

## WHY ME? HELP AND HOPE FOR THE HURTING: SECTION TWO

### Three Promises That Encourage the Hurting – Promise Two/Good from Bad

The second promise which God has provided for those difficult times of life, involves His sovereign control over every circumstance. He can take a bad situation and produce something good. In **Romans 8:28-29**, we have the expression of this promise in all of its fullness regarding its purpose, people and profit. Paul begins by appealing to our knowledge of the promise in using the phrase “we know.” What is it that we know? We know that God is sovereign and in control. As a result, no negative circumstance should be viewed as an “error” in God’s plan for our lives. As we study all the implications of the Romans 8:28-29 promise, we will realize that God is determined to keep any such thing from happening in the life of one who belongs to Him.

Make no mistake, God’s perfect will doesn’t mean a trouble-free life. His loving plan includes the good as well as the bad. Therefore, the *purpose* of this promise doesn’t include an exemption from suffering. What it does involve is revealed in the central verb of v28: “work together.” It is the Greek word *sunergeo*, from which we derive the English word “synergy.” In both Greek and English, the verb describes a “cooperation of differing factors for the purpose of working together.” The effect of this synergy is always good. God’s pledge, coupled with His power to make it happen, guarantees this positive end result. This promised supernatural synergy ensures that God will be at work in all the circumstances of life, the good as well as the bad, orchestrating them and when necessary, overruling them for our ultimate benefit. What an incredible purpose undergirding this beautiful promise.

Only God can assume such a comprehensive responsibility and successfully carry it out, since only He can control every circumstance to the utmost extent. Without this promise, dealing with adversity would be a daunting task. Apart from this assurance, “the sufferings of this present time,” mentioned by Paul in Romans 8:18, would overwhelm even the strongest believer. Yet God’s pledge to produce “good from bad” is designed to prevent such discouragement from developing within the Christian. How? The Romans 8:28-29 promise guarantees that no matter how difficult life may be, God will take those negatives and cause them to interact with us in a manner which ultimately produces a good result.

Many analogies have sought to describe the mysterious mechanics of this process. Some have compared it to the front and back of a watch; with the back consisting of a confusing array of gears, presenting anything but a clear and uniform image. However, on the other side, a clear and precise picture of “time” is portrayed. Others have compared God to a pharmacist who takes various ingredients, which by themselves can be useless or even poisonous, combining them in a way that produces a beneficial medicine for those in need of it. Suffering is an ingredient that serves this positive purpose. It tears down the sinful responses which we all make in seeking to cope with life. Over a period of years, our fallen behavior contributes heavily to the makeup of who we are as individuals. But it also serves as a hindrance to what God is seeking to accomplish in conforming us to the image of Christ. Nothing clears away those impediments like a time of personal adversity. Suffering tears us down from who we are, which in turn creates an opportunity for God to build us up into the person He wants us to be.