

## ***DID YOU KNOW the Believer's Meaning of Romans 8:28???***

I believe one of the most misused and a misunderstood verses in the entire Bible is Romans 8:28 (NIV);

***“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.”***

No matter the circumstance, we tend to use this verse as a catch all, feel good verse.

You lose your job; God works all things to your good. You lose a loved one to death; God works all things to your good.

I am a firm believer that we need to know the context of the verses that we read. You see Paul did not stop his exposition with verse 28, he continued on:

***“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. For those God foreknew he also predestinated to be conformed to the likeness of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those He predestined, He also called; those He called, He also justified; those He also justified, those He justified, He also glorified. What shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us?”*** (Romans 8:28-31 NIV)

There are some confusing words in the verses above that I want to quickly clarify before we move on. They are foreknew and predestined. Some denominations will take verse 29 and twist it to say that God already knows who will be saved and there is no reason to even try to convince someone to get right. That is not the case. Once again, this misconception of the meaning of these verses cast a shadow over the beauty of their meaning.

Allow me to start with the idea of predestination and work my way backward. Mankind was created with a unique gift that set him apart from the rest of God's creation. That gift was the gift of free will. The angels were created to serve and worship God. That is their function and purpose. So, if God had the angels created to worship Him, why did He create man? Man was created so that God could have a “free will” relationship with His creation. That is to say that relationship would be reciprocated, God communes with man because He loves His creation; man communes with God because he wants to, not because he was “created” to. I believe that is the predestination of man, to have a free relationship with God.

The foreknowledge, I believe speaks to the fact that God knew that mankind would fall prey to sin. And for that purpose, God already had the events set into motion to redeem humanity back to Him. In verse 32 Paul has this to say:

(Continued on Back of Page)

***“He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all-how will He not also, along with Him graciously give us all things.”*** (Romans 8:32 NIV)

In other words, what Paul is trying to say is that God loved us so much that He gave His own Son so that we can be redeemed back to Him, sound familiar, read John 3:16. So, we have the basic ideas of this part of predestination and foreknowledge, let's move on to the concept of all things working together.

So many times the trials and troubles we face are the results of our own doing. Yes, when we sin, God will forgive us, but we are left to deal with the consequences of our actions. Don't take what I am saying wrong, the circumstances that come along in our lives, God uses to make us into the mature Christian that we strive to be.

Paul is encouraging the Roman Christians that the trials they are facing are for a reason, and in turn we can take comfort that the trials that we face are for a reason as well. What is the reason for the trials that we face? The answer is found in verse 29. It is simply to be conformed to the likeness of His Son. This is a major theological concept, but what does it mean to be conformed to the likeness of Christ? We find clues to what this means in the New Testament. One is found in Romans 12.

***“Therefore, I urge you, brothers in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God-this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is-His good, pleasing and perfect will.”*** (Romans 12:1-2 NIV)

We are to be conformed to the likeness of Christ so that we can know God's will for our lives. The next clue is found in the epistle of 1 Peter:

***“Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as He who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: ‘Be holy, because I am holy.’ ”*** (1 Peter 1:13-16 NIV)

We are to be conformed to the likeness of Christ so that we can be holy, just as God is holy. So, why do all things work for our good? So that we can be like Christ in all that we do, in knowing God's will for our lives, and to be holy as God is holy.

So, **DID YOU KNOW???** If you learned something new, today, why not attend Sunday School where dedicated, knowledgeable teachers will assist in your understanding of the Bible. Today's DID YOU KNOW (August 16, 2009) was presented by Keith Blackwell, King's Class Sunday School Teacher.