



**Victory in the Spirit
Part 1
Knowing Our Prayers ARE Heard! Victory in Jesus!
Romans 8:26-28**

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So far, Paul has taken us from the glorious realization that in Christ, there is no condemnation, we have indeed been set free. We have learned that the expectation of life in this new regime of the Spirit means no longer living and exhibiting the works of the flesh, but instead, we see the Holy Spirit producing His fruit in our lives.



We also have learned that to fully enable that changed lifestyle requires a type of power we are not able to produce on our own. And we learned that upon salvation, not only does the Holy Spirit come into us to help us now live as citizens of heaven, but if we ask Him, He will also come upon us in power to do extraordinary service for Him, allowing our flesh to move further and further into the background and allowing His Spirit to rule and reign in our life. As we move into this new citizenship of heaven, we experience the fruit of the Spirit and step out in faith and power to be Spirit led in all that we do.

We have also discovered that we have a future that is incredible, mind-blowing in fact. We are all, as followers of Jesus Christ, destined to be glorified and given bodies just like His. Paul, this is all stuff about the Holy Spirit we really wanted and needed to know about. I can't wait to be glorified and with the King, but until then? What does life in the Spirit look like? Queue up Victory in Jesus by E.M Bartlett.

O victory in Jesus,
My Savior, forever.
He sought me and bought me
With His redeeming blood;
He loved me ere I knew Him
And all my love is due Him,
He plunged me to victory,
Beneath the cleansing flood. (Bartlett 1939)

What about day to day though. Paul talks about that.

Romans 8:26–28

“Now in the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know what to pray for as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.” (NASB 2020)

The reality of doing life, day to day is what Paul anticipates the next question to be about. How do we do this? Jesus, who has been here, knows all about that, this is why He sent the Holy Spirit to us.

John 16:13–15

“But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take from Mine and will disclose it to you. All things that the Father has are Mine; this is why I said that He takes from Mine and will disclose it to you.” (NASB 2020)

Jesus told us that the Holy Spirit would guide us in “all” truth. He is the one who teaches us what the Word says. What He hears He speaks. We know as He leads us that He is guiding and directing per Jesus and the Father. He also teaches us to be waiting and watching for Jesus to return. Here in Romans, Paul says he “helps.”

First up is prayer, God hears us. This is why you and I can indeed do life. The Holy Spirit helps our weakness, and that is a problem for us until we go home to Him or are glorified. The word in the Greek here for help is συναντιλαμβάνεται (synantilambanetai). Big word in the Greek but it means “to take up with.” (Delling 1964-, 376) We really do not know how to pray, so He helps us.

Not only does He help us, but He is also in us or “takes up with us” as Delling seems to indicate.



Stop and think about that “taking up with us” for a moment or two. I know that when I first became a follower of Jesus, I was excited to know that the peace I suddenly experienced was because the Holy Spirit had just moved in forever.

There were still tons of things to clean up, and He is still doing that, but He was inside and I had peace with God, and the peace of God that freaks everyone out (John 14:27). But here, we are told, that because of our weakness, our inability to pray for what we should be or even how to pray in accordance with the will of God, He is “taking up with us” and standing right there helping and interceding with the Father interpreting per God’s will what we are praying about.

Yes, this is an incredibly long Greek word for what is simply translated as, “helps.” The word is only used in the Bible in one other place, Luke 10:40 where Martha wants Mary to stop sitting at the feet of Jesus and come and “help” her.

Dr. Rosscup did a bit more digging on the word and provides us the following. *“The word combines three terms in a compound, sun (“together with”), anti (“over against”) as one assumes a position distinct from another to do his part, and lambano (“to take”), receive one’s share to do.*

The Spirit’s help is not together with a believer’s weakness in the sense of 50–50 teamwork or even 95–5. He does what we due to weakness are not able to do (Rom. 8:3; Phil. 2:12–13; cf. Jn. 15:5).” (Rosscup 2008, 2013)

Robertson tells us “Here beautifully Paul pictures the Holy Spirit taking hold at our side at the very time of our weakness and before (it is) too late.” (Robertson 1933, Ro 8:26)

The word means “to help by joining in an activity or effort—‘to join in helping.’” (Louw and Nida 1996, 457) We are never alone as followers of Christ, never.

