

... we have in our Father & in His curriculum whereby *all things work together for our good*, and the kind of confidence that produces to form our perspective on the rest of our life:

... those 3 components of Sonship Establishment are so impressive and so affects our inner man—that they actually shape and form **who we are as sons** of our Father—so much so, that they become **who we are**, just as much as our Identity in Christ is now **who we are forever more!**

- And the truth is, sonship establishment is designed to never be forgotten—and really, the curriculum won't let you forget these issues you learn in sonship establishment.
- Now, getting back to the 'flow' of how this section goes:
 - Once (:28) sets forth what it does, then it takes all of (:29 & 30) to establish that as a reality in your inner man.
 - Therefore that means that at the outset, you probably **don't know** that "*all things work together for good*" — but by the time you get to the end of (:30), you do "*know*" that *all things work together for good*, and that what (:28) says is true!
 - Word of Warning: It may be possible to adopt (:28) as a favorite verse—and it may even be possible to come up with a rational or logical reason why you might think (:28) works; **but that won't work**—it won't be effectual to work in your inner man unless you know that (:28) is true and real **ONLY** based upon what (:29-30) says!!! (**for those reasons only!**)
 - So my understanding is that by the time you get to the end of (:30), you **KNOW** that what (:28) says is **TRUE!**
- And I bring that out once again—just to make sure that when you look at what goes on in (:31-39) and in those 5 probing questions—that you're not looking at them as more **proof** of (:28) being a reality—because they're not giving more proof for what (:28) said—really, (:31-39), instead of giving proof for (:28), they come along and **SUPPLEMENT** it.
 - (And that's a big difference). — And I think it's very critical that you recognize the difference—because there really is a great deal that our Father wants to get accomplished here—and it takes a rather sophisticated method of presenting to us the information in the way in which He does it, in order to get accomplished in us all He wants accomplished.

- And when (:28) comes along and says, “*And we know ...*” - those words aren’t being used there to indicate that this is something that we should already *know*—but these words are used in a way, and are actually a technique of writing, that are used to express the measure of the impact and impression that a certain realm of knowledge that we’re talking about has upon us.

- And in view of what our Father is trying to get accomplished—the measure of absolute certainty & full persuasion of mind concerning the **ability** of what He’s provided us to operate upon in our sonship lives—(that it will do its job) - that actually gets accomplished in 2 ways:

1) There’s a solid foundation that is laid—that if nothing else is said after it, is ‘solid enough’ (so to speak) - and you can stand firmly upon it with complete confidence.

- But because of the kind of insight & perception regarding the ability of what our Father has planned for us to deal with (curriculum-wise) to do its job it’s designed to do within us throughout the scope of our sonship education—and because our Father wants us to have insight & perception of that before we actually get going:

2) He gives us some **supplemental** information—so that, if you can think of standing upon the foundation even firmer—that’s what He’s doing in (:31-39).

- And that’s done by Him so that what happens to your inner man, is to make it so that there isn’t (to use the legal expression) ‘*a shadow of a doubt*’ that the education we’re going to receive as sons is going to do its job!

- And I know that I’ve said a lot of things to you in the past just like what I’ve been saying to you now (in general), with respect to being persuaded, confident, assured, etc., but we’ve kind of lumped all that together in the past (because that’s all we could do with it, because we weren’t here—and that’s ok) — but now that we are here, we need to deal exactly with what our Father says when it comes to producing this thing that we’ve just lumped together under the one general umbrella of ‘complete confidence,’ ‘full persuasion,’ ‘total conviction,’ ‘absolute assurance,’ etc.

- Because when it comes to producing that within us—our Father has got a **way** of doing that, that He wants us to realize—and He’s got a way of producing that, so that those words **mean something** to us beyond a number of synonymous-type terms for being certain & sure about something!

- And when it comes to actually dealing with what is said here in Romans 8:28-39—we're going to have to take what we've only been talking about in general, and come to realize **the way** in which God produces this kind of complete confidence and complete assurance that we're supposed to have.

- And to a degree you've begun seeing that just by the way you've indicated to me that you see what's going on in this large body of information.

- You've seen that there are confident overtones to what is said in (:28-30);

- You've seen that there are confident overtones to what is said in (:31-39) - because the terminology is confident-type terminology:

- Ex., “*And we know*” (:28)
- “*we are more than conquerors*” (:37)
- “*For I am persuaded*” (:38)

- And what I'm 'splitting hairs' about here—and one of the reasons why this largest body of information of sonship establishment (12 vss.) comes **last**—is because, what's taking place is **not just** the production of full confidence and full persuasion regarding the success of our sonship lives if we'll deal with the curriculum like we're supposed to deal with it — (it is that), but it's not **just that!**

- It's the issue of — in view of what has taken place already (through the effectual working of [:16 down through :27], and through the previous issues pertaining to sonship Orientation [:14-15]) - it's the issue of producing that full confidence and that full assurance in a way that doesn't have us coming along and just saying, ‘Man, isn't this great?’ — but in a way that's going to make it so that **WE WILL NEVER ABANDON OUR CONFIDENCE, REGARDLESS OF WHAT HAPPENS!**

- And in order for that to take place—[we can talk about it in principle; we can talk about it in concept; we can talk about it as a category of doctrine; and deal with it systematically; and all that kind of business] — **but unless we have God produce that kind of confidence in the way in which He has designed to produce it: WE WILL ABANDON IT when trouble comes!**

- And that's why it ends in (:38), “*For I am persuaded*” — when you're *persuaded* of something, you are so convinced of it that you will not move from the position you have taken, regardless—in fact, **you will DIE rather than move!**

- ... you will forfeit the most precious thing you own, naturally:
which is **YOUR LIFE—you will forfeit it, instead of move!**

- And when you think about it—that kind of commitment
has to be particularly produced!

- And that kind of commitment doesn't come from a cleverly
concocted sermon—or from an eloquent appeal from a
well-spoken pastor or evangelist.

- But this is produced particularly from the information that
is sitting in Romans 8:28-39 and its effectual working in your
human spirit!

- This is the confidence & commitment of a “son” — and this
same thing (by means of this same kind of information) had
to be, and was produced in the very soul and spirit of the
Lord Jesus Christ Himself!)

- Now that's easy for me to say—but that's what the issue is!
(and that's just a brief, gist-type statement regarding the effectual working of
the sense & sequence of what's contained in :28-39 when it comes to
producing the **KIND** of confidence our Father is endeavoring to produce.)

- In fact, that's what you need to understand: our Father is
endeavoring to produce a particular **kind** of confidence—not just
general, run-of-the-mill confidence that any man could possess by
being assured of something.

- Our Father is producing a particular kind of confidence—one that,
outside of Himself, **no one else can possess except one of His sons!**

- (Even an angel can't possess it!)

