***Those who Love God  
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**The Destination of Good**

Please open your Bibles this morning to Romans 8 as we continue on the Destiny of Good. This is segment number 2 covering verses 28-30.

For Christians everywhere, it is obvious that another week has passed. Believers have experienced bad news, have experienced disappointments, frustrations, fears, kinds of emotional instability, mental confusion, social conflict of various kinds, yielding to the temptations to sin, a lot of hard work, some suffering sickness, and always on the horizon, the specter of death. All of these things bring suffering and sorrow into a believer's life, but the royal family of God, the church, while suffering the consequences of this curse of God upon nature as punishment for Adam's sin in Eden, also have a hope in looking to the future for the time when this curse will be removed with all of its painful consequences terminated. They will be completely behind us. So that, whatever the sorrows at the moment, there is a time in the future when it will be reversed.

In the meantime, God the Holy Spirit brings us as Christians the comfort of the promise that God is bringing us into a good through all these painful things in life. We Christians have clear information from God in the written scriptures so we actually do know what's going on to the extent that we know the Word of God. Thus, we know that God causes the trials of life to mesh together for a good result. Everything that comes into your life is not good in itself. Many of those things are terrible. They're lousy. They're awful. But they mesh for an ultimate good in the hand of God.

**Three Phases of Good**

And the word "good" in the Greek language, we pointed out, means that it meshes for something that is beneficial for the individual. The good which is promised, we have indicated, is the good in three phases. Phase 1, briefly, was positional sanctification. This is the good of salvation by grace through faith resulting in the gift of absolute righteousness being imputed to the believer and he entering into the position of eternal, permanent fellowship with God the Father. The believing sinner is placed into Christ by the baptism of the Holy Spirit at the point of salvation. This is a permanent relationship, and it sets this person apart for heaven. This is the only level, unfortunately, of good that most Christians will ever have. That's the extent of the good they will receive. But, that certainly is a good. That certainly is beneficial, and that certainly is desirable.

However, the good does not have to stop there. For, there is a second level that we call "experiential sanctification," phase 2 good. And that is living daily as a spiritual Christian filled with God the Holy Spirit because of your confession of known sins so that you are victorious over the sin nature and you maintain a position of temporal fellowship with God the Father. Under the teaching of the Holy Spirit, you're capable of learning Bible doctrine and thereby building a spiritual maturity structure in your soul so that you have the capacity to receive blessings in time from God who is eager to pour it out upon you.

The spiritual Christian is capable of investing his life in God's service so that he is capable of producing divine good works which are stored as treasures in heaven. Many Christians go on from the first level of good to getting into the knowledge of the Word of God to applying and investing their lives in terms of the plan and the will of God, and consequently they come to this second level of good where they qualify for a great deal more after the sufferings of life are in the past.

There is a third phase, and this is the ultimate thing of what Romans 8:28 means, the point of ultimate sanctification. The believer in heaven in the resurrection body without the sin nature so that he is absolutely sinless, transformed into the image of Jesus Christ. And he stands in that body at the judgment seat of Christ and receives rewards for the divine good production in this life, and he receives special honors in the form of victory crowns that are granted to certain ones.

Now, that is the real good. That is when it is all going to amount to something - to stand before that judgment seat and to find yourself rewarded enormously because of your life's investment and to find that there is, furthermore, honor for your victory in the Christian life with crowns that will be placed upon your head. The blessings of some kind of rewards. Specifically, what they are, the Bible does not tell us. Not everybody will have them. Those who do will enjoy them for all eternity. The honor of certain crowns.

**Victory Crowns**

The crown of rejoicing, for example. The crown of rejoicing which is given to certain Christians which have spent their life in a maximum divine good production in God's service. Philippians 4:1, 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20 talk about this crown of rejoicing that goes to Christians who have maximized their time on earth in providing divine, good works.