That word selection tells us that Paul understands that as a follower of Christ, we are not on our own. The Holy Spirit is there joining in or as we see here, in some cases taking the lead and interpreting to the Father what we are incapable of expressing in words.

One of the things I have learned over the years is I am still learning.

Jesus provided us guidelines for prayer and by studying His prayer life there is much we can learn. Why do we not pray the way we should? Why do I not pray the way I should? Primarily because God does not do things the way you and I do things. We tend to want to do things our way, so we also tend to think we need to learn new ways to pray, but Jesus has provided us His example. Maybe do it His way?

We looked at a passage earlier from the final briefing Jesus held with His 11 key workers, the disciples. Dr. Mitchell tells us that “in this final, crucial meeting, Jesus reiterated six times, “If you ask...I will do.” When Jesus Christ repeats something six times in one meeting, you and I better sit up and take notice. I submit to you Jesus was giving His disciples a formula for action. He was telling them how to really accomplish things in divine style...prayer is set forth as the primary human factor in the accomplishment of God’s program on earth. With a startling boldness, Christ asserted that divine action, in some mysterious manner, is conditioned upon believing prayer. Thus prayer is set forth as the chief task of the believer. It is his (our) responsibility to ask. It is God’s responsibility to accomplish.” But our weakness is only one of the problems. (Mitchell 1977, 11)

1 John 3:21–22

“Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; and **whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him.**” (ESV)



1 John 5:14–15

“And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that **if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.**” (ESV)

All of that implies not just a relationship, but a really close relationship and one that our thoughts are His thoughts and thanks to the Spirit in us, we are in tune with what He wants to do, so we pray that way. One more thing, remember this from earlier?

Romans 1:17

“For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written: **“BUT THE RIGHTEOUS ONE WILL LIVE BY FAITH.”**” (NASB 2020)

Paul quoting from Habakkuk 2:4. WE are also to be fully and completely grounded in Christ, in His faithfulness and also reflecting Him and being faithful as well.

Mark 11:22–26

“And Jesus answered and said to them, “Have faith in God. Truly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and thrown into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says is going to happen, it will be granted to him. Therefore, **I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they will be granted to you. And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father who is in heaven will also forgive you for your offenses.** But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father who is in heaven forgive your offenses.”” (NASB 2020)

When Jesus said this, He was walking towards Jerusalem and would have to walk across the Mount of Olives as He did so. Jesus is making a point after He condemned the fig tree, a type of Israel, for having no fruit.

Lane relates that Jesus is teaching the “concept of faith as a quiet confidence in the power and goodness of God who accomplishes everything. The corollary to faith is miracle, and in this immediate context faith is unwavering trust in miraculous divine help.” (Lane 1974, 410)

He makes specific reference to the Mount of Olives being thrown into the Sea, and off in the distance, the disciples could see the Dead Sea. Jesus is affirming a prophecy made in Zechariah 14:4.

There we learn that the Mount of Olives will split in two when Jesus lands there, creating a valley that runs all the way to the Dead Sea. The mountain being cast into the sea, literally. “When prayer is the source of faith’s power and the means of its strength, God’s sovereignty is its only restriction.” (Lane 1974, 410)

As we pray, we may not have the right words, the Holy Spirit is there to help. We may not be fully aware of what is God’s will in this situation, the Holy Spirit is there to help.

Jesus is not telling us, and Paul is not either, that “if you pray hard enough no matter what, God is obligated to answer your prayer.” Nope. There are those who teach that but that makes God a genie and raises us up to be equal with God in fact, controlling God. That is not the case. It is not faith in faith or faith in feelings and by the way, this promise is being made to His disciples, His closest followers. Not to the general masses and those who were following from a distance.

