

Read: Romans 8:28-30

Nothing is More Valuable than God's Work in Our Lives

Romans 8:28

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.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Maya was confused. She scratched her head. She squinted her eyes. She tilted her head sideways to the right, then slowly to the left. "I don't get it, Momma," she said. "This painting is ugly."

It was Maya's first time at an art gallery, and the very first painting she saw was so big that it stretched from floor to ceiling. Maya was staring at it for a while but couldn't quite figure out what the painting was about. "Step back here, honey," Maya's mom said to her. She led Maya to the back of the room and then turned her around to face the painting again. "Oh! I see! I get it now!" Maya suddenly saw the most beautiful painting of two little children running through the fields in front of a mountain with a colorful sunset in the background.

You see, Maya was standing too close. All she saw were splashes of red here and blue there, and strokes of the paint brush all over. None of it made much sense until she stepped back and saw the whole picture. *Then* she realized that the artist had created a beautiful masterpiece.

This is the way our lives can be. You might get a bad homework grade. You might lose the big game. Maybe mom or dad loses their job. Maybe someone even gets sick with cancer. When these things happen to us, at the time it can be very easy for us to think, "Eww! That's ugly! What a horrible thing!"

But the apostle Paul reminds us of something wonderful today. In all things—both good things and bad things—God is working for our good. It might not feel good at the time, but God knows how it will work out. That bad homework grade might motivate you to work harder as a student. The game you lost might encourage you to practice more. Someone losing a job or getting a sick can be a reminder how much we need God and how much we look forward to heaven.

Sometimes we need to take a step back and look at our lives and say, "Oh! I see! I get it now! How beautiful!" The whole time, God has been working by the power of his Word in our lives—bringing us to faith in Jesus, strengthening our faith, and leading us on toward heaven. Everything that happens in life is something that God can use to keep us close to him and on the path toward heaven. Then, one day, when we finally get to heaven, we will be able to look at the whole "painting" of our lives and say, "How beautiful!" God created another masterpiece!"

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for Younger Children

- Can you think of something bad that has happened to you or your family?
- Ask your parent(s) how God did or might in the future work that for good.

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- Why do bad things happen to us in this life?
- What is the best thing that God has done for you?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- When you are suffering through really hard times, what makes it so difficult to trust that God will work it out for good?
- How do we know we can trust God's promise to work all things for our good?

Closing Prayer:

Heavenly Father, sometimes there are things that seem very bad in life. Help me to trust that you work all things, even bad things, for our good as you lead us toward our heavenly homes. Amen.

Hymn: CW 757:1,4 – Where Your Treasure Is

Refrain

Where your treasure is, there your heart shall be.
All that you possess will never set you free.
Seek the things that last; come and learn from me.
Where your treasure is, your heart shall be.

What do you gain from all your worry,
What you should eat or what to wear?
There is no peace in stress or hurry.
Do you not know that you are held within God's care?

Refrain

O little flock, do not be frightened;
Yours is the kingdom of the Lord.
Give your possessions to the needy;
Obtain a treasure in God's heaven safely stored.

Refrain