- And I'm saying it to you this way because as I've said—if you think that
what you've come to know already in sonship orientation & sonship
establishment (and even in the general reading over of this passage) is
impressive—(and it certainly is) — but you haven't grasped yet what this
thing called sonship establishment (and the words that go to making it up) has
the power and ability to do, and what it's supposed to do!

- (And I'm not criticizing you—it's just a matter of fact.)

- Romans 8:31-39—by their thought-provoking and probing questions are specifically designed to take that kind of confidence that (:28-30) generate within us—AND MAKE IT **PERSONAL!** — to the point that we have the same measure of confidence & commitment **that God Himself has!**

- And this is why I said that instead of (:31-39) coming along an merely providing more proof of the reality of what (:28-30) say—but that (:31-39) are doing something in a **supplemental manner**—and that means that you’ve got to appreciate that (:28-30) are accomplishing a tremendous amount as well.

- And hopefully, by taking the time to set forth my understanding of the general sense & sequence of (:28-39), and what these 12 verses are designed to do—that will make it so you see the absolute need to make sure that over and above everything else we’ve covered so far, you realize how important it is to get ever single word of this properly and effectually working in your spirit!

- Now—let’s just make sure that you’re not just relying on what I’ve said to be the truth of the matter when it comes to the sense & sequence and design of these verses, but that the passage really does bear that out.

- Let’s see, by looking at just some of the terminology that occurs— if this passage really does produce this godly and fatherly measure of confidence and assurance like I’ve just said:

- Ex., when you start off there in (:28), it starts off by saying, “*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.*” — and for now, let’s just look at the terminology that is used generally in the verbs that are confidence-type terminology, assurance-type terminology by nature.

- (:28) once again: “*And we **know** ...*”

- And then when you get to (:31) and it makes the transition from what (:28-30) have done to what (:31-39) are going to do by saying, “*What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?*” — the terminology now isn’t so much an individual word, as much as it is the words within that question—being such that pits one power against another power—and the one power is being **unassailable!** — And obviously, therefore, if you’ve got the unassailable power working for you, then you should have some pretty good confidence!

- So we're still dealing, therefore, with **confidence**.
- And actually, within each one of the questions that are asked—you're still dealing with something that is designed to generate confidence.
- (read the rest of the 5 questions: :32, :33, :34)
- And then (:38) "*For I am persuaded*"
- Once again we clearly recognize (and an 8 yr. old child could recognize) that all the verbs, and all the clauses and phrases controlled by those verbs are all under the umbrella of confidence, and assurance—they're all under the umbrella of: **dispelling doubt and producing certainty**.
- But what I'm particularly after now is that—when you think about those terms—and you discriminate between the words that are used—and you look at them with a microscope (so to speak) at what's under that umbrella of certainty—you realize that God hasn't just jumbled together and randomly used some particular words, expressions, and terminology and phraseology with respect to confidence—but He's done it **in a progressive, developmental manner!**
 - And the truth of the matter is—He starts off with a word and a phrase, that when it was used within the context of the statement He was making, had all the sound, and all the impact of full confidence and assurance—all by itself: *And we **know** that all things work together for good... etc., etc.* — (on through :30)
 - So God starts off with a term of confidence/assurance that, if you were a building inspector that had the skills to evaluate the structural integrity of a foundation—could come along and say, "You couldn't have poured a better foundation than this! — You couldn't come along and drive piles and drive rebar down into this and make it any stronger than this already is!"
 - But that's not good enough for God—not as our **Father** who, in connection with us being His sons, wants to make it so that in connection with the curriculum for our sonship education that we're about to have delivered into our hands and begin to use—in connection with His desire to make it so that **we will never entertain a glimmer of doubt** in regard to what He tells us that curriculum is designed to do!

- And in connection with producing **that kind** of confidence, our Father comes along and says,:

“I can make that foundation even **more sure!** —

I can make that foundation work within you in ways that you have never even imagined!!! —

And I can produce a *spirit of faith* within you, with respect to what I’m going to tell you... that if every thing & every body around you told you it **wasn’t** true — **you’d believe Me anyway!**”

- And that’s what HE does when He starts asking you to think in a particular way about what He’s just said—(in :28-30).

- And that’s why (:31) says, *What shall we then say to these things?* (Those *things* have just said something to you, now you’re going to say something **back** to them!)

- And when you ask someone a question, what do you expect? ... someone to give you an answer! (to say something back to you)

- And our Father knows exactly what He wants to hear—and if He doesn’t hear it from us, He knows that we **aren’t** as *persuaded* as we ought to be!

- Now I’m **not** going over all this for you to know that what I’m saying is true (because the word of God is going to do that) - but I’m doing this just to draw your attention to both the reality and the huge importance of recognizing that this entire 12-verse section has very intricate **progressive developmental order** to it—and it is deliberately designed by our Father to be that way—and it is designed by our Father to be taught and understood in that progressive developmental manner!

- And that’s so that by the time you get to (:38) - you can not only say, **“I am persuaded”** — but you can say *I am persuaded in the very same way that God our Father is persuaded, Himself!*

- (Notice that Paul doesn’t come along and say, ‘For I am persuaded that the curriculum will work, etc.’ — but he knows that the things that he’s been provoked to think about **are the very things that are going to work to move him off that foundation!!!**)

- Those are the very things that are going to tell him to think otherwise — those are the very things that are going to come along and tell him that, What your Father says in that curriculum is **not true!**

- But Paul says, I'm going to believe it anyway—I'm going to operate upon it, anyway!

- And that's the kind of confidence: the kind of conviction—that our Father, not only wants to produce within us, but it HAS to be produced within us— **or we WILL abandon the curriculum.**

- And when I say that we will abandon it—I don't mean entirely, necessarily—but at various points along the way.

- And the moment you abandon it, your sonship education STOPS — and grinds to a halt.

- And until you change your mind and believe what it says and operate upon it—then at any particular point where you've stopped, **you won't make any further progress!**

- (That's why you've got to look at this 3rd Component of Sonship Establishment as the **vital** thing that it is — **and that's why it comes last!**)

- Now that's just a scope survey of the general purpose & design and sense & sequence of this 2-part passage—as well as a survey of the terminology and phraseology that makes it so that you should be able to come along and realize that what I've stated as to its designed purpose does hold up when you examine the passage and its terms and phrases.

- And really, the main objective of all this is for you to determine, (in light of our survey of the passage) - that we really do have 2 major parts to it—and that (:28-30) both have enough information in them, and are by design supposed to be able to stand on their own to fully prove, validate, and substantiate the reality and truth of what (:28) says — with nothing else needed to be added to make it true.

- In other words, (:28-30) don't need (:31-39) for it to stand true and sure — (:31-39) come along and, acting as a supplement, expects you to deal with (:28-30) in a way that has you talking back **to** it—that has you *saying something to these things* that (:28-30) have just said to you.