Paul will talk about qualifiers, expectations the Lord has of us as we pray, that is yet to come here, but we already are beginning to smell a bit of what he is saying right here based on who Jesus is talking to.



Jesus is addressing those who are faithfully following Him. And Jesus provides a condition as well that Paul does not.

Mark 11:25

"And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father who is in heaven will also forgive you for your offenses." (NASB 2020)

A lack of faith is a serious problem, especially if you fall into the "But I followed the formula" camp. Name it claim it is hogwash. God is sovereign. Okay, so you have the faith and are walking with Christ, but there is that person who wronged you that you are still bitter at. Oopsie.

What that means is that there are those times where the mountain that needs to be moved, is not that one out there you are praying over, it is that huge towering structure of bitterness we have built up inside ourselves.

We are not to place anything we do for the Lord or on behalf of the Lord in ministry ahead of maintaining good relationships with those around us. Paul is not there yet, but he says this in Romans 12.

Romans 12:18

"If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all people." (NASB 2020)

Soft hearts are indeed a standard requirement for Jesus.

Am I the only who feels really apprehensive and inadequate about praying? One more, of many reasons, why our loving Lord has given us the Holy Spirit. Thomas Schrenier says that "Paul is not describing, then, the Spirit's help for us in a general way, nor does he contemplate weakness as a total phenomenon in the lives of believers. It is weakness in prayer that Paul zeroes in on, and the Spirit's help in prayer is the answer to our weakness." (Schreiner 1998, 443)

In other words, as a believer, you can pray right now.

The Holy Spirit translates; he also intercedes as does Jesus with the Father. The issue is not knowing how to pray, that is a conversation with Jesus. You take care of the personal issue, but the issue remaining appears to be the content.

Romans 8:26

"Now in the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know what to pray for as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words;" (NASB 2020)

In our flesh, we have a weakness that we cannot beat in this life, ever. We will never know what to truly pray and not pray for in this life. The sin nature is indeed a problem. But Jesus has the solution.

"We do not know how to pray as what to pray for as we should," that is a true statement for all of us. But there is a solution, the Holy Spirit. Dr. Moo adds this. "All our praying is conditioned by our continuing "weakness" and means that—except perhaps on rare occasions—our petitions must be qualified by "if it is in accordance with your will." This does not, of course, mean that we should not strive to understand the will of God for the circumstances we face, or that we are in the wrong to make definite requests to God; but it does mean that we cannot presume to identify our petitions with the will of God. This inability to know what to pray for cannot be overcome in this life, for it is part of "our weakness," the inescapable condition imposed on us by our place in salvation history." (Moo 2018, 546) We are sinners saved by grace who are being sanctified.



How do I know that this issue over content is what is the primary problem? It is because of what Paul does not say. Paul does not command us to correct it. He doesn't tell us to read the Bible x times to resolve the stupid flesh issue or anything else even remotely moving towards a law solution to a grace situation.

God has saved us by His grace. He loves us and has given His Holy Spirit to us to be in us to cover our inadequacies that we have, being citizens of His Kingdom; yet not in glorified bodies where the wiring is no longer flawed by sin. We are not told to search for or ask for special revelation to know how organize our prayer content correctly, or to search the scriptures for that matter either. He says nothing about it. We are told to pray. And the Holy Spirit does indeed make up the difference for us. His intercession, His translation of what is on our heart takes care of this for us.

I have read several books that imply or state there are laws of the universe about prayer. There is one. To pray and do so continually.

Matthew 6:9

"Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father, who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.'" (NASB 2020)

Jesus commands it.

Matthew 7:7

"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you." (NASB 2020)

And don't stop doing it. Be thankful too.

