

Greg Laurie: What Many Really Misunderstand About This Popular Bible Verse

The other day I was wondering which Bible verses people most frequently search for online.

According to Bible Gateway, here are the top five: Predictably, No. 1 is John 3:16. The second most popular is one of my favorites, and that is Jeremiah 29:11. The next is Philippians 4:13, followed by Psalm 23:4. The fifth is Romans 8:28, which is a beloved and often-quoted verse: “We know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.”

But do we understand what it actually means?

When the Bible says “all things work together,” it isn’t referring to the general public. This statement isn’t true for every person out there. Variations of this statement include “All’s well that ends well” and “It’s all good!”

Let me just say that no, it’s not “all good.” Sometimes it’s really bad, actually. There are times when things don’t make sense. Things happen to us that are inexplicable.

When the apostle Paul penned the words of Romans 8:28, he was addressing those who put their faith in Jesus Christ. This is a very specific promise to very specific people: those who love God.

If you love God, and by that I mean, if you have put your faith in Jesus Christ and trusted Him as your Savior and Lord, then you can lay hold of this promise for yourself, no matter what you’re going through right now.

Notice how this verse begins: “*We know*” (emphasis added). It

doesn't say "we think" or "we hope" or "we suppose" or "we wish."

It says, "We know."

But how do we know?

We can find the answer in Romans 8:32, where Paul said, "He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"

Whenever I'm tempted to doubt the love of God and wonder whether things really are working together for my good, I need to take a long look at the cross and remember that Jesus demonstrated His love for me by dying there in my place. It wasn't the nails that held Christ on the cross; it was His love for you and me.

As a Christian, you can know that whatever is going on in your life, all things work together for good to those who love God. That's because God has shown His love toward us by sending Jesus.

Now, all things are not good. But because God is good, all things work together for good to those who love Him.

There are things that are bad, and they'll always be bad. So Romans 8:28 is not saying that God makes bad things good. Instead, it says that all things work together for good to those who love God.

So God can take something that is evil in its intent, something that is designed to harm us, and can somehow, in his providence, turn it into something that ultimately produces good in our lives. But this is only the hope of the believer.

Christians don't believe in dumb luck; we believe in God's guidance. We don't believe in coincidence; we believe in providence. And when things are not working out for good in

the given moment, we don't panic, because we know there are no so-called accidents in the lives of Christians.

I think Christians are the most realistic people around, because we recognize that bad things happen in the world we live in. The world isn't a nice place. It can be a very bad place, in fact. But the good news is that we serve a very good God.

The Bible says, "Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him" (Ps. 34:8). That means God is the final court of arbitration when it comes to defining what is good and what is not.

So when God says that something is good, then it's good. And when God says that something is bad, then it's bad.

But what is good?

Good is what God approves. That isn't circular reasoning; it's biblical reasoning.

For example, we think good means that everything is going our way. Good means green lights, blue skies, paid bills and excellent health. But sometimes an affliction or hardship can be good, because it causes us to turn to God.

Sometimes when things are going really well, we forget God. We simply take things for granted. Let's just be honest and admit that. We don't pray as we ought to and don't read our Bibles that often.

But when the bottom drops out and a crisis hits, we drop right to our knees. And that's good. God can take what is perceived as a bad thing, and it actually can become a good thing in His hands.

Yet there are things that happen, and we say, "I don't think anything good ever will come out of this."

I thought that when my son Christopher died in an automobile accident. I thought it effectively was the end of my life. It still hurts. And we still miss him.

But there have been things that God brought out of it that have worked for good. For example, it has given us more compassion for others who are hurting. It has given us a ministry to people who have lost loved ones, especially children. And it has made us stronger in our faith, causing us to take bold steps that we probably wouldn't have taken otherwise.

So yes, I can see all things working together for good. In spite of this bad thing, God has produced a good thing.

All of life's events pass the point of providence. This gives us equilibrium in the middle of a storm, faith in the midst of doubt, courage in the midst of danger and hope in the midst of despair. God is in control. {eoa}

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