

## I KNOW part 10: “God Works All Things For Good” 02.12.12

Scripture: Romans 8:28 NIV

Videos: “Called” by Dustin Williams

“Alls Well That Ends Well” by Crossroads Creative

**Intro:** We come today to one of the GREAT promises of the entire Bible. “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.” Romans 8:28 NIV If I’ve heard it quoted once I’ve heard it quoted thousands of times. Many Christ-followers tell me it is their most favorite verse in all of Scripture. The challenge is that not only have I heard it quoted, I’ve often heard it *misquoted*. Sometimes not all the ingredients are always included. Today we’re going to do **two things**. *First* we’ll take a look at the six ingredients of God’s great promise to us in Romans 8:28. *Second* we’ll consider 4 ways to remember all 6 key ingredients. **Let’s take a look at this great promise with all 6 ingredients!**

### 6 Ingredients of God’s Great Promise

**Ingredient #1** - The ASSURANCE of the promise.

“And we know that ...” Romans 8:28a NIV

God does not want you to be doubtful about this promise in your life. God is good. He wants to accomplish good things in your life. And He wants you to KNOW it, not DOUBT it. Paul writes this to the Roman Christians - and to us today - with a shared conviction. This is not something that is only for some Christians, for saints, for clergy, for experienced Christians... it’s for all. And that includes you! What a difference this would make in our life if we KNEW that God was on our side, that He was for us and not against us... that evil is never His intent.

**Ingredient #2** - The EXPANSE of the promise.

“... in all things ...” Romans 8:28b NIV

When you or I say “all things” we really don’t know what that means. We think we have some idea, but since we’ve not experienced all things, or created all things, we can only conceive of a limited slice of what “all things” really means. But when God says “all things,” and since He created all things, - this really has ALL THINGS in mind! Think of it. Every bad thing that happens is included. Every hurt, every loss, each disappointment, each heartache. All of it! It’s not just that somehow there’s more good than bad. It’s that God takes ALL THINGS - even the evil and bad things - and somehow miraculously works them for your good! No exceptions. No exclusions. Not a high percentage. ALL!

**Ingredient #3** - The SOURCE of the promise.

“... God works ...” Romans 8:28c NIV

This is incredible. Where else have we seen God at work? Creation. All the universe around you that you are a part of, that you exist within. That’s God’s work. And God worked to plan and initiate your redemption through Christ. He sent His Son to die so that your sins might be paid for. He raised His Son so that you might have the hope of your own resurrection some day. The kind of work God does is awesome.

Here we learn about the ongoing nature of God's work. That He is continuously taking all the things that happen, including the wrong, the cursed, the hatred, the evil, the foul, the disasters, the accidents, the wars, the murders, the lies - ALL of it... and God works to turn it into good for those who love him!

**Chess Illustration** - Think of the endless layers of thinking and working this involves. It'd be like a chess game with no corners, no dimensions, an endless, infinite, continuous, historic and future working to bring all that happens into the rightness of His will and intent.

**God works, not delegates.** And just so we're clear, this is not God at his managerial best delegating out the details to subordinates. This is personal for God. HE WORKS. This should send a chill and a thrill down the back of every Christ-follower. God isn't retired waiting for it all to work out eventually. He is *making it happen* - despite the working of Evil to the contrary - for your good and mine.

**Ingredient #4** - The FOCUS of the promise.

“... for the good of those who love him, ...” Romans 8:28d NIV

This is another way of saying Christian, Christ-follower, believer. If your heart has been turned toward God in love, then this means you. The focus of God's work, of His great promise is YOUR GOOD!

Who can love God? Remember that by nature we are enemies of God, without Christ we are not able to love or even desire to love God. Our focus - without Christ's Spirit inside us - is entirely upon ourselves and upon our own definition of what is good for us.

It is a hard lesson to consider that God's focus of his good work is not upon all men and women. He gives the freedom to men and women to pursue their own life - even when that life does not include Him. God's working for good is concentrated upon those whose life is focused to love Him. God feels special toward you, Christ-follower!

**Ingredient #5** - The CHOICE of the promise.

“... who have been called ...” Romans 8:28e NIV

In case we ever doubt the FOCUS of God's promise being the Christ-follower, we have a reminder that this is God's CHOICE - and not our own. God has chosen you long before you ever chose Him. We'll talk a lot more in a couple of weeks about this calling. However, it's clear where Paul's mind is at when he writes about the connection between those who love God and those whom God has called. Twice in the two verses that follow he uses the word “predestine.” This is something that only God can fully know and understand. However, we have the truth that, if you are a Christ-follower, somehow God chose you before you even were a glint in your mother's eyes. God not only works to make you possible, but He works to make you part of His plan, and to bring nothing but good your way regardless of the bad things that happen to you!

**Ingredient #6** - The PURPOSE of the promise.

“... according to his purpose.” Romans 8:28f NIV

The fact that we love God and that he overwhelms us with His good promise, and that this is all according to His choice, is all by itself fully amazing. Paul gives us one last ingredient to the promise that we should never forget: **according to His purpose**. God has a plan. He is working it out here on Planet Earth and with those who love Him - you and me. Our calling is for God's good purpose. He reveals this to you and to me in what we are instructed to do - how we are to live out our lives for Him. We call Jesus not only Savior, but also Lord. We live beyond our own purpose and for His purpose.

#### **4 Ways To Remember ALL The Ingredients of God's Promise**

**Ref. to Kid's Sermon** - Just like a chocolate chip cupcake isn't a chocolate chip cupcake without the chocolate chips, so this promise won't be remembered and applied fully in your life without all 6 parts. How can you remember and live a better life because of Romans 8:28?

- A. MEDITATE** - Memorize and focus on Romans 8:28! When I use the word meditation, we usually have the wrong idea. I'm not talking about twisting your legs into a pretzel and humming. I'm talking about FOCUSED THINKING. Concentration. Take each one of these 6 parts of the verse and think about what it means. How it applies. How it would be different if even one part were missing. After a week or two of this you'll own 8:28... More importantly it will own you!
- B. THANK GOD** daily for the good. A life of gratitude brings you a long ways toward believing Romans 8:28. When you remember all the good things God has already accomplished for you, it's so much easier to trust Him that He will keep His promise toward you. An attitude of presumption does just the opposite. If you assume all is always good you won't be ready for the bad, or for trusting God to work it toward good.
- C. CONFESS TO GOD** the daily bad. Confession means to agree. I'm suggesting that when bad things happen, we should not sugarcoat it. We should say to God what we think. This is bad. This is disappointing. This is evil. This is wrong. This is unfair. Don't be afraid to go to God with your confessions of the bad things. He knows it. He agrees. God can defend Himself. The sooner we eliminate this false expectation that somehow this terrible thing is really a *good-thing-in-disguise*, the sooner God's Spirit can begin to mend our broken heart. BTW, when bad things happen to other Christians, let's stop theologizing of Romans 8:28. When someone has suffered a tragedy, the LAST thing they need is a reminder that "*all things work together for good!*" **III. - 5 yr. old Chloe & Jillian.**
- D. PLAY** on the team. Get off the bench! If you are a Christ-follower, you have been called by God according to His great purpose. We don't know all His plans and details. But we know His purpose is making good out of bad. So if we are His children, it's time we get on Team Jesus and start acting like we are the agents of change God has called us to be. Find your ministry. Find your calling. Stop reading about it and thinking about it. Start *doing* something about it. You'll start recognizing all the good things God is accomplishing through you!

**Pray. Band Sings "No One Like You" with congregation.**