1 Thessalonians 5:16–18

"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus." (NASB 2020)

Got it, we are to pray, and do so continually, practicing to continually be in the presence of the Lord. Brother Lawrence talked about his understanding of this in a conversation on August 3rd, 1666. "We should establish ourselves in a sense of GOD's Presence, by continually conversing with Him. That it was a shameful thing to quit His conversation to think of trifles and fooleries." (Brother Lawrence of the Resurrection 1906, 10)

We are all unintentionally weak thanks to the sin nature which is one reason why Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to us.

And again, emotional intelligence is also required. We need to be aware of how we are living and is there something we have done recently that we have not confessed of yet or involves someone else. Yes, we can hinder our prayers. Guys, Peter has a word for us.

1 Peter 3:7–9

"You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered. To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, loving, compassionate, and humble; not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you would inherit a blessing." (NASB 2020)

There are times in my life, where I cannot see what is coming, yet all the signs are there and screaming. We have, as David Seccombe states, have "someone inside may be praying nonetheless. This may only



express itself to us as sighs and groans, but they may be sighs inspired in part by the Spirit of God, who is also interpreting them to God. The Spirit knows the will of God and will pray accordingly, so these prayers will be pleasing to God and he will answer them. How important prayer must be if God even sends his Spirit to do it for us when we are too weak to do it ourselves!" (Seccombe 2013, 148)

Looking back at our text, since we do not know how to pray according to the will of God due to our flesh and sin and imperfect knowledge of God's will while in this body, we must rely on the ministry of the Holy Spirit to cover the gap for us. When we are told the "Spirit Himself intercedes," the Greek here is in the present active indicative.

Thanks for the grammar lesson, Ken, translate. When a verb is in the Greek present tense, it is "the verb tense where the writer portrays an action in process or a state of being with no assessment of the action's completion." (Heiser and Setterholm 2013)

The reality of this as being the ministry of the Holy Spirit is that from the moment, we came to Jesus and the Holy Spirit came into us, He began this ministry of interpreting our prayers to the Father and He has no intention of ever stopping. The active part of this means the Holy Spirit is personally doing this. And since Paul also put this word into the indicative mood by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he is telling us "the action of the verb or the state of being it describes is presented by the writer as real. It is the mood of assertion, where the writer portrays something as actual (as opposed to possible or contingent on intention)." (Heiser and Setterholm 2013)

How confident am I that the Holy Spirit is taking what we pray, desiring God's will as we pray, but not knowing, in our weakness, what the Spirit perceives is the best, to translate to be actually God's will? 100% confident. We pray, the Spirit already, since He is God, knows what is best and He is actively, as we learned from the word, parsing through what it is we are saying and what He knows is in our heart and takes it to the Father "cleaned up."

And the type of prayer Paul is talking about is the general term, prayer. That includes praise, confession, petition as well as intercession. Confessing our sin or talking with the Lord when someone has wronged us can be a toughie.

Again, what or how do we pray for them and as we examine ourselves, is there anything we need to confess to the Lord and ask forgiveness of. A hard truth is this, not everyone who has wronged us will come to us later and repent of what they did or said. We are to forgive them, knowing that. It does not mean forgive and forget, it means forgive and give the case over to the Supreme Judge, Jesus Christ and let Him deal with it as the Spirit provides us the peace we need. It also does not mean going right back into the situation because you have forgiven them, they still may be busy hurting the next person not even knowing or carrying that they hurt you. Like I said, a hard truth. Jesus said the following.

Matthew 18:15–17

"If another believer sins against you, go privately and point out the offense. If the other person listens and confesses it, you have won that person back. But if you are unsuccessful, take one or two others with you and go back again, so that everything you say may be confirmed by two or three witnesses. If the person still refuses to listen, take your case to the church. Then if he or she won't accept the church's decision, **treat that person as a pagan or a corrupt tax collector.**" (NLT)

Jesus does indeed get it that even those who say they follow Jesus will, at times, refuse to allow the Holy Spirit to work in or through them. We forgive them and walk away. It is the Lord's problem now.