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- And the reason why you're saying *these things* in response to the thought-provoking questions that are being asked to you isn't to prove the reality of (:28-30) - **but it's to prove that you can DO with (:28-30) what your Father has designed for you to do with it!**
 - And really—when you think about what we've covered in just an overall, general scope or survey of the information contained in these 12 verses—and when you think about what its all designed to do, in the order its designed to do it—you begin to realize: **there's some mind-blowing stuff here!**
 - (This is one of those situations where: You ain't seen nothin' yet!)
 - Any questions about the general scope of the passage?
 - Any questions about the 2-part breakdown?
 - Now with that general understanding about how this section of Romans 8 is broken down into its 2 parts—that should tell you something (in light of how you now understand & appreciate its design and sense & sequence) - that should tell you something about the **importance** of those 2 parts:
 - And that is—to whatever degree you have the 1st part of (:28-30) effectually working in your inner man—that means that you can only expect to have the effectual working of that 2nd part of (:31-39) **to that exact same degree!**
 - In other words—if you only get 50% of the effectual working of (:28-30) - then **at best**, all you can ever hope to expect to get is 50% of the effectual working of (:31-39)!
 - Therefore you have to have a healthy respect for the vital importance of getting the **FULL** effectual working of each section!
 - Because when you get to those thought-provoking probing questions contained in (:31-39) - the Father says, "I'm looking for a particular answer from you, son, in connection with this." — and that means that you've got to have (:28-30) **fully** doing their job within you because, just as the first part of :31 says, there are *these things* in that information that are now supposed to be making you think in a particular way in light of each one of those 5 heart-probing questions.
 - The information in (:29 & :30), in particular—that substantiates the reality of (:28) - makes you and I start to think about some things **like we've never thought about them before!**

- And that's why the Father comes along beginning in (:31) and says, "I'm going to ask you a series of questions now, and on the basis of *these things* that you've got fully working in you (from **only** that information in [:28-30]), I want you to respond."

- And just to drive my point home—unless you have the full effect of (:28-30) understood properly—you don't know why He's asking you these questions!

- (In other words, the sense of the questions won't make sense!)

- Which means that if you're having trouble with one or more (or any) of those 5 questions—now you know why—because you're having trouble with something in (:28-30)! (there's something there you haven't understood)

- Now, in light of all that introduction—we should be ready to begin dealing with (:28-30) in detail.

- Before we look at the details—because of the nature of this entire section (in general), and especially (:28) specifically, being both popular and endearing to most Christians, and being thought to be one of the most deeply theological (*science falsely so called*) - we have to be warned and be constantly on guard to keep this entire 12-verse section CONTAINED within the parameters of the context in which God wrote it!

- We have to allow the CONTEXT to govern and to control how every word and every term and every phrase and even every concept, issue, idea, & thought is to be handled, treated, understood, and appreciated!

- And there are 2 major context forces that have to be brought to bear on every word and phrase of this passage—in order to govern it and control it:

- 1) Sonship Education
- 2) The Father's Perspective

- And if you ever lose sight of that context—you will stray off the path and never get the proper effectual working of this passage—you **will** mishandle it and therefore misuse and misapply it!!

- And another thing that must be ever in our thinking here is to not get the 'cart before the horse' (so to speak) - that is, you have to always bear in mind the ORDER in which God wrote this and the ORDER in which He presents the information (sense & sequence)!

- (In some ways it would be good to pretend we haven't gone over all this in the past few Bible classes—and just go back to that 3x5 card-type thing as you go from (:27) to (:28).)

- And that **order** is so critical because of the fact that of all of God's word—(and I mean that) — the real genius of how God says what He says, in the order in which He says no more powerfully put on display than in Romans 8:28-39!

- And He has to do it that way because of what He knows He has to get accomplished in the heart of His sons!

- And the genius in the way in which God put this together and in what He accomplishes in this passage (especially as He takes (:28-30) and then probes His son's heart in light of it in those 5 probing questions) - makes it so that there is first of all a **general effectual working** of that probing — because every son's heart (regardless of their personal circumstances, situation, age, or whatever) - every son's heart has to go through common adjustments.

- But then, when those common adjustments are made—the nature of what God asks in those 5 questions (and the way in which it works) provides for dealing with any idiosyncrasies (i.e., a peculiar behavioral problems or unusual reactions) type things that might be true of one son/daughter in their situation—but might not be true of another one. (that is, any snags, roadblocks, hindrances etc.)

- And you need to realize that those 5 questions aren't going after any misunderstandings (or erroneous understandings) — they're going after actual areas of **resistance & opposition** that come from the way in which people live and think by nature.

- And I'm going to have a lot more to say about those 5 probing questions—and the nature/genius of them—and why there are 5 and not 4; 5 and not 6; and why they're in the order God put them in—when we get down to (:31).

- But for now—let's get going in Romans 8:28.

Romans 8:28

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.

- Again—this is probably one of the most misused and abused verses in the entire Bible—and that’s directly due to folks just reading this verse and, without any regard for the context in which it is said, ‘naming it’ and ‘claiming it’ to whatever bad thing or tragic thing has happened to enter their lives.

- And as I’ve said in the past—even among literate, English speaking, English reading people—somehow this verse gets all mixed up somewhere from the page to the brain—and they wind up thinking that this is saying that “God is going to work all things for my good” — and because of that, a lot of erroneous teaching and false doctrine—and corrupted doctrine has gotten into the thinking of most Christian folks.

- No doubt this is largely due to the fact that many modern English translations flat-out say, ‘And we know that God causes all things to work together for good ...’ (NASV)

- And really the entire scholarly (viz., the modern science of textual criticism) and theological schools of thought regarding the handling of Rom. 8:28 are so far off from ever getting what (:28) is saying—largely due to either following corrupted minority texts, or attempting to do with this verse a whole bunch of things that God never intended for them to do with it—(like, debate whether or not “*all things*” includes even the person’s sins???) — [and this is a favorite passage that Calvinists love to appeal to in order to support their TULIP theory] - that it winds up being the ‘blind leading the blind.’

- But more commonly, most folks just read this and without any regard for its context, they, more often than not, see that phrase “*all things work together for good*” - and without any appreciation for context or even rightly dividing the word of truth, they assume this means that God is going to come along and divinely intervene by means of His omnipotence in their life/history and by His hand, ‘reshape’ history, or move events around their life, and interfere in the events of their life so that even though bad things happen, God will kind of take them in His hands and re-work them all so that, (kind of like Joseph back there in Genesis), “*But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, ...*” [Gen. 50:20] — always with the caveat that, “We might not know ‘why’ in this lifetime, but someday we’ll understand it better, by and by!”

