 8.28] ²⁸ And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

Do we really believe this? Do we?

Today we are going to be talking about why all things work together for good for those who love God.

1. A Closer Look at Romans 8.28

This verse does not say that everything that happens is good. It says that all things will work *together* for good for those that love God. There's a difference.

The allure of joining the Marines to me as a young 18-year-old was incredible. I wanted the uniform. I wanted the girls swooning as I walked by with my rippling muscles that I was going to somehow instantly get. I want the hero worship.

Reality set in when I was shipping out. It was little late I know, but sitting in the recruiting office hours before I left for boot camp, I saw a poster that read "Marines. We don't promise you a rose garden." On the poster there was an image of young man just like me who looked like he was dying while trying to do a pull-up.

The reality of our Christianity is that once we become a Christian, we think we have it made. We think the hard part is over. But, in truth, the battle is just beginning.

Dave Ramsey is a famous Christian financial advisor. He teaches a variety of methods and plans to get people out of debt. He says that the moment you start your plan, Mr. Murphy will come into your home and set up shop. ("Whatever can go wrong will go wrong.") The moment you start trying to do the right thing with your money, Murphy will set up shop.

I didn't know what this meant until Bonnie's computer had to be replaced in her car right after we started the program. And I had to have new tires and brakes also.

When we dedicate our lives to the service of the Lord - that is when the devil hits us the hardest. Temptation like never before. Why? Because now you hold yourself to a higher standard, and that higher standard is sometimes difficult to maintain.

All things in our Christian lives will work together for good if we love the Lord. When we think we are tempted beyond what we are able, we need to read 1 Corinthians 10.12-13:

¹² Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. ¹³ No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

2. Why Do Bad Things Happen to Good People?

Sometimes this is the most fundamental question we ask.

My Aunt was a faithful Christian. Every time her and my mother were together it was a laugh-fest. The cackled constantly. She died of liver cancer in 2002.

Many of you have stories such as this, of loved ones and dear friends who have been tragically taken from us. They were good people. They were even Christians. So how do explain this happening to these good people? How would a God who is ultimately good do such a thing?

My mother for a while seriously doubted God. She wouldn't go to worship and even went so far as to say, "If my God takes away my sister like this, then I don't want to have anything to do with him."

When I think about bad things happening to good people, I look at Job.

Sure, you know the story of Job. The guy who had everything and lost everything.

[Job 1.1-3] ¹ There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job, and that man was blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil. ² There were born to him seven sons and three daughters. ³ He possessed 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, and 500 female donkeys, and very many servants, so that this man was the greatest of all the people of the east.

In teenager terms, the dude was loaded. It says in verse 3 that Job was "the greatest of all the people of the east." Let's read on.

[Job 1.14-15] ¹⁴ And there came a messenger to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing and the donkeys feeding beside them, ¹⁵ and the Sabeans fell upon them and took them and struck down the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you."

[Job 1.16] ⁶ While he was yet speaking, there came another and said, "The fire of God fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants and consumed them, and I alone have escaped to tell you."

[Job 1.18-19] ¹⁸ While he was yet speaking, there came another and said, "Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, ¹⁹ and behold, a great wind came across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young people, and they are dead, and I alone have escaped to tell you."

Imagine, just for a second, that you had everything taken from you in one swoop. A guy sends you an email saying "All your stocks and bank accounts have lost all their money." Your wife calls from work and says your house and all your property just burned to the ground. Then a policeman comes to your place

of work and tells you all of your children were in a building collapse and none survived. How would you feel? Would you curse God? I would. But what did Job do?

[Job 1.20-22] ²⁰ Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head and fell on the ground and worshiped. ²¹ And he said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD." ²² In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong.

Job did the opposite of what most of us would do. He turned to God instead of away from Him. But was God done with Job yet.

[Job 2.7-10] ⁷ So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and struck Job with loathsome sores from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. ⁸ And he took a piece of broken pottery with which to scrape himself while he sat in the ashes. ⁹ Then his wife said to him, "Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die." ¹⁰ But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women would speak. Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips.

To top it all off, Job was struck with boils from head to toe. And if that wasn't enough, his wife turned against him.

A few verses later Job is visited by his three friends: *Elphaz*, *Bildad*, and *Zophar*. For seven days they lamented with him. Then, for 35 chapters, Job's friends tell him how he deserved what he got. By the way, when something bad happens to one of your friends, you may not know why. But what the best thing you can do? Love them, encourage them, comfort them, and SHUT YOUR MOUTH.

Job was probably wondering where the Lord was in all this. "Why won't he answer me?" is what Job says in 31.35. You don't have to be on this planet very long before you ask that question. Then in chapter 38, the Lord answers Job.

3. It's Not About Answers; It's About Attitude

[Job 38.1-4] ¹ Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind and said: ² "Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? ³ Dress for action like a man; I will question you, and you make it known to me. ⁴ "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding.

I read this a long time ago and I didn't understand it at all. Why would God ask Job a question like that? God knew Job wasn't there when he laid the foundations of the earth. God wasn't trying to get an answer necessarily, he was trying to change Job's *attitude*. You see, God knows how we think. He's a lot smarter than us. There was a show that premiered not too long ago called *Lie to Me*, and it was a cop show based around an interrogator who could tell if someone was lying just by looking at facial twinges, their hands or whatever. He could spot a liar from a mile away. God's like that, except on a totally deeper level. God know what we think.

[1 Chronicles 28.9] ^{9b} ...for the LORD searches all hearts and understands every plan and thought.

God asked Job *eighty-four* questions without so much as a word from Job. You see, the questions weren't designed for answers, they were designed to change the person's attitude.

It's kind of like a father and son's relationship. Kid comes in and says, "Dad, I think it's time I was able to stay out until 4 in the morning. After all, I'm 10 now."

Well you can imagine how this conversation goes. The dad says, “Hold on there, son. Let me ask you a few questions. Who pays the electric bill? Who bought those clothes you’re wearing? Who bought the soap and the water you used to take a shower....(sniff)...about a week ago? Let’s get it straight son, the Bible is very clear on this topic:

[2 Opinions 3.19] **He who maketh the money and pay the bills maketh the rules.**

“You see,” the dad says, “Me: dad. You: kid. When you make the money and pay the bills you can go off on your own and stay up till 4 in the morning all you want. My house, my rules.”

All God did to Job was ask him 84 questions. He never answered him why He let his servants be killed, took his cattle, or killed his children. He just asked question after question after question.

Now the question is, would you still serve God if everything went wrong and you never found out why?

Job did.

We want answers. We want to know why. We want to know why bad things happen to good people. We want to know why our loved ones are taken from us. We want to know why God allows things to happen to us. We can’t see the future and we can’t see the good God will do with a bad thing.

We need to trust in God. Going back to our main passage today, Romans 8.28: **All things work together for good for those that love the Lord.** If we love and trust in God, and we know that all things, ALL THINGS, no matter how bad or good, work TOGETHER for good, everything will be alright. It may not seem like it at the time, but eventually, we will know.

If you’re struggling today with trusting God, if you have put God on the back burner and allowed Him to become 2nd place in your life, then make that right today. If you haven’t been baptized as a child of God, washed of your sins, we can do that as well. If you have any spiritual needs, come now, while we stand and sing.