

Do All Things Really Work Together for My Good?

Romans 8:28 New King James Version

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

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INTRODUCTION

As we continue the “Awakening” leg of our transformation journey – I truly hope you fully awakened to the foundational kingdom truth we just finished ... “As You Think – So Are You” ... Which translates into – What you think – literally creates the world around you – in which you live ... If you think sickness and disease – you will create a world of sickness and disease ... If you think poverty – you will create for yourself a world of poverty ... Unless you are willing to Repent – change the way you think – nothing will ever change in your life.

Repentance is critical for this next leg of our journey ... We have all been taught man’s concepts concerning - - Who God is and how HE functions ... If you are not willing to repent concerning what you’ve been taught to believe – about who God is and how He functions – this next leg of the journey will be very difficult for you ... In fact, as I said last week – it will become a curse in your life.

So, where are we heading? ... We are now traveling down the awakening path of – “All things work together for your good” ... Let me say this right out of the gate ... I’m not talking about you just passively accepting everything that happens to you – as coming from God – so you just need to suck it up and push through ... I’m certainly not implying that everything that happens to you is simply fate – nor God’s plan for your life.

As I did for our last leg – I want to begin by presenting a 30,000-foot view so we can see the entire section of this journey before I break it down into pieces for better clarity and understanding.

We all Deal with a Perception Gap

Isaiah 55:8-9 Amplified Classic

“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.”

Now catch this ... Before we can even talk about – All things working together for our Good – we have to deal with a common underlying problem ... We all keep trying to understand God’s ways – specifically for our context – God’s goodness – with a mind that was never built to comprehend it ... As our natural mind cannot comprehend kingdom truth.

So, what our natural mind does is frame goodness – in accordance to what makes natural sense ... It uses our experiences and cultural norms to define goodness ... So, goodness typically gets measured by comfort – by ease – by however our mind has interpreted this experience it calls goodness ... But catch this important key – Paul is conveying to us a kingdom truth that must be framed – and discerned – from a spiritual perspective ... Paul is framing for us – God’s goodness – not how man has chosen to define goodness ... This again – demonstrates the importance of – how you think so are you ... Wrong understanding and thinking always creates wrong perception.

Mark 10:17-18 The Message

As He went out into the street, - a man came running up, - greeted Him with great reverence, and asked, - - “Good Teacher, what must I do to get eternal life?” ... Jesus said, “Why are you calling me good? ... No one is good, - only God.

Now catch this ... Jesus was not being modest in His reply ... He was making a very important point that always gets overlooked ... A man ran up and called Him good – in the typical way we all throw around this word ... For example – we say good job – good weather – good supper –

or Joe is a really good guy ... But notice Jesus stopped him cold ... “Why are you calling me good ... No one is good – only God” ... Jesus wasn’t rejecting a compliment ... He was correcting the category ... He was saying – you don’t even know what good means – because you’re using a natural definition – for a word that only God gets to define ... If the word good itself – belongs to God – then how much more does our understanding of Him – working all things together for our good – belong to Him and not to us ... We don’t get to bring our definition of good – into the discussion concerning the goodness of God – nor what that goodness actually looks like ... We have to let God define good – on His terms – not ours.

Once you accept that God's definition of good – is not your definition of good – another perception issue shows up right behind it ... Because the moment God stops matching your definition of good – you start reaching for another word to make sense of it ... And that word is fairness.

There is No such Thing as Fairness

Matthew 20:13-15 New King James Version

“But he answered one of them and said, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong ... Did you not agree with me for a denarius? ... Take what is yours and go your way ... I wish to give to this last man the same as to you ... Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with my own things? ... Or is your eye evil because I am good?’”

Now catch this ... One of the biggest lies we carry into this conversation is the idea that God is fair – or owes us fairness ... We get upset when someone else’s life looks easier than ours ... We get upset when we prayed – worked hard – and did everything we knew to be right ... Then we watch someone else who didn’t put in the same effort – get the blessing instead ... Our immediate thought is – that isn’t fair ... How come they get the promotion and I got overlooked again ... In fact, a political party has made this issue of fairness a platform pillar – “the rich need to pay their fair share.”

But listen to what the landowner says in this parable ... He did not cheat anyone ... Everyone got exactly what they agreed to ... His question back to the complainers was simple ... “Are you jealous because I’m generous?” ... In other words – the problem was never his generosity ... The problem was their comparison ... They felt because they worked longer and harder than those who showed up at the end of the day – it was only fair that they get more – than those who put in less effort.

And this is where the problem lies – much like the concept of goodness ... Fairness is not a Kingdom concept – it is a human one ... Let me help put fairness into proper perspective ... Fairness is a human construct – a standard created by people – in order to judge what they believe is just, equal, or reasonable – within a particular culture, situation, or set of values ... Or it could be put this way ... Fairness is a human construct based on subjective ideas of justice and equality – rather than an objective, universal standard ... Fairness is an illusion – designed to help people feel better – when they feel an injustice has occurred.

If you do not repent – concerning what you believe about – Goodness and Fairness ... You will really struggle in this awakening leg of our journey ... The Spirit wants to awaken us – because the enemy of our soul – has been extremely effective – in using these two misperceptions to cause division among people.

Once you let go of demanding fairness from God – you can finally start trusting His goodness instead of auditing it ... Which brings us to something that sounds almost backwards until you really sit with it ...

You Can’t Know Good without the Contrast of Evil

Genesis 50:20 New American Standard

“As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive.”

Now catch this ... You cannot know love apart from hate ... You cannot know rich apart from poor ... And you cannot know good apart from evil ... They only make sense standing next to each other ... Joseph's brother's actions were pure evil ... They sold their own brother into slavery because they were mad at him ... And notice Joseph didn't soften what they had done – he called it for what it was ... And then in the same breath – he says but God meant it for good.

Here is the same event – but two different intentions were running simultaneously ... The brother's intentions – pure evil ... God's intention – pure goodness ... The only way we can truly understand and discern what goodness is – we must have the contrast of evil ... This world has taught you to avoid anything negative as soon as possible ... Christianity has wrongly taught you that everything bad is from the devil – everything good is from God.

Let me drop this nugget before I close this morning ... Stop looking at the event or behavior to determine your perception ... Learn to discern the intention behind the event or behavior – and allow that to develop your perception.

TAKEAWAY

This next leg of our journey will be the toughest yet ... This leg will deeply challenge your religious ideology ... If you try to grasp this concept through natural means – which is our natural inclination – it will become a curse in your life ... I don't say that lightly.

Let me get a bit theological for a minute ... This principle has been debated for centuries – and has created two different camps ... Arminianism verses Calvinism ... Freewill verses Predestination ... Your mind wants to line up on one side or the other ... It is only by the Spirit that you will be able to understand this pure kingdom concept.

I want to leave you with the following questions and a verse to chew on this week before we start our deep dive ... Are you willing to repent? ... Are you willing to completely change your

mind? ... Will you clean the slate and allow the Holy Spirit to teach you concerning this kingdom principle?

1 Corinthians 2:14 New King James Version

But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.