

Do all things work for good and should we be thankful for everything?

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We look at the Greek text of Romans 8:28 in order to find out if really everything works for our good and then we answer the question, should we be thankful for everything?

Do all things work for good?

Romans 8:28 is often translated as follows:

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. (KJV)

All things include also illness and poverty for example. But are these things really working for good to us? If these things work for good, why should God deliver us from them?

Let's see what's written in Greek:

We know now that to those loving God,

πάντα	συνεργεῖ	(ὁ	θεός)	εἰς	ἀγαθόν
panta	synergei	ho	theos	eis	agathon
Adjective	Verb	Article	Noun	Preposition	Adjective
Accusative	3rd Person	Nominative	Nominative		Accusative
Plural	Singular	Singular	Singular		Singular
all (all things)	works together	the	God	for	good

to them who are the called according to his purpose. (see biblehub.com)

Who is doing something? "The God" (nominative).

What is God doing? He "works together" (verb).

What does God work together? "All (all things)" (accusative), namely "for good."

The things don't do anything, but God acts, he is the one who does something with them. This verse confirms God's promise that he is doing good to his children.

Should we be thankful for everything?

In 1 Thessalonians 5:18 it is written:

In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. (KJV)

We should be thankful in everything; we should give thanks to God in all suffering, that means despite the suffering.

In Ephesians 5:20 Paul wrote about giving thanks to God for everything, but this is not to be understood literally. Because, if God wanted us to be thankful for illness, for example, then it would not be according to his will if we pray for health. If we should be thankful for truly everything, then it would even follow that we should not ask God for any change; because when we ask for change, we are expressing that we are not completely satisfied with

something, i.e. for something we are not thankful. This would be completely absurd. In my article “What Commandments should Christians keep?” I show in the section regarding the epistle to the Romans that there are other text passages in the New Testament where the word “everything” or “anything” (in Greek „pás“) cannot be understood literally.

We should not be thankful for illness or poverty. But we should give thanks to God even when we are suffering, i.e. despite illness, poverty and other issues.

Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise – the fruit of lips that openly profess his name. (Heb 13:15 NIV)

We may thank God for what he has already done good to us and for what he will still do.

¹ Praise the Lord, my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. ² Praise the Lord, my soul, and forget not all his benefits—³ who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, ⁴ who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion, ⁵ who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s. ⁶ The Lord works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed. (Ps 103:1–6 NIV)

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