Forgiving someone means you release them from debt. It does not necessarily mean you are going to trust them, or have a close relationship with them again. (Johnson and VanVonderen 1991, 102)



Romans 8:26–27

“Now in the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know what to pray for as we should, but **the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words**; and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.” (NASB 2020)

Groanings is the word στεναγμοῖς (stenagmois). Chapter 8 is about the Holy Spirit but it is also the groaning chapter. There are three groanings here. We have already covered the groaning of creation in verse 22. Then there is our groaning wanting to be in our new bodies as we look forward to our redemption in the rapture of the church.

Now, it is the Holy Spirit who is groaning. Many times, when we pray, we are so overwhelmed by what we are praying about, or who are praying to that we do not have words. I know there are times in my life where I really do not know what to pray for but I need to pray and it is the Holy Spirit who is taking what is on my heart and turning it into prayer before the Father. And there are those times where He too, has no words.

This is not praying in tongues here. Tongues means language and talking. There are no words here.

As we look at the text, we see the translation as “groanings too deep for words.”

“Too deep for words” as a phrase is one Greek word, ἀλαλήτοις (alaletois). Think wordless. The word means “ineffable, inexpressible, without being able to speak.” (Montanari 2015)

Dr. Rosscup points out “the Spirit’s prayer help meets a problem of all Christians, whereas only some speak in tongues or have the gift of tongues in NT passages. All of Romans 8 deals with blessing for all believers.” (Rosscup 2008, 2015)

What the Holy Spirit does for us is not contingent upon any giftings He has provided us with; this is for all of us.

All the bases are thus, effectively covered by the Holy Spirit. Those times where we are in lockstep with the Spirit and are praying per the will of God, such as praying for someone to be saved. Then there are those times where we pray for something that is good to have, but not in God’s will for us. The best example I have of this is the young lady I was deeply infatuated with in High School and wanted to date but the Lord said no, and seeing her 10 years later at a reunion and learning how good the Lord was to say no about her.

Also, there are those times we are not really clear what or how to pray for someone, He knows and covers us.

And when under duress, in the middle of a trial, when we are learning that Jesus is all we need because Jesus is all we have, that too.

Wordless. In a trial, how do we pray? Do we really know how to pray? What is God’s will? I have no clue.

He might be developing a new set of skills I need in my toolbox. Or perhaps someone is watching what we go through and how we handle the trial and they will give their life to the Lord as a result.

Do we pray for it to end, to learn from it, or for the strength to endure it? Or do we just pray and sigh.



So, three groans here, creation wanting to be set free from corruption, us too, and now the Holy Spirit sharing in our longing and the longing of creation as well, identifying with us while also ensuring that we have a clear path to the throne room. Jesus purchased that path on the cross with His blood; the veil was indeed torn in two from top to bottom (Mark 15:38) meaning access is now possible directly to the Father.

And because Jesus too had those moments when He was here on this planet, He knows.

For those who teach or have been taught to pray the promise and not the problem, that means there is a lack of understanding prayer. It is conversation, honest, brutal and open with the God of the universe. The Holy Spirit takes care of the presentation. You cannot cancel out your prayer, you cannot negate your prayer, there are no rules of the universe that God must obey and there is no such thing as a quid pro quo God who will answer prayer only if we pray upside down wearing a sash and an apron or only out loud.

David, when he prayed, was always upfront and brutally honest with the Lord, we can be as well. I like how Dr. McGee puts it.

It's wonderful sometimes to go to the Lord and say, "Lord, I don't know what to ask for. I don't know what to say. But I'm coming to You as Your child. And I want Your will done." And the Spirit of God then will make intercession for us according to the will of God. My, again, how wonderful that is! (McGee 1997, 703)

So, what have we just learned here?

There are three persons involved in prayer per Paul here in Romans 8.

We come to the Lord, we pray, but we really do not know how or what to ask for due to our weakness, our inability to know the will of God as well as we wish we did. But pray anyhow and do not sweat it.