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- And in that way, Rom. 8:28 becomes like a medicine for the soul: some kind of a tranquilizer to dull the pain and suffering for when bad, rotten, horrible, disastrous things happen in a person's life. (Spiritual snake-oil!)
 - And also in that way vs. 28 just ends up being just a slogan for the strictly human function of the power of positive thinking!
 - Now here's what I'm going to do with every scholar and every theologian and commentary writer— and every attempt to manipulate the text and retranslate the text and modernize the text—as well as every theological argument to attempt to inject Calvinism (or the idea that man's freewill doesn't exist or only partly exists) - as well as all the debates concerning how God omnipotently intervenes into the external events of life and manipulates them and massages them into favorable outcomes for us — I'm going to take all that pile of ... distractions, and in one fell swoop: **I'M GOING TO IGNORE THEM ALL!!!**
 - Because none of them regard the context of Romans 8—none of them regard God's word rightly divided—none of them are an honest handling of the text—and none of them are even close to what God is doing here—so I leave all of them to play in the 'kiddie' end of the pool with the other children!
 - Now—let's deal with the reality of what (:28, 29 & 30) are setting forth:
 - Remember that in the final component of Sonship Establishment, the Father wants to produce one more **specific kind of confident attitude** in His son's heart—and to do so, (even though the son might not expect it to be said or to come up), the Father sits on the table (so to speak), right under His son's nose the statement of (:28).
 - And the son is supposed to read that and appreciate that that is a very powerful statement—yet, he really has **no confidence** that that statement is true—in fact, it's **impossible** for him to know that what the Father has just said in (:28) is real and true (at least to the degree that **an adult son** needs to) just by that statement alone.
 - [Of course, he could just say, “Well, my Father says it, so it must be true.” — but that's childhood type thinking!]
 - And for an adult son, it's absolutely critical and vital that you know **WHY** (:28) is true and a reality in your life!

- Therefore the confidence that the son has to have in order to really “*know*” that (:28) is true and a reality—all comes from what is said in (:29 and :30).

- And that’s why (:29) starts off with a “*For*” of further explanation — and that’s why (:30) begins with that excellent English word of logic, “*Moreover*” (that’s not all, there’s more to be said).

- (:29-30) provide the proof for the statement of (:28) - and **the confidence comes from the proof!**

- So the real power or punch of what (:28) says really comes from (:29-30).

- Now, again—remember, as we approach (:28) - that we have a large (12 vs.) body of information that is dedicated to **one main goal**: to produce **absolute confidence** in the curriculum/education you’re about to receive and in the Father who designed it — and yet, the road to accomplish that one main goal **requires numerous adjustments to a son’s inner man, to achieve that goal!**

- Because there’s **numerous snags** in a son’s inner man upon which he can get hung up and be impeded when it come to achieving that goal.

- And the method of the Father is—that even though you can talk about the goal of achieving absolute confidence under one big umbrella of these 12 verses—and even though the body of information starts out with a statement of confidence (:28) — it starts out with a statement of confidence **just to get the ball rolling**—it doesn’t start off with a statement of confidence that says, This is the end result.

- So I say it that way so that you realize that (:28) **is** a statement of confidence—but the reasons why you can confidently rely on (:28) isn’t sitting in (:28), it’s sitting in (:29 & 30)!

- In fact, any simple (or even detailed) reading of (:28) should really make it so you realize that you **don’t** really have any confidence that what it says is true or will work yet—**unless** you get further information that produces the confidence in that statement!

- And (:29 & :30) go on and provides the information that gives you the absolute confidence you need in regard to (:28).

- *And we know ...*

- By beginning with the word *And*—the Father now sits one additional component before his son's eyes, and brings this additional thing to his attention—even though it might not have been occurring in his son's thinking at this point—the Father knows that it now has to occur in his sons' thinking, and has to be dealt with by his son.

- *And we know* (oida) - what does it mean here when Paul says, *And we know* — what does it mean to “*know*” here?

- *know* = very, very broad and multi-useful word; perceive; recognize; identify; etc.,

- But there's another aspect of *knowing* that's in view here, what is it?

Answer: To *know* (perceive/recognize and **to operate upon!**)

- *And we know* (oida) - this **isn't** the kind of thing we encountered over there in ch. 6 in all those “*Know ye not*” and “*Knowing this*” and “*Knowing that*” — as if this is something that we should already know.

- That kind of presentation of information back in ch. 6, and that kind of carrying on a discourse—or technique of making an argument where you come along and state something as a ‘known’ or a ‘given’ - or bring it up in a questioning manner as an issue that should be known—the way that's done is always dependant upon what was said **immediately** before it.

- And that's why it's **not** a hard & fast rule that every time you come across such an expression that it's got to mean that this is information that we should already know.

- These are differing issues of what we might call the **style** of the English language—and it's the information that is given immediately in the context prior to the ‘knowing’ expression that determines how you're supposed to look at what you're being told you have, *knowledge-wise*, or is a ‘known’ that you should already know about.

- And here in (:28) - we don't have anything immediately in the context that has given us something that we're supposed to be coming along and saying, Yeah, I know that already. (Which is why it doesn't say, “*Know ye not*”).

- What we have is a statement being made that is to be dealt with by us as something that we're supposed to *know* and **operate** upon—and the *know* is a term of absolute confidence that is the aim or objective of the statement—but it really hasn't been explained to us yet so that we can come along and say, Yes, I do *know* that—and yes, I do operate upon that.

- (And that's why :29 starts off with the word *For* — and that's why, when you get down to (:31) it says, *What shall we then say to these things?*)

- The opening phrase of (:28) - [*And we know*] - tells us that the whole body of information contained in (:28-30) comes along and tells us that, (:28) is declaring something to us that we're supposed to *know* and operate upon—and that's now being put on the table **for** us to *know*—and that every bit of information that's going to be given to us following it is going to enable us to come along and say, “I **DO** *know* that—and I'm going to be able to operate upon that!”

- Therefore, the opening expression, *And we know*, works as a kind of a presentation of knowledge that we need to deal with and get effectually working within us—rather than a statement of knowledge that we're either supposed to already be in possession of, or just as a matter of common sense, or something that we're supposed to just know intuitively—or even something that we're supposed to accept simply because the statement is being made to us right now by our Father. (and you should just believe it because He said it—which is inconsistent with adulthood type thinking—that's childhood!)

- In other words—when (:28) says, *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose.* — the issue is **not** that we're to come along and say, Yeah, based upon everything I've gone through so far, I understand that and that's the way it is.

- No. Based upon everything we've gone through so far in our sonship orientation and the opening 2 components of sonship establishment—the issue is, that we're brought to a point where we are now anticipating actually dealing with that curriculum—and we've been told some things about it's effectual working—but by nature, we **DON'T** have the full measure of confidence, yet, that we're supposed to have. (even though we may think/imagine we have!)

- And our Father knows it—because He hasn't provided for us to have it yet!

