

# All Things

Romans 8:28



The small town church service was just beginning. Suddenly a shot rang out! The shooting did not stop until people lay dead and injured all around. Why did this happen? Why didn't God protect them or keep it from occurring? Only God knows the reason He allowed this terrible slaughter. However, we know God had a plan. Countless other situations take place in this world and we ask the same question each time—why?

## A Promise

*“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose”  
(Romans 8:28).*

How can we apply Romans 8:28 to this tragedy or countless other things that happen in day-to-day life? Throughout the Bible, we find incidences of this promise being fulfilled. Maybe you have not paid attention to this verse being a promise, but it is one of the most powerful and most quoted verses in the Bible. John MacArthur called it “perhaps the most glorious promise in all of the Bible.” It is a statement of fact about believers. God uses the events of one's life and threads them together with every other part of life to produce what He knows is best for the believer.

This verse tells us all things work together for good. All means the complete number or amount, completely, or every one. That means the bad as well as the good. Read Romans 8:18; 35; 38-39. It is comforting to know nothing can separate us from God. Yet, even strong people doubt at times. Mark 5:36 reminds us to, “...Be not afraid, only believe.”

**God Always  
Keeps His  
Promises**

Romans 8:28 is often quoted at the wrong time. It is not to be used at times of death or other catastrophes, but internalized and relied on when encouraging others. These goals will help you believe this promise.

### ***GOAL ONE: To Make Us Like Him***

God has a plan, a purposeful design, or goal for you (Romans 8:29). God orchestrates all of our lives. "Foreknowledge is a subset of God's omniscience. He knows all things in advance" (Robert Morgan, *The Promise*). We are not to be conformed to this world (Romans 12:2). We must not define *the good* as what we see in this life. It does not mean comfort, health, or prosperity, instead, it is what we need to make us more Christ-like.

### ***GOAL TWO: To Reach People For God***

People will look at the way you handle things and either be blessed or not affected. Friends battle cancer, children rebel, loved ones die, financial problems arise, marriages fail, and many other tests enter our lives. Often, God allows these things to happen for the benefit of others. Our response will either solidify our testimony for Christ or cause them to doubt.

**Describe the outcome of a severe test in your life.**

### ***GOAL THREE: To Move Closer to Him***

When you are going through something, God is increasing your ability to be used by Him. In Isaiah 26:3 God says that He will keep one in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Him: because he trusts in Him. We have an image, a reputation, and then there's the truth of who we really are. Robert Morgan said, "God allows trials in our lives because we have a strong core of inner pride and self-sufficiency that works to our long-term detriment. Problems are God's way of showing us we don't have sufficient resources within

ourselves to solve every problem or right every wrong. We have to turn to Him, surrender those things into His hand, and let Him have his way" (*The Promise*).

**Can you be calm through all events of your life? If not, why?**

## Conditions

### *Love God*

For Romans 8:28 to fully be applicable one must meet the conditions: (1) *Love God* and (2) *be called for His purpose*. Loving God is the easy one. Right? Why would we not love Him? He sent His son to die for us. He gives us eternal life if we believe Him (John 3:16). Jesus tells us "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15).

### *Called for His Purpose*

Scripture reveals God's eternal purpose is to glorify Himself by saving people through His grace so Christ can be preeminent in all things. Romans 8:28 only works if God has an eternal purpose He is able to accomplish in spite of sinful people and free will. So then, *the called*, meaning Christians, those who are saved, the new creatures in Christ are to live their lives to witness and bring others to the saving knowledge of Christ and to disciple others to become more like Him. In order to do this, we have to know the character and personality of Christ. Galatians 5:22-23 give us these virtues. We are to strive to make them a part of us so we can become more like Him.

**List the nine virtues found in Galatians 5:22-23.**

**Which ones are the hardest for you to let the Spirit control?**

What can you do to become more Christ-like?

## Meeting the Conditions

### *Abram and Sarai*

Think back to some instances in Scripture where people had rather disturbing things going on in their lives. All hope seemed lost, and then things miraculously turned around where good was revealed. One of these biblical figures was Sarai, Abram's wife in Genesis 16:1.

She longed for a child and had been praying for years to become pregnant. Desperately, she came up with what she thought was a perfect solution. She wanted Abraham to father a child with Hagar, her handmaid. We all know how that ended. Not so good! Hagar did have a son, Ishmael. You would have thought Sarai would be happy but her decision made her miserable. She had rushed ahead of God.