There is the crown of righteousness given for a life of maximum time spent in temporal fellowship with the Father and thus spent in godly living. 2 Timothy 4:7-8 referred to this crown of righteousness. Not all Christians are going to get this, because so many Christians spend so little time in temporal fellowship. The time is so infrequent when they're actually in the inner circle. Most of the time, they're floating out in carnality. But for those who consistently stay in the inner circle, those who consistently are in temporal fellowship, God says that was a victory, and in heaven, we get a special recognition. We hang a medal of honor in the form of a crown on your head for that.

There is the crown of life which is given to certain Christians for a life which has progressed to the super grace level, building the spiritual maturity structure in the soul through the Word of God and then staying there. Some Christians get up there but reversionism soon corrodes so many so that they're back down or they're on their way down. But there is a type of Christian who can get up to that mountain peak of super grace living. He's stable. He stays in there. He stays in the Word. He's consistent with the truth of the Word of God. He has great respect for the scriptures as the inerrant communication from God, and he has great respect for the authority of the teaching capacity of God the Holy Spirit through the human agency of the pastor-teacher in the local church, and so he treats it with respect. The crown of life. James 1:12, Revelation 2:10 refer to this. For the Christian who maximizes his life at super grace level.

And then, the specialist crown. The crown of glory, the Bible speaks of in 1 Peter 5:4, which is a crown that is reserved only for those who have been called and have been given the gift of pastor-teacher. And for those who faithfully teach the Word of God to the flock of God, God's people, and do not get sidetracked and buck the tide and swim upstream and refuse to be conned into the mass success syndrome of getting into something other than instructing people in the Word of God so that they know how to live their lives, that pastor gets a special crown of glory.

This third level of ultimate sanctification is the ultimate divine good for some Christians who have invested their lives in God's service and therefore have saved their lives instead of losing them for all eternity. There's going to be a special place in heaven with eternal blessings after this era of suffering and turmoil is over. This special, ultimate good from God. The judgment seat of Christ is obviously not going to be a good for those Christians who have wasted their lives running around doing their own business. The good that Romans 8:28 refers to is this ultimate good, this ultimate sanctification level.

Some of you will never get beyond the fact of the good of salvation. Some of you will get somewhat into the good of investing your lives in the Lord's work in storing treasures in heaven. A few of you will come to that ultimate good of enormous blessing and satisfaction and joy beyond anything you can comprehend in heaven that will be yours exclusively.

**Those Who Love God**

Now, verse 28 of Romans 8 goes on, then, with this as our introductory review, to another very significant qualification. Yes, we know on the basis of information recorded in scripture that all the terrible things of life that come into the life of a Christian mesh together for an ultimate good to a certain type of person: "to them that love God."

The word "love" is our Greek word "agapao." This is the word for a mental attitude that is submissive that is accommodating to God rather than one that is resisting God. "Agapao" means that you're not mad at God, that you're not angry at God, that you don't resist God. It means that you are subject to Him, and there is a certain type of believer that has the capacity to do this. This actually refers, you see, to mental occupation with Jesus Christ and to His will for the Christian. This love is in the present tense, this word, which means it is the believer's continuous attitude. It is active; a Christian personally has a love for God. Most Christians do not have a love for God. Some Christians have a love for God, and it is a participle indicating it is a spiritual principle.

This word is in the emphatic place in the Greek sentence. In the Greek language, you can shuffle words around in the sentence. You know which word is supposed to be the subject, which is the verb, and which is the object because you can tell from endings which are attached to the words. So, when they want to make something very clear, they put it up at the first of the sentence, the first of the clause. This word comes up front, because he has just said that God is meshing things together in life for an ultimate, tremendous good when you get out there. But (and that's what he suddenly says by throwing this word up here), that's not for everybody. For certain types of Christians, those who have a capacity to love God. In fact, he says, we know that to those who love God. The Christian does not by virtue of being born again have the capacity to love God.

If we gave you somebody's name, you're a young man, we tell you about some young lady, you wouldn't know whether you loved that person at all. Say I had this friend; her name is Mary Sue. Now, Mary Sue lives over here, and she'd be a nice girl to marry. Now how would you feel? Is that all you need to know to say, "Yeah, ok, set it up, I'll marry her. I need to marry somebody. Mary Sue sounds like a good person to marry."