- The last thing a father does—before he begins dealing with his son about the curriculum—is: he produces within his son, the implicit faith he needs to have in what his father's going to begin to teach him!

- AND THAT'S WHY THIS COMES **LAST!**

- *And we know **that all things work together for good** ...*

- “**that all things**” — here is where you've got to be accurate and honest in how you handle God's word—because this is so tortured and distorted by most Bible teachers/commentators because it's so often taken and lifted out of its context—or even if it's not being lifted from its context, its preceding context is so **poorly** understood, that most saints—because they aren't oriented to their sonship status, and they don't know what takes place in sonship establishment—that they then can't deal with the terminology properly within its context, so the only thing they can do with it is to put it within the context of something they are **familiar** with—which is just their normal, everyday type living.

- Or else, as a Bible teacher—they then attempt to stick the terminology into some kind of made-up theology or made-up category or made-up system of edification—and force the *all things* into their made-up system!

- Now, in this phrase we have the most startling and shocking issue of this confidence-producing statement that the Father tells His son as He begins this final aspect of sonship establishment:

“ ... **all things** ... *work together for good* ... ”

- And there's nothing difficult or 'tricky' or puzzling about those 2 words: **all things** — God says exactly what He means to say, and He means exactly what He says—**all things** *work together for good!*

- In other words, *all things* means exactly that: **all things**

- That doesn't mean that all things are good or that all things that are going to happen to you are going to be good—in fact, there's going to be a whole bunch of bad things happen to you!

- The ‘trick’ (to use that term) is that you have to have a real, firm grip upon the **exact context** of this passage—and by means of that **proper** context—you merely keep this terminology and phraseology corralled within that context! (not word studies or Greek grammar!)

- And the context here is the son’s establishment as an adopted, adult son about to embark upon the curriculum for his sonship education—and the son is being told by his Father how his Father has designed the curriculum for his sonship education to work for him—how He has designed it so that by the son’s use of, and utilization of that curriculum for his sonship education—as he lives his sonship life and utilizes the information within the curriculum his Father gives him—each and every single thing that happens to him (you) - and each and every thing that you ever will experience in your life is geared to work for your *good*—for your **benefit**—for your **success!**

- This includes ***all things***:

- physically
- personally
- locally
- nationally
- internationally

- And even though we might want to get into a whole bunch of details—you’re not supposed to ‘over-think’ this and over analyze this at this point.

- You’re just simply supposed to be struck by the fact that your Father is saying to you that ***all things*** (good, bad, or otherwise) *work together* (within the framework of your sonship education and your utilizing the curriculum for your sonship education) *for your good* (for your benefit).

- And as you may have gathered by now—**this is a highly qualified statement**—(which we will see clearly in the rest of the verse [which narrows this down to apply to only a certain few]).

- But for now—even by means of the context alone—you should have a pretty good idea that this is NOT intended to be an across-the-board statement that includes everybody (saved & unsaved); nor is it even including every Christian (all saved members of the church, the body of Christ)!

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- Now—before we go on—let’s just make sure that we’re properly understanding what’s been said (declaration-wise) to us so far in (:28).
 - *And we know*—This is a powerful, confident-producing **declaration** my Father now knows is the necessary & natural final issue that I have to deal with in order to bring about the full measure of the adjustments to my attitude that has to take place in sonship establishment. Not only is it a confidence-producing statement that goes to producing the nature/kind of confidence I have to have at this point—but it is also a statement that, when it has been effectually produced in me, will be something that I will confidently & continually operate upon in all the details of my life as my Father’s adopted son, now and forever more.
 - *that all things*—This is just what it says—*all things*—and while not all things are going to be good things, this includes the bad with the good and everything in between. However all those *things* from mild to severe; from minor to major that happen to me are all within the framework of a believer in Christ who is taking their sonship life seriously, and opting to be educated by God my Heavenly Father under His curriculum for sonship education. And in that way, while the *all things* that happen to me may be exactly like what happens to all other people, the critical difference is being an adopted son of my Heavenly Father and operating under His curriculum.
 - Any problems with that? Any questions so far? (especially about *all things*)
 - *And we know that all things work together for good ...*
 - Once again, by keeping this in its proper context—the **context** will **not** allow you to think that this is saying that God is going to *work all things* out for your *good* by means of His intervening, omnipotent hand—altering and bending and manipulating events and situations and circumstances so that bad things that happen are ‘just a blessing in disguise’ type thing.
 - Neither is this (in its context here) a statement that God is going to *work all things* for your *good* **regardless of your will**—that He has decreed that *all things* will ultimately work out for *good*—and ‘by and by’ when we all get to heaven, we’ll finally see that what we thought was a bad thing, really was a good thing in the long run—but for now we just can’t see ‘the big picture’, but when we do we’ll understand.

- But rather *all things working together for good* is a **highly context sensitive phrase!!!**

- And in that respect, we're to understand and appreciate that this is only talking about *all things* that impact your life and/or stimulate your life one way or the other—you take all those things and **marry** those things with the curriculum for sonship education—then by the effectual working of that curriculum in your inner man, that sonship curriculum has the **capacity** and the **ability** to take any and every thing that impacts your life (good or bad), and work them all for **good**—for your *good*.

- And *good* here isn't just the issue that 'all things work out as they should'—the issue of it being *good* is the sense of it being for your **benefit** and for your **usefulness**—for just so many opportunities for you to use and utilize the wisdom of your Father and bring it to bear upon all these many and varied circumstances and situations and stimulations that enter your life—and that curriculum has the **power** and the **might** and the **strength** to take any thing that touches you and cause it to *work together* with the curriculum for your added and continued benefit ... *for good!*

- Therefore the issue is, we've got this thing called the curriculum for our sonship education that our Father is putting into our hands—it's designed to be what we live our sonship lives on the basis of—(and that's exactly what a father delivers to his son in connection with adopting him) - and the issue is, *all things* that take place, therefore, in our lives, **when they're mated with what goes on in that curriculum**—it *works together for good*.

- And it *works together for good* in connection with **the objective that our sonship life has in view!**

- And that's exactly what a son **wants** to understand to be the case—and what a son realizes by logic that that's the way things ought to be—but wants to be (and has to be) convinced & fully persuaded that that's the way it is, and that when he operates upon it, everything goes towards meeting that objective — and that he'll be able to **succeed** and **prevail** in all those *all things* that happen to him!

- Again, it's critical that you understand and appreciate that this is not the issue of: '*all things work together* (**with all other things in our life**) *for good*' !

- Because that means that God still somehow is taking this thing, and this thing, and this other thing—and putting them together for some end result.

- And not only is He not manipulating things to assure good results, but even that concept of *all things working together*—that can't even mean that all the experiences of your life that you encounter will *work together* with all the other things you encounter—because the reality is that you encounter many things in your life that in all truth are unrelated events!