The second person in this equation is the Holy Spirit. He take what it is we are praying about and includes our heart as well as part of the overall equation and then intercedes for us and through us to include, at times, wordless groans reflecting our heart. We pray anyhow, and the Holy Spirit takes it from there. And for a bonus extra, Jesus is interceding for us as well.

Then there is the Father. He knows us, He knows our heart.

Since the Father knows the Spirit's mind, and visa versa, the Spirit reframes our prayer for the Father, and the Father does indeed hear us. He is Jehovah Yishma after all, The Lord who hears.

But the really cool thing about these two verses is this, God wants us to talk to Him and He never gets tired of listening to us. He will never ignore and answer vaguely like my earthly father did. He is always paying attention and always listening, eagerly wanting us to talk to Him and the Holy Spirit ensures that on our behalf, we will indeed be heard.

Romans 8:28

"And **we know that God causes all things to work together for good** to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose." (NASB 2020)

I have spent a lot of my time in life learning various mathematical models to try and predict the future based on the past. How many people do you need to cover the telephone to answer questions. How many staff will be needed to cover x number of square miles as well as x number of investigations or claims. And how do I avoid the dreaded, dropped phone call due to call volume. And on and on.



We spend a lot of time working to optimize life.

My bride uses an analog planner to plot out and keep track of where we have to be and when. We all plan as much as we can because none of us like surprises.

But I have learned, as well as many of us have, that you can't do life that way all of the time.

Plans fall through, things happen, accidents take place, traffic flows clog and people who say they will fix or do certain jobs, never show up. You can plan, but life happens. Semper Gumby. Always flexible.

1 Corinthians 9:22

"To the weak I became weak, that I might gain the weak; I have become all things to all people, so that I may by all means save some." (NASB 2020)

Pastor Chuck Smith used to say, "Blessed are the flexible for they shall not be broken." Which is another way of saying. As we are Spirit led and filled, and things happen, we understand it has all been Father filtered and we continue to flex to the Spirit.

Satan loves to throw things at us to bring up the temperature and move us away from trusting in the Lord to being mad at the Lord and how could He let this happen to me. Pity pot time.

Then Paul shows up and his opening phrase here in verse 26 is, well, rather upsetting. "And we know." Great, what is it Paul that you assume that all of us who are following Jesus know? That "all things work together for good."

But there is a qualifier that Paul has added to this phrase, it is not applicable to everyone, only those who meet the limiting qualification.

Romans 8:28

"And we know that God causes all things to work together for good **to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.**" (NASB 2020)

I point that out because, as Francis Schaeffer states, "this is one of the Bible verses that everyone seems to know and everyone seems to misquote. People will often just sort of shrug their shoulders with an attitude of fatalism and say, "Oh well, all things work together for good," implying that this applies to all people, no matter who they are or what they believe." (Schaeffer 1998, 224)

But it doesn't work that way. All things work together for good for those who meet the limitations.

First, let's take a step back and see the context. That may answer some of our questions. We have been learning about the Holy Spirit amplifying and making certain that our cries for help not only are translated as need be, but that are also reflective of the will of God since that does come into play for us in our finite mortal bodies. His cries on our behalf make our cries look insipid. He groans for us and does so in full knowledge of the will of God. It is because of this intercession being done on our behalf by the Spirit, that you and I can be totally and completely certain that "God causes all things to work together for good."

Secondly, as we look at this verse, we find five things in it that solidify what we have already learned about the Spirit and how He is involved in all aspects of our life as we have moved from the realm of the flesh to the realm of the Spirit. The Spirit does indeed cover for our weakness and I am so glad He does. It proves up the five things we see here, which, because of what He has already done, we know.



We know that God is working in the life of every believer. Our translation says, “God causes,” but that is not in every Greek text. But the context of this verse, in my mind, has God as the subject of the verse, as such, “we know God causes.”

We learned in the previous two verses how intimately God the Holy Spirit is involved in our prayer life it also continues that God is the one at work in our lives and working in them.