No, because you'd say, "That's crazy. I don't know anything about her." That's right. And because you don't know anything about her, you must also say, "I don't know that I really love Mary Sue. She might be a dog, you know when I meet her. I've known Mary Sues who are dogs. Anybody with a name like Mary Sue I wouldn't assume would be a dog, but she could." So, you don't know whether you love her or not.

What are you going to do? You have to have information, you see. And you have to get a lot of information. You can't just meet Mary Sue when she comes all dolled up and dressed and on her good behavior. What you need to do is get over to Mary Sue's house. Look into her closet. Then you know how neat she is. That tells you a lot. And you have to have information before you can say, "Yes, I love this person," and the information, you see, has to go deeper than what is on the surface.

This is why a short-term association is a bad basis for a marriage. Because you don't know this person when they have their guard down, when they are acting their true selves. And that takes time and a lot of association for you to know that under all kinds of conditions.

So, it is obvious that we cannot say that we love God when we don't know a Fig Newton about Him. And the Bible makes it very clear that you are not born into the Christian life with a love for God. You come in with basic, low-level appreciation for the fact that there has been a solution for your terrible condition of heading for a destiny in hell. But how much love you have for God, whether you love Him or not.

You see, as we become acquainted with the gods, say, of eastern mysticism, as we get information about those gods, we find that we hate them. We find that these gods are mean. We find that they are brutal. We find that they act without conscience. They act without justice because they are gods that man has invented in his own image. And man's sin nature is the kind of a god he produces, and that's the kind of a god we don't love. The more we know about those gods, the more we are offended by them. Now, you may fear that kind of a god if you believe he really has power, but you will not love him. And the gods of paganism do not expect to be loved. That's not what you do. You just fear them, and you subject yourself to them because you don't want the gods to be against you.

So, the Bible makes it clear that to talk about loving God is tantamount to saying that you are a mature believer, that you have gone on to some development in your understanding of the person of God. John 14:15, we read, "If ye love me, keep my commandments."

Aha! If I love you, I must keep your commandments. There's the first indication, there's the first clue as to what gives me the capacity to love God. I learn what He thinks. I learn what He wants. Verse 21 of John 14, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."

Now, when you learn about God, and you learn about His essence, when you learn about His person, when you learn of His thinking, when you learn of the rules He has, when you learn what He says, "This is how you must act in life," and you say, "I don't like that." You see, He says, "If you keep my commandments, then you have capacity and you are indicating that you love me."

God comes along, and the Bible is very clear about the role of government. And you don't like what the Bible says about the role of government, so you try to twist scripture, and you try to wiggle out of it, and what are you saying? "God, I don't like you. I just don't like the rules you're making relative to government, because I'd like to have socialism as a style of government, and you are condemning it and undermining it and restricting it to free-enterprise capitalism. I don't like that. I don't like private ownership type of stuff. I want to be a distributor of what other people possess to those that I think deserve it. And so, God, I don't like you, because I don't like your thinking. I don't like the rules you're making." That kind of a person does not love God.

Verse 23 of John 14 says, "Jesus answered and said unto him, 'If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him." Now, that's pretty clear that if you love God, you must know the doctrines of scripture that tell us about Him so that we become acquainted with God and then we can love Him. Now, if you don't have this, if you devoid of sound doctrine in your human spirit, you are incapable of developing a genuine love for God. So, what do you come up with? You come up with the faith stuff. And throughout Christendom, one church group after another, there is this sugary sentimentality cranked up from the old sin nature as an expression of love for God. People standing up and mouthing about a love for God and denying the basic doctrines of scripture. People standing up and saying, "I love God," and telling us all kinds of things that are false and wrong.