- And if that's what you're thinking this is—even that is a denial of what sonship is at its very core! (Because that would demand that God would come along and still intervene to tie all these pieces together so that the sum total of all *the things* turns out *good*—and that's **not** consistent with being treated as a son!)

- The critical issue here (and I'm not saying this just to 'wrest' the Scriptures and force it to say what I want it to say) - but the only possible way to understand and appreciate contextually, that this isn't saying *all things work together with all other things for some ultimate good that God is going to produce* — is to clearly recognize that the only way that *all things are going to work together for good* is that as a son of my Father: I have the privilege of enduring all things (good and bad) and those *things together with, mated with, in union with the curriculum* for my education as my Father's son will *work together for good*.

- And the *good* is the beneficial results of having to USE that information contained in the curriculum as a son that is going to further train me in my vocational training so that I will, in turn, be better qualified to receive my joint-inheritance with Christ and gain the experience of having to **use** the information in the curriculum whereby the result will be my success and my prevailing in whatever circumstances and situations ever come my way!

- *All things work together* (with the curriculum for sonship education) *for good* (for my benefit, for my well-being, to enhance and promote my sonship life) — in fact, having to endure *all things* (good & bad) [in the context of being a properly functioning son of my Father] will actually be to my advantage and not to my detriment at all!

- That's the startling declaration my Father makes to me in verse 28!

- Now, are there any questions in connection with this first phrase:
And we know that all things work together for good ... ???

- Now just as most folks get that first phrase goofed up—things get even worse with the last phrase - what you might call the qualifying phrase.

- Beginning with the word “to” to the end of the sentence/verse—not only does the context keep us from misusing and misapplying the 1st part, but just to make sure that we're not misunderstanding just exactly who this issue of *all things working together for good* is intended for—we have a 2-part section of the sentence that acts to say: Only those who fit this description are qualified for having *all things work together for good*.

- And even at that—a lot of folks just come along and read this, and say, Ok, I *love God* (heck, who doesn't?) - and I'm saved, so I'm *the called according to his purpose* (whatever that means) - so, hey, this is for me!

- And this is where it's going to get rather uncomfortable for some folks—because the truth of the matter is, while this is ‘for’ every saint (to read and profit from) — this is NOT something that all saints (believers in Christ) can use and apply to themselves, simply because they **don't** qualify according to what this is saying and what the context says it's talking about! (Especially if you just crack your Bible open to Romans 8:28 and read that one verse—and then just think, hey, that's for me!)

28 *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.*

- The truth is, *all things working together for good* is not for everyone — it's certainly not the case for any unbeliever, unsaved, unjustified person—and just as true, it's not the case even for the majority of justified believers in Christ!

- “... ***to them that love God, ...***” — First of all, notice that it doesn't say, ‘to them that are God's [God's own saints/believers/justified persons/saved].’

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- Granted, “*them that love God*” can be taken in a way that is descriptive of any saint that has some love and adoration and appreciation for being saved from the debt & penalty of their sins; from no longer being an object of God’s wrath, but now being an object of His forgiveness, mercy, and love & grace.
 - And granted there is a measure of loving God that is produced simply by responding to God’s grace and the substitutionary sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ on Calvary’s cross.
 - But again, this phrase of *loving God* in Romans 8:28 is a highly contextually sensitive phrase—meaning that this isn’t talking about loving God in the sense of being justified unto eternal life—but there has actually been produced in you a more specific (and I mean more specific to the context of sanctification and especially the capstone of your sanctified position in Christ: the adoption of sons) - it’s that specific kind of love for God that has been generated and produced in you in connection with being adopted, oriented, and established as a son who has been given this powerful curriculum for ss education!
 - Therefore, this isn’t talking about just any old Christian—this is talking about a saint who, as an adopted son who has had all of the effectual working of what’s sitting in Romans 8:14-27 working in his inner man—it has produced a *love for God as your Father* who has made you aware of all that He has told you about since you hit Romans 8:14!
 - This isn’t a general love for God, but a sonship love for God!
 - And then just to qualify *all things working together for good* even further, we have the final phrase: ***to them who are the called according to his purpose.***
 - And here you encounter that ‘bug-a-boo’ word: ***called***—not to mention: ***purpose!*** (Should I get “A Purpose-Driven Life”?)
 - But neither the word *called* nor *purpose* are supposed to be difficult at all—and you certainly aren’t supposed to have to stop here and teach the entire doctrine of the Divine Decrees—or other such theological disciplines—in order to understand this.
 - NO. It’s really all very simple—if you just keep these words and terms and phrase where God put them—in the context!

- That expression—*the called according to his purpose*—is simply describing who we are as sons, in view of the objective of sonship!

- And that's exactly what a son needs to think about himself, (and think of himself), in connection with when it comes to being able to appreciate the power of the effectual working of the curriculum he's going to be dealing with!

- He needs to see himself as one who is *the called according to his Father's purpose*.

- Otherwise—if he's not going to look at himself that way—he's not going to look at the curriculum as he should be looking at it—because the Father wants him to look at the curriculum **FROM HIS PERSPECTIVE** when He composed it, put it together, and everything He did to make it, therefore, so that it will do its job in His son.

- And then once the son is thinking about things that way—and the rest of (:29-30) do their job to insure that that takes place—that's why (:31) comes along and says, "*What shall we then say to these things?*" - and the Father can then begin to probe His son's heart on the basis of His son looking at what His Father has designed for him to utilize in his sonship life—and to come along and to probe his inner man and deal with each of the 5 areas of potential problems in His son's heart & mind—and He can surgically remove snags, impediments & hindrances—and leave His son with a heart of absolute trust and implicit faith in the effectual working of that curriculum.

- But the only way the son will ever come to that point is if he looks at the curriculum **just like the Father looks at it!**

- And that's why he (you, the son) have to start out looking at yourself as one who is '*the called according to your Father's purpose*.'

- "... *called according to his purpose*." — that's exactly what you are as a son in your Father's eyes — and that expression/phrase is not supposed to be analyzed outside of this particular context—it isn't difficult at all—it isn't so deeply theological that it takes a degree in the falsely called science of theology to understand it—it's simply expressing what any old adopted son is, from the father's perspective!

- At the *time appointed of the father*, He adopted you as His son for the purpose of educating you and edifying you in order to think like Him, live like Him, and one day enter into laboring together with Him in His business — and that's what the **called** is referring to (to the time in which He *called* you into sonship edification at the point in which He adopted you as His son) — and that's what the **purpose is according to** (the *purpose* of ultimately laboring with your Father in all His business).

- And what all that means is—that the phrase *all things work together for good* **IS HIGHLY RESTRICTIVE** — it's restricted only to a son who is aware of his sonship status; a son who has been properly oriented and established and crying *Abba, Father*—in other words, a son who is taking his sonship life seriously (one who is desiring to be being educated as a son of God his Heavenly Father).