Sarai had to live with her impatience for 14 years. Then God appeared to Abraham and Sarah (by this time their names were changed) and told them they would have a son together. Of course, they were very skeptical because of their ages. Yet, God reminded them of this one thing, "Is anything too hard for the LORD?" (Genesis 18:14). Their faith bound them together and soon became sight. When Isaac, their son, was born, Abraham was 100 and Sarah was 90. A miracle for sure!

Look at Genesis 21:12. God told Abraham to listen to all Sarah had said. Her faith pleased God. We find Sarah in Hebrews 11:11, the *Hall of Faith*. We know Abraham was God's man for that time and Sarah was the woman who stood by him. God's purpose and His promise were fulfilled through her. (Genesis 17:16)

Remember not to discount  
old folks being used of God!

**Rahab**

Another woman in the Bible is introduced to us in Joshua. Her name was Rahab and her reputation was not very respectable. Joshua 2:1 calls her a harlot.

No matter what you've done  
or where you've been,  
Jesus can save you.

Joshua sent two men to spy out the land around Jericho and the city itself. These men went to Rahab's house. How they chose her house is not revealed, but they may have gone there because of its location. Joshua 2:15 tells us it was built on the town wall. "The description of Rahab's home as being located upon the town wall is one of the evidences of the antiquity of this book. Excavation of this area shows that the houses were built on the wall" (*A Survey of the Books of History* by Dr. J. D. O'Donnell and Ralph Hampton). As it turned out the king discovered they were in town. Consequently, the spies needed a place to hide, and Rahab hid them.

Joshua planned to conquer Jericho. Yet, the wall could present a problem. Read Joshua 6 and you'll find the wall came tumbling down! Remember, when Rahab hid the spies she made a deal with them to save herself and her family. She was to let down a scarlet cord out of her window to identify her location. In reading Joshua 6, we see the horrific events for the inhabitants of Jericho but because of Rahab's faith, she and her family were saved. Rahab's salvation reveals to us clearly how God saves those who place their trust in Him. Rahab indicated her faith in Joshua 2:11. She loved the God of Israel and He made a way for her and her family to escape. Hebrews 11:31 shows she had faith.

Scholars and commentaries over the years have debated why Rahab was singled out to help the spies. Ephesians 1:7 could be the answer, grace. She then put her faith to work as James 2:25-26 tells us. Out of Rahab's obedience to being called for God's purpose

a wonderful event happened. Rahab was listed in the genealogy of Christ in Matthew 1:5. Read down the lineage and in verse 17 we find that Christ came from those generations. Rahab's life, her family's salvation, her life after Jericho all fit into Romans 8:28. She had a new reason for living and developing into a person that served God.

## **Claim the Promise**

We have discovered God deepens our faith through trials and hardships. *All things* include "*the sufferings of this present time.*" Romans 8:18 and verse 35 do not give us a pass when it comes to this life. "The rugged hope of the believers is that every one of our agonies becomes an instrument of God's mercy to do us good. The confidence that a sovereign God governs for your good all the pain and all the pleasure you will ever experience is an absolutely incomparable refuge and security and hope and power in your life." (John Piper, *Called According to His Purpose*).


**What do these verses say about God's sovereignty?  
Acts 17:24**

**1 Timothy 1:17**

**On a scale of one to ten, with ten being the best, how strong is your belief in the Bible? Explain.**

Broken windows and broken lives are connected. They both have cracks and missing pieces. Windows can be mended and so can lives. Both take work and time, but with effort and dedication, they become whole and beautiful again. Just remember you do not have to come up with the solutions to all your problems. Powerless moments and situations beyond your control can be handled with God's help. Do your best to be an encourager to those around you who are hurting.

**Do you know people who are broken or a little cracked? How can you encourage them?**

We may not understand why certain events take place in our lifetime, but we can know for certainty if we are followers of Christ, having been called for His purpose, loving and serving Him, *all things* will providentially work for our good, either now or in the future. It is up to us to trust God and let Him be in control. Praise Him in adversity before crying out in distress. Be thankful for everything. Trust the promise of Romans 8:28. Commit to the verse completely. Memorize it. Live your life by it, but remember this condition: *Love God!* 

**About the Writer:** Carolyn Michael is a retired elementary school teacher, deacon's wife, mother, grandmother and great grandmother who enjoys being involved with her church. She is also the Alabama Women Active for Christ president, but finds time to read, write, and spend time with family and friends. This year she and her husband will celebrate 51 years of marriage.