One man came up to me this morning and said, "Well, Jimmy Swaggart has shown his true colors." He said, "I was watching a program, and in that program, he said there are certain sins in the Bible that if you persist in committing, you will not go to heaven. You will lose your salvation. Now, that's, that's putting it on the line. That's showing your true colors. Do you think murder would be among those? Do you think murder is bad enough not to go to heaven? Well, David did, and David's in heaven.

But you see what an enormous ignorance of doctrine this poses. What a total violation of salvation, the basis of salvation, that this indicates. And there's all kinds of people out there who are indicating, "Oh yes, I just love to love God the way He loves God." And they don't have the foggiest notion of what it is to love God. You know the Word of God and you say, "Yes," that is love to God. You cannot say, "Yes," to what you do not know. You cannot love a person that you have not become acquainted with. And when you get to know God, you find He is in contrast to all those brutal beasts of the pagan gods. Here is a God who is kind. Here is a god who is merciful. Here is a god who does it all for us but who does not override our volition to choose, who makes it possible for us to have it all if we receive what His kindness has produced.

So, for everything to work together for good in your life, we are talking about those who are mature Christians. We're not talking about all the bunko squad among us. We're not talking about all the people who are ignorant of the Word of God. Nothing works good for them. The people who do not know the Word of God are not the people for whom things are meshing together. They cannot possibly have any emotional or mental stability. They're like wounded little beasts that are taking their blows and whimpering because they don't know how to understand that there is a good out there when all of this will be insignificant, that is my pain in the moment. Only mature Christians love God in reality, and they are the ones who are qualified for the fantastic, ultimate good of these blessings in heaven.

A few scriptures that remind us of this are 1 Corinthians 2:9, "But as it is written, 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.'" These are not the things out there in the future. These are the things of the Word of God as the context goes on to show you, that God the Holy Spirit is ready to reveal to you now. These are the tremendous things that we have now which enable us to have a basis for developing a love for God.

Ephesians 6:24 says this, "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity." Ah, yes, there's a bunch of them out there that love our Lord Jesus Christ in insincerity. It's a put-on because it's created by the sin nature. Only the Word of God can give you the acquaintance and the intimacy with God to develop a genuine love for Him.

2 Timothy 4:8 says this, "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing." Those that love the Lord and look forward to His appearing have lived a life that qualifies them for the crown of righteousness. Maximizing time in temporal fellowship.

James 1:12 said, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him." Who's going to get this special crown? Just any sweet Christian who stands around and gets in an emotional group and starts praising off and spouting off and saying, "Hallelujah," and, "Praise the Lord"? No, you're only conning yourself, and you can go ahead and do that if you want, but be prepared to ask yourself, "Do you really want to pay the terrible price when you get out into eternity and realize you were fooled, you were tricked, you were conned, you bit?"

James 2:5 says, "Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him?" Heirs of the kingdom and all of its riches and wealth to them that love Him. Why? Because it is those who truly love him that are those who are capable of producing a life that is invested in a way that counts for eternity. Not all Christians love God, and not all Christians love God to the same degree so that they limit the good that they may receive from God.

"To them that love God" excludes, obviously, then, those who are negative to the will of God, who are out there doing their own thing, who think it is just on their own, that they decide what they're going to do with their lives. And they sort of muddle into it. They never really ask themselves, "Why is this direction frustrated? Why do I keep running into blank walls, closed doors? How long is it going to take me? How much of my life am I going to have to waste and squander before I say, 'I understand that you're telling me something, Lord. What You have designed for me from eternity past is not this direction.'" And you switch gears and make your life count forever.

To them that love God. When you start loving God, you start paying attention to Him. Instead of occupation with our Father's business in proclaiming His Word and fighting the angelic warfare, we are more and more being told that we should be self-oriented. And we've covered that territory pretty thoroughly, that self-orientation syndrome which is being imposed upon Christians.

Those who are experientially, emotionally motivated in the Christian community like the charismatics, they'll be in heaven in a resurrection body, but the maximum good that they could have experienced will never be theirs. They will be minus the maximum good that sound doctrine producing a love for God enables them to invest their lives in a way that God can reward them for what they do. The charismatics will be in heaven, but because they are so disoriented from the truth in the Word of God, particularly concerning God the Holy Spirit, they will experience a terrible loss of potential reward. And there will be many tears from them at that time. And, the Bible, again, tries to make it very clear that this self-deception is so widespread among the unbelievers, and the Christians are easy victims to it too.