The second thing Paul tells us is that not only is God working, but He is working for good. That is one of His attributes, so it makes perfect sense that it is God who is not only working in our lives but working for good.

So, back up a bit and what is it that God is working good on our behalf? All things. Remember the groanings we discussed earlier? All things, even those, He is working good on our behalf.

Even the negative stuff? Again, negative in our limited finite view may not be negative in God’s infinite view. He knows all things, He knows the beginning from the end, and as such what you and I may perceive as being incredibly negative may be the one thing God is doing in our life to further perfect us, to protect us by taking us home, to develop us, but yes, it sucks while it is happening. Again, perspective. In other words, yes, suffering too is included in this.

So, we have seen that God is working good for His people and this is in all things but now also comes one of the two qualifiers, “to those who love God.”

This right here ends the sorry teaching some have indulged in that all things work together for all who say they are believers. Prosperity gospel false teachers tend to go here without giving you the rest of the story. The qualifier is right there for all to see. We see here a specific qualifier, who love God. The intent is to filter out the chaff because for the one who has decided to walk after the flesh and is now doing their own thing and under God’s discipline, the good God is doing is bringing them back to repentance or in a worst-case scenario, taking them home. John Stott also discusses those who attempt to generalize this and why that won’t work.

Paul is not expressing a general, superficial optimism that everything tends to everybody’s good in the end. No, if the ‘good’ which is God’s objective is our completed salvation, then its beneficiaries are his people who are described as those who love him. (Stott 2001, 247)

Recapping, God is working for our good as His people in all things but this is first of all, only for those who love Him, that is the first limitation. Now comes the second limitation.

Romans 8:28

“And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, **to those who are called according to His purpose.**” (NASB 2020)

All things work together for good because those of us who are followers of Jesus, I mean true followers who can indeed say that God has called them from a life of sin to follow Him, who are busy growing up in good soil, all things is, as David Seccombe relates, “His plan is to make every one of his chosen children like Jesus. This likeness is not one of appearance or personality, but of character. We are to be like Jesus in his obedience to God, his trust, his truthfulness and courage, his love and his compassion. Such Christ-likeness corresponds to the God-likeness for which we were first created (Genesis 1:26), but which only Jesus has ever fully realised. Human beings were meant to be, and will be, physical likenesses of the invisible God.” (Seccombe 2013, 151)



He is also perfecting us as brothers and sisters in Christ. Many times we read this verse and translate good to our own personal definition, but it is per His definition.

His goal is to take each of us and make us more like Jesus.

All things work together for good because we do indeed love God and because we love Him, we fully identify with Jesus resulting in us also identifying with the call that God has placed onto each one of us as His kids. Knowing this should transform us into those crazed folks who are willing to turn the world upside down for Jesus. Looking back at the final briefing Jesus gave, He said this.

John 14:12–15

“Truly, truly I say to you, the one who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do; because I am going to the Father. And whatever you ask in My name, this I will do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it. If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.” (NASB 2020)

Because we know what He is doing and why He is doing it, then you and I can understand what was going on when Paul and Silas were busy singing worship music in prison in Philippi. They knew God has a plan, they were excited about His plan, they just did not know that they would have to be imprisoned first, but the warden and his entire family were saved as a result.

If you know Jesus, then you know. If you don't know Jesus, you don't. Join us today.

Romans 3:21–24

“But now God has shown us a way to be made right with him without keeping the requirements of the law, as was promised in the writings of Moses and the prophets long ago. We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are. For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins.” (NLT)

Romans 10:9–13

“If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved. As the Scriptures tell us, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced.” Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect. They have the same Lord, who gives generously to all who call on him. For “Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.”” (NLT)

ABC's of Salvation

- A. Acknowledge that you are a sinner, tell Him that.
- B. Believe that Jesus died on the cross for our sin and that He rose from the dead.
- C. Confess that Jesus is Lord. Tell someone about what you have done.

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