- Simply put: *all things working together for good* **is only applicable for an intelligent son** (intelligent, so far as Romans 8:14-27 has made him!)

- And that intelligent son who has the effectual working of Romans 8:14-27 is one who, in light of those things contained in that section, **loves God** (that information has produced in him a love for God his Father that's different than any general love for God that is based upon being justified/saved, and different even from the first 2 major components to his godly sanctification) - **it's one who loves God as a son** (a *sonship* love for God).

- And that intelligent son **sees himself as his Father sees him**: as a son who is **called** (at the time in which he was adopted by his Father) **according to his purpose** (which is the purpose of being educated by his Father in order that he might be *meet* to be a *partaker of the inheritance* [as Paul puts it in Col. 1:12] - he's *called* (adopted) **according to his Father's purpose** (to ultimately labor with his Father in the Father's business).

- And remember that this is our Father declaring to us a very powerful concept that is to become a **principle**, fundamental to how we are going to live our lives as sons—and one that is to dispel fear and hesitation and any lack of confidence in our Father's educational system to work **no matter what!**

- And in that way—this is not only a confidence-building statement, but it is a **fear-dispelling** statement—that no matter what happens to you in all your life (good, bad, and everything in between) — *all things work together for good* for you who are qualified by the last part of (:28) — *all those things* (when **mated** with the effectual working of the curriculum for sonship education) *work together for your benefit* as a son of your Heavenly Father!

- And that's designed to **attack** any natural fear, anxiety, or worry or distress or anything along those lines that says, "You know, as much as I might want this, I don't know if I can do this."

- And again—just to point up that this is highly qualified and highly restricted to only a certain group of people—(as much as you might not like hearing that) — notice carefully that when Paul precisely states who, and only who, are the ones this applies to—he doesn't just come along and say, "to them that are saints" or "to those who are justified" — but by saying it the way he does: "*to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose*" — Paul (and God Himself) is making a **discriminating difference** between those who are justified unto eternal life (saved from the debt & penalty of their sins), and those who are all that, but on top of that are living consistent with who they are **as sons of God**.

- Furthermore—Paul doesn't even say, "to them who are adopted" or "to them who are sons" — because all saints/believers/justified/saved folks are also adopted as sons, too. (They just either aren't aware of their sonship status, or view it only as **an event** with little to no ramifications beyond that [especially here on this earth], or they are aware of their sonship status but simply **don't care** about living as sons).

- And I point that out once again—just to underscore that I'm not just 'splitting hairs' or making up some issue that really doesn't exist in the mind of God—when I say that you have to begin to think about being a Christian in light of not merely being justified, and not even merely being who you are "in Christ" sanctification-wise — but realizing the difference between one who is a genuine believer in Christ — and one who is intelligized as a son and living consistent with who you are as a son of your Father!

- Paul uses very specific terminology in describing those who qualify for having *all things working together for good* very carefully in terms that can **only** be speaking of those who are aware of their sonship status in Christ, ***and***

who have had produced in them (by the effectual working of Romans 8:14-27) the intelligence of who they are as sons of God and the desire to be educated as sons of God their Father.

- In other words, Paul writes Romans 8:28 to you as one who has properly received what he's just given you—as one who (to just go back to our Table of Contents) one who has just received “Knowing wisdom and instruction” and one who is receiving the “perception of the words of understanding.”

- Therefore to be blunt and brutally honest about it—and though a lot of folks won't want to hear this, and most won't like what I'm about to say):

1) This is not for any person on this earth who is not a believer in Jesus Christ (who has not been justified by believing in the gospel of Christ);

2) This is NOT for any believer/saint (saved & justified though they may be) - this is not for any saint who is not being “led by the Spirit” through the sonship curriculum; who is not “crying, Abba, Father”; who has not received sonship orientation and sonship establishment — this is **NOT for them—it does not apply to them—Romans 8:28 has **ZERO** application to them!!!**

- If that describes you—then you have no right to this verse; you have no claim to it—it won't work for you; it doesn't apply to you—it's not a verse that does anything more for you than give you a pseudo, temporal salve for some problem in your life — it's nothing more than a spiritual placebo!
(= something of no remedial value that's used to give some false sense of reassurance.)

- THERE IS NO “*WORKING TOGETHER FOR GOOD*” IN THEIR LIVES—all things **DON'T** work together for good for that Christian!

- Because the truth of the matter is—when you don't appreciate who you are as a son—(and since this isn't talking about God intervening with His omnipotent hand into the affairs and circumstances of life) — then the truth is, you simply don't have working for you the **power** that makes *all things work together for good*—you don't have that **curriculum** that has the capacity and the ability and power and strength to cause *all things to work together for good!*

- And when all that you've been educated in so far about your sonship status and what it all means (up to this point) to be an adult, adopted son of God your Heavenly Father — when that isn't something you ever come to appreciate as a saint — when all you know is: I'm not going to go to hell; my sins are forgiven; and I'm going to go to heaven when I die — when that's all you know, then YOU DON'T **LOVE GOD** ... (like Paul describes in Romans 8:28) ... AND YOU'RE NOT **CALLED ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE!**

- How in the world can you define yourself as one who is *called according to his purpose*, **when you don't know what His purpose is???**

- Now, for those to whom this **does** apply—again, this DOES NOT mean that your life will be perfect—with no bad things ever happening to you—in fact, quite the opposite is going to be the case!

- A whole bunch of bad things (suffering, heart-wrenching, disappointing, disturbing, frightening things) are going to happen to you!

- Your life will be lived with all those things happening to you without any alteration to them whatsoever! — **But**... when all that is **MATED** with the curriculum for your sonship education, then they **WILL** *all work together for good!*

- Romans 8:28 is by far the greatest statement and greatest declaration your Heavenly Father has told you since you became aware of your sonship status—and it may very well be that it's the greatest thing, and most important thing you ever will hear as a son!

- And because our Father (knowing what He has to do as the final thing to produce [He produces it Himself] to produce this final attitude we have to have in order to be fully established in our sonship status) - because our Father just plops this in front of us—He makes this declaration to us—He expects us to be suitably impressed with how **big** of a thing this is—because it **is** one of the boldest statements in all of Scripture—and He knows that we have to have all of the information contained in (:29-30) in order for us to be suitably confident, suitably assured, and suitably convinced [just as He Himself is] that the education He's about to give you has no weaknesses in it; and is so **powerful** that **nothing** that you will ever experience, go through, suffer, endure, or face in your sonship life—will, when it is mated with this curriculum, *work together for good* to you, His son.

- Now before we go on—I just want to return to that issue of “*good*” — *And we know that all things work together for good* — and I want to make sure that there isn’t any confusion on what the *good* is:

- (We’ve already covered the issue that *all things* consist of good, bad, and everything in between) — so, since we’re told about a whole bunch of bad things that are going to happen to us (see :37) - let’s take it from that perspective:

- Let’s say something bad happens to me—it’s not that I wanted it to happen—in fact, I didn’t want it to happen, but it did happen, so how does it *work together for good*? what’s the *good*?