I read to you again Matthew 7:21-23, Jesus says, "'Not every one that saith unto Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven.'"

Yes, you can call Him "Lord." You can get in a meeting where you can talk about, "Lord Jesus, Lord Jesus." You can hold your hand over your head and roll your eyes upward and jump over chairs and everything else and shout out the name of the Lord and all the other excitable phrases, but what does it mean? Nothing unless you are doing the will of my Father in heaven. And what did Jesus say? "This is the will of my Father in heaven: to believe on Him who He hath sent." It starts with that. Trust in Christ as personal Savior, and then taking in the Word of God to build a spiritual maturity acquaintance with your God so that you can develop a love for God so that you will be subject to Him. You are not subject to anybody that you don't love.

Verse 22 says, "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? [Yes, they did. They predicted the future things.] and in Thy name have cast out devils? [Yes, they did. They cast out demons. The devil did it for them.] and in Thy name done many wonderful works?'" Yes, they did. They performed miracles. The devil did it for them. But what did that experience prove, you see? While we warned you that experience does not demonstrate truth. How you feel about things does not lead you to the truth, because the devil cons you on both of those.

And the terrible verse 23 that says, "'And then will I profess unto them, 'I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.''" Go to hell. That's what has been established for the devil and his angels, and you must go to that same hell. I never knew you. The word "know" when it's used in the Bible is a word that connotes an intimacy of relationship. And that's why it's used to describe sexual relations. Adam knew his wife. So that, here, Jesus says, "I never knew you. I never had a close, personal, family relationship with you.

The super grace Christian, then, is the one who is in maximum capacity to love God and to serve the heavenly Father so that he prospers with blessings in time and enormous blessings in eternity. The mature believer has been adjusted to the justice of God. And so, he's capable of receiving the greatest good after all the suffering once he is in heaven.

The reversionistic Christian is totally out of the picture of the good that Romans 8:28 talks about. The reversionistic Christian will go to heaven, and that's the limit of good that he's going to have. When God disciplines, of course, the reversionistic believer, the backslider, it is because He wants to give opportunity to that person to change his course and receive the good.

So, when God closes doors, when God disciplines, when God maybe even brings serious tragedy into your life, the course of wisdom is to say, "I'm going to listen. I haven't been listening. I'm going to change my ways. I am going to listen. I do view this as discipline. And the reason you've done it is because you want to do the maximum good for me, and I'm standing in the way of that. So, I'm going to change my ways." When God disciplines the reversionistic believer, He is giving opportunity for securing the good. If God can bless the spiritual believer, of course, in Satan's world, He can do and will do much more for those that are in heaven.

**God as the Object of the Christian's Love**

Now, the specific object of this love is very precisely indicated in Romans 8:28. We're talking about the mature Christian having this good, the one who has the capacity to love God. The Greek word, "theos." In the Greek it says, "the God," indicating specifically God the Father. The believer having developed the capacity to love the Creator who is the head of the Trinity. Our God, as you know, is one God in three persons.

This was indicated at the very beginning of the Bible in Genesis 1:26, where we read, "And God said, 'Let Us [plural] make man in Our [plural] image, after Our [plural] likeness," and so on. So that the very opening of scriptures we indicated to us and then reiterated in various ways in the Old Testament that while there is one God in terms of one essence, there is, in terms of three persons, the Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

In the New Testament, this becomes even clearer. For example, in Matthew 3:[15]-17, "And Jesus answering said unto him [that is, unto John the baptizer when John recoiled from applying water baptism to Jesus, Jesus says], 'Permit it to be so now." John didn't consider himself worthy of baptizing the One who is the Son of God. Even though Jesus was his cousin, he knew who He was as the Godman, the Messiah.

