

## Let God Deal with the Outcomes

I don't know how many times over the past few years I've had to correct one of my kids by saying, "Hey, it's not your job to \_\_\_\_\_. I'm the dad. That's my job." I'm beginning to realize that my Father in heaven has been saying the exact same thing to me for years.

**Romans 8:28** is becoming an increasingly important verse to me. "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose" (ESV).

Whose job is it to make sure all things work together for good? That is God's job. It is not my job. For years I've spiraled in out-of-control stress, fear, and doubt about nearly every decision because I wondered where they were going to lead in 5, 10, 20 years. I paralyzed myself with questions about how it would impact my children, my family, my congregation, my job. I would think through and analyze every decision trying to manipulate the outcome to be what I wanted it to be. When I finally became overwhelmed with the stress of trying to manipulate the outcomes, I would give up, throw caution to the wind, and not give my decisions any thought at all. Then I made some real bone-headed mistakes. My life has usually been a pendulum swinging between these two opposites.

What was the real problem? I hadn't fully learned the two greatest lessons. 1) There is a God. 2) I'm not Him. Oh, don't get me wrong; in my head I knew I wasn't God. I couldn't create the world as God did. I couldn't keep it running as God does. But in my life, I kept trying to do God's job. It's God's job to deal with the outcomes. He'll take care of those. What is my job? My job is to love God. If I love God, I'll seek His will today (**I John 5:3**).

Another passage that brings out this point is **Matthew 6:33**. If I seek God's kingdom and righteousness first, He'll take care of me. He'll provide everything else I need. It's God's job to provide for me. What's my job? My job is to seek God's will and do what is right.

When I begin to worry about and try to manipulate the outcomes, I'm trying to do God's job. In **Romans 8:28**, He's saying, "Edwin, it's not your job to make everything work together for good. I'm the Father, that's my job."

Of course, another problem for me is that I think I know what all the good outcomes are. I've decided that what is best is for my kids to turn out a certain way, the church to go a certain direction, my family to accomplish a certain goal, me to achieve a certain status. One of the reasons I take up the mantle of controlling outcomes is because I'm just not sure God is going to bring about the outcome I want. When that fear starts to set in, usually subconsciously, then I start getting stressed.

But what did **Romans 8:28** say? It said God will work all things out for good for me if I love Him. That doesn't say that everything that ever happens to me will be good. Some of it will seem pretty bad. I'll experience rejection. Loved ones will die. Friends will betray me. Family will annoy me. Churches may struggle. Brethren may hurt me. I'll get sick. I'll go through financial straits. I may become jobless, homeless, friendless. When I fear those things are coming, I may pick up the reins and start trying to manipulate and control the outcomes again.

This passage teaches me that whatever path God leads me on, the end will be good. If the path goes through hardship, I shouldn't start trying to do God's job. I should trust Him to manage the outcomes for me.

I guess I should offer one caveat. God will cause good outcomes for me if I love Him. Sometimes the outcomes I'm worried about revolve around other people. I want my kids to go to heaven. I want members of the congregation to stay faithful. If other people don't love God, their outcomes will not be good. The struggle is, I can't control other people. I can't make anyone love God and do what is right today. When I try doing that, I'm not doing my job. I'm trying to do theirs, and I just can't do that. I might offer positive influence, give good advice, provide a proper example, but in the end it is their job to love God and let Him govern their outcomes.

This will certainly cause me some sadness, but it doesn't change the fact that today, my job is to love God and do what is right. I have to surrender any thought of controlling others or controlling the outcomes of my life to the God who has promised to make it all work together for good if I'll just keep loving Him.

So, for today, I'm going to hand the outcomes over to God and just strive to do the next right thing. You know what, the days are a whole lot easier when I'm not trying to do God's job.

-Edwin L. Crozier