- Ok, a bad thing happened—(___ fill in the blank ___) - I didn’t want it to happen, but it did—and there’s information in my sonship curriculum that will take that issue as so much of an opportunity to further my vocational training; benefit me by **using** the information/doctrine to deal with that thing.

- (And where are we in the Table of Contents? [*to perceive the words of understanding*] — therefore, the curriculum will have “*words of understanding*” to deal with (___?___)

- For example: I Cor. 6:1, 5-7 (:7) — the issue is that there was a bad thing happening to the saints at Corinth, but the sonship curriculum had provided *words of understanding* that were to be utilized in the midst of this bad thing happening so that it would *work together for good* - and therefore they blew a great opportunity to be better trained and better qualified for their Father’s purpose!

- The *good* isn’t merely using information to **endure** a bad thing—but to **better train me**; and **better equip me**; and **better qualify me** for my joint-inheritance with Christ—and having even greater **wisdom & experience & capacity** in using the curriculum for sonship education, **and ultimately be a better trained, better educated, better qualified intelligent son!**

- (It’s that *all things work together for good* **AS A SON!**)

- This isn’t some kind of goofy psychological mind-game exercise as if Rom. 8:28 is God’s way of saying: ‘Let’s turn those frowns upside down!’ & ‘When life gives you lemons, just make lemon aid!’

- And there are **counterfeits** to all this out there in “*the wisdom of this world*” that attempt to ‘spin’ all the things that happen to you so that you think they all work out for *good*.

- Too numerous to go into now—but along the lines of:
“Well, ‘hindsight is 20/20’ - and looking back on things, if this (bad thing) hadn’t of happened, then I would have never met my wife.” (or whatever)

- But none of that is “*good*” AS A SON! — None of that counterfeit coping wisdom/technique causes me to emulate my Father! or to be more conformed & better conformed to the image of Christ!

- Even the bad things of life may be rationalized to ‘work out for good’ — such as in the case of POW’s, for example, who in many cases had great success in rationalizing their captivity into something good that came out of it—(and, by the way, I’m not denying that there isn’t real success in doing that) — **but that’s not good AS A SON! (not godly)**

- And the truth of the matter is—even when genuine Christians attempt similar coping mechanisms for the bad things happening in their lives—even by using Scripture to do it, (but, of course, using the Scriptures to form their own methods) - [or by using the latest best-selling book by the current ‘stable of stars’]—even in that case, there is **NO good** in it AS A SON!

- Because as far as fulfilling the very *purpose* God had in mind when He saved you in the first place—all that kind of stuff **doesn’t work for that purpose at all!!!**

- Each component of Romans 8:28 can be easily contained in its context by simply putting that contextual issue of ‘AS A SON’ onto each component:

- ***And we know*** AS A SON
- ***that all things*** AS A SON
- ***work together*** AS A SON
- ***for good*** AS A SON
- ***to them that love God,*** AS A SON
- ***to them who are the called*** AS A SON
- ***according to his purpose*** AS A SON.

- And all of this brings me back to what I said earlier about God our Father plopping this declaration down in front of us—and our becoming suitably impressed with the confidence, assurance, and conviction that it declares we can have, should have, and will have in our sonship education.

- Truth is: this educational curriculum for our sonship life has **UNLIMITED APPLICATION!** (*“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.”*)

- Romans 8:29-30

29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

- These are 2 of the most daunting verses in the entire Bible. And that’s because by-in-large the terminology (the words) seem to be far too difficult to understand by ordinary ‘laymen.’ And more often than not, it’s assumed that you have to have a degree in theology just to ever have a clue as to what Paul is talking about here.

- (Funny thing is, it’s those very ones with those degrees in theology that **really never** have a clue as to what Paul is saying here—and to their chagrin, this passage is easy to handle and crystal clear to any believer with zero theological training, but who can simply read the English language and keep things in their context!)

- I mean, look at it—isn’t it daunting? too deep for mortal minds? too complicated for the non-clergy?

- 1) Foreknowledge!
- 2) Predestination!
- 3) Calling!
- 4) Justification!
- 5) Glorification!

(I think I’m going to faint!)

- But again, we’ll be saved from mutilating these verses and making a huge mess out of this passage if we just recognize the excellency of the translation of every word as it appears in our King James Version—and if we simply contain what God says within the bounds of sonship establishment—just as any ordinary father would establish & educate his own natural son!

- Ok—since that’s the case—let’s allow the context to save us from a whole bunch of problems that are normally associated with this passage—and while we’re at it, let’s allow something else we’ve often talked about in connection with God’s word and how He wrote it, to also come to our aid and make sure that we get out of (:29-30 and :31-39) all that God expects us to get out of it: and that other thing is sense and sequence (or the strict attention to the **order** in which God says things).

- (And while I may seem to be coming off as ‘beating a dead horse’ so to speak—and pounding this issue over and over—it’s because I know how easy it is to get completely lost here—and just go deeper and deeper into the woods with every step you take!)

- So let’s talk a little bit about what is going on in the mind of the Father who is bringing His son to this last and final issue in sonship establishment:

- When a son comes to the end of (:27), and he’s got the first 2 components of sonship establishment covered—what all this is leading to is this total and complete development of absolute confidence, trust, assurance, and conviction in his Father and in the curriculum his Father has designed for him.

- But at the end of (:27) the son really doesn’t know that there are an awful lot of hindrances and impediments and snags resident in his mind/heart—you’re just simply not aware of those things being in your mind ... but the Father knows they’re there!

- And when a father brings up the final issue of sonship establishment with his son—which is designed to get it so that he does have full confidence, assurance, and the full measure of conviction he needs to have in the curriculum doing its job — the son isn’t aware of what it takes to get that accomplished. (The son simply doesn’t know what needs to take place in his heart in order to get that full confidence developed: **but the Father does!**)

- The son is totally ignorant (dumb) as to how to get this done—as to what the **process** is to get it all accomplished.

- So (:28) makes a statement that sets in motion the issue of the building of the confidence, assurance, & convictions that are designed to be built and put into place by the time you get to the period (.) at the end of (:39).

- And even though it’s still a couple of verses off—it’s still germane to our study to keep in mind those 5 probing questions that the Father is going to ask his son about—because the son’s heart has got to be probed in order to **awaken** him to certain things—and to get some thoughts going—that if the probing questions didn’t get them going, they never would get going in the first place!

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- (Because the son, innately, doesn't have the capacity to get these things going.)
 - It takes the word of God—which is just as Hebrews 4:12 says—*is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any towedged sword*—to go into that son's heart and do something in his soul & spirit that actually can