And Jesus says, "'Permit it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.' Then he consented to him." Jesus said, "Go ahead and do it, because my baptism is unique. Nobody else follows me in baptism. My baptism is my signal of dedication of my placing myself to the cause to which I have been called." And that's what baptism always is. It's a symbol of your subjection and dedication to God's call to you. Our Christian baptism is a totally different thing. In the case of the Lord Jesus, to be the Messiah of the world.

So, Jesus, when He was baptized, John proceeded to baptize Him, now here's the God-Man Jesus standing in the Jordan River. John has just immersed Him, brought Him back up. Jesus is standing in the water. He went straightway then out of the water. Jesus walks out of the river back onto the bank. "And, lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the Spirit of God [God the Holy Spirit] descending in the form of dove, and lighting upon Him [sitting upon the Lord]: And then a voice from heaven, saying [obviously, the voice of God the Father], 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'"

So, at the baptism of Jesus, you have all three persons of the Trinity present in evidence at one time. So, the members of the Godhead are personal. They are alive. The Father has formulated the plan for salvation. The Son executed the plan. The Holy Spirit applied it in the lives of the elect.

**A Review of the Attributes of God**

We are not called to love a God of our own creation. And, of course, you say, "Well, I don't love the gods of Hinduism. Of course I don't love Sheba. Krishna is not the person I'm in love with." The problem is that you do have a God that you misrepresent in terms of what He is. You love a God that you have adjusted to fit your cause and your desires. And so, if you think that this God might disapprove of something dishonest, you readjust your God to convince yourself that, "No, He wouldn't disapprove of this." The God that we worship is a God who is very clearly defined in scripture. We cannot go in great detail, but we will briefly review.

The essence of God begins with the fact that He is sovereign. He is absolute king. There is no one above Him. There is no one who tells Him what to do. He decides, and there is no appeal from His decisions. Ephesians 1:5 tell us that. Psalm 115:3 clearly describe God as sovereign. He is absolute.

Secondly, He is absolute righteousness. Romans 3:22 and 2 Corinthians 5:21 tells us that God is righteous. He is absolutely perfect. There is no sin, there is no evil in Him. He is absolute righteousness. That is the kind person He is. Therefore, don't treat Him as if He is going to compromise with your evil. He won't do it. He Himself will do not evil. He is a righteous God.

And along with that is another element of His essence which, when combined with righteousness, creates the holiness of God. That is the justice of God. He is just. Deuteronomy 32:4, 2 Chronicles 19:7 clearly declare that God is just. What does "just" mean? It means He's fair. He is absolutely fair. He is not going to treat you in a way that is not fair. But He will not compromise His justice. This is the whole problem that people face. If you're an unbeliever, you must adjust yourself to the justice of God.

Now, the justice of God says, "You're a sinner, and I must send you to hell." Now, how can you adjust yourself to the justice of God so you won't do that? Only one way. Accept the covering of your sin provided in Jesus Christ who bore that sin and paid the penalty and now has removed the guilt from you so that you accept His substitution, you're free. You're born again. God's justice has not been compromised. He has been perfectly just, and your sin has been removed.

Furthermore, our God is a God of love; He is not a God of hate. 1 John 4:7-8 and 1 John 4:16 describe Him as the God who is love. And that is a tremendous quality. Unless you have had some occasion to have had some extensive reading about the gods of paganism, the gods of the ancient world, you will not fully appreciate the fact that our God is a God of love. Because when you read about those gods, you are appalled on how downright dirty, mean personalities they are and how mean their followers were. Love is not a quality of the gods of paganism, but the real, the true, the Creator, Living God, He is - thank God - a God of love. And because that is His primary motivation, that is the way He treats us in everything.

He is, furthermore, eternal life. That means there never was a time when He did not exist, and there will never be a time when He does not exist. Now, we can understand eternal life as life which never ends, but we come up against a blank wall intellectually when we try to comprehend life that never began. That goes on beyond what we are capable of. But 1 Timothy 1:17, Revelation 1:8, Psalm 90:2 all clearly declare that God is a God of eternal life.

