

***Life in the Spirit: God's Good Purpose, Part 2***  
***Romans 8:28-30***

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**Getting Started**

- ❖ Reflect on how God has been working for you good in the “good”, the “bad” and your “failings”. Now think about how each of these circumstances could harden you toward God or lead you to rely on him and become more like Christ. It is not as important to change our circumstances as it is to change our heart’s attitude and stance toward them. How might you need to do this today?
- ❖ **Opening Prayer Time:** This week, let’s pray specifically for the marriages of our church and of those we love to be strengthened.

**Digging Deeper**

- ❖ Verses 29-30 are “heavy” verses full of deep truth. **Read the following, looking up the scriptural passages it references.**

Paul describes those for whom God so works from the human point of view (those who love him) and the divine (who have been called according to his purpose, 28). God’s ‘call’ is not simply his invitation to people to embrace the gospel, but his effectual summoning of people into a relationship with himself (see e.g. Rom. 4:17; 9:12, 24). This calling takes place in accordance with God’s purpose, that purpose being ultimately to conform us to the likeness of his Son (29). God brings each of us to that goal through a series of acts on our behalf. First, he ‘foreknows’ us. Some scholars think that προγινώσκω (‘foreknow’) here means what it often does in Greek literature—‘know something ahead of time’. But Paul says that it is we Christians whom God knows, and this suggests the more personal idea of ‘knowing’ that is sometimes found in the OT: election into personal relationship (e.g. Gn. 18:19; Je. 1:5; Am. 3:2). This is almost certainly also the sense that ‘foreknow’ has in its other NT occurrences (11:2; Acts 2:23; 1 Pet. 1:2, 20). God’s ‘foreknowing’, his selection of us to be saved from ‘before the creation of the world’ (Eph. 1:4), leads to his ‘predestining us’, his appointing us to a specific destiny. This destiny is that we become like Christ, a final event that God accomplishes by ‘calling’ us (see v 28b), ‘justifying’ us (see 3:21-4:25) and ‘glorifying’ us. It is significant that this last verb is, like the others in v 30, in the past tense, suggesting that, though the attaining of glory may be future, God’s determining that we shall attain it is already accomplished. (IVP New Bible Commentary)

- Discuss this commentary together and brainstorm a simple definition of each of the 5 “links” in this “golden chain of redemption. (Foreknowledge, Predestination, Calling, Justification, Glorification)
  - How does properly understanding God’s foreknowledge change the way you look at “relationship” with Him?
  - Summarize Jerry’s explanation of the two kinds of calling we see in the New Testament. What thoughts and emotions stir-up inside you when you think of you being, in a spiritual sense, “Lazarus” and Jesus calling you to life?
- ❖ **Read 2 Cor. 12:7-9 and Phil. 3:10-11.** In these passages how do we see Paul living out what he says in Rom. 8:28-29?

(Over)

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❖ **Applying this sermon to Our Lives:**

- How should foreknowledge, predestination and calling affect us personally?
- How should it influence our evangelism and being Ambassadors for Christ?
- How does this passage affect your assurance of the future?

**Think About It!**

*It may come as a surprise that being conformed to Jesus' image is not for our benefit: God's desire is for Jesus to be glorified as the firstborn of all creation and to hold this preeminent position over creation. Once again we are reminded that although God loves us and has a wonderful plan for our lives, this plan is more about Him and His bigger purpose than about our happiness. Whatever benefit we gain in being conformed to God's image is ancillary to His greater purpose in seeing His Son properly honored. (Stephen Runge)*

**Praying Together**

This week pray the final petition of the Lord's prayer together taking time to confess to one another areas of current spiritual struggle.

(Note: In this year's study of Romans, our study questions are being inspired by or derived from books, commentaries and bible studies authored by: Pastors Matt Smith, Max Lucado, John MacArthur, R.C. Sproul, Jack Hayford and Tim Keller.)