And, what we share with Him when we are born again is eternal life. And we have eternal life, now, immediately. We have eternal life when we trusted in the Savior, when we die, and go to heaven, and our bodies are in the grave, and we take on that intermediate body. We have eternal life in that condition. And then we have the ultimate of eternal life when we get that body back as a resurrected body fully capable of entering into the eternal life that God has given us. But we have it now even though we are in a temporal body. And so, we have a life that is eternal.

Then, the three "omnis." Omniscience. 1 John 3:20 and Proverbs 15:3 tells us that God knows everything. And God knows everything. Why? He knows everything that's going to happen. Tell me, why does He know everything that's going to happen? You have to go back up to the top of the list. Because He's sovereign, and He decides what's going to happen. Whether you to go heaven or not. Hmm. Does He decide that? Don't read the rest of Romans 8:28, please. That might be a shocker to you. And some of you are going to get blown out of the water when we pick up that subject. Yes, He knows everything. He has all knowledge.

He has omnipresence. He is everywhere at the same time. Jeremiah 23:24. Psalm 139:8. Acts 17:27. He is everywhere. So, don't play cutesie-poo with Him. Don't pretend that He is suddenly not there with what you're doing. Don't think He's not sitting there in the dirty movie with you. We just remember the presence of God who's sitting there in that seat next to you and who is observing. Would you be willing to do that if that God were to materialize before your eyes?

He is omnipotent. He is all-power. Matthew 19:26, Luke 1:37, Revelation 19:6 tell us that. He can do anything, and He can execute that which He plans. You're not going to frustrate Him. You're not going to outmaneuver Him. You're not going to say, "No, something is not so," when His Word says that it is so.

He is immutable. That is, He cannot change. Malachi 3:6, James 1:17. Because He is immutable, He'll keep His word. He is capable of keeping all those promises that He has given. The devil is not immutable; therefore, he will double-cross you someplace along the line. He will change on you. But God is immutable; He will never cross you.

And finally, He is veracity. He is truth. John 3:33 and Titus 1:2. He is absolute truth. He never lies. He never deceives. And everything we need to know for our life in time He has seen to it is recorded in the Bible. And the Bible is a true book. All you have to do is learn it. Ignorance of the Word of God is so rampant, even among people who are church people. Your heart goes out to them when you realize the shock that's going to come to them when they get out into eternity and they see Christians who have functioned on the Word of God getting maximum good, and they get leftover cold beans because of what they did with their lives.

You see, ultimately, Romans 8:28 is designed by our God to enable the Christian to carry through in times of crises and panic in his life. That's what Romans 8:28 is for. I don't care how mature spiritually a believer you are, how strong a Christian you are. There are things that will come into your life that are going to jolt you. The best of Christians. You're going to be jolted. You're going to be in panic. You're not going to know what to do. You're going to be in fear.

And when that happens, that's when you need to grab hold of Romans 8:28, knowing that ultimately, all is going to mesh together - no matter how horrible the trauma at the moment - is going to mesh together for the good. It says in Romans 8:28 that it's all right. No matter what happens, it's all right. So, we start with that understanding. When panic comes, when we're disoriented, we go back to Romans 8:28, and we say, "It's all right. I don't have a handle on this. I don't have a perspective, but this thing that's happened to me, it's all right."

This assurance, then, enables the Christian to settle down and to begin to apply doctrine to his situation which will carry you through the trial. And sooner or later, you're going to come into a place in life where you're going to have to remind yourself that Romans 8:28 has told you that everything is ok, and that God is bringing it all together, and that there is a solution. And the proper doctrine applied to your situation will carry you through.

Romans 8:28 is a call, in effect, to use the faith-rest technique. The capacity, the technique, of mixing our faith with God's promises. And that brings us to an important doctrine totally unknown to most Christians but which we daily need to be able to function on: the faith-rest technique. Mixing our faith with the promises of the Word of God. And we'll pick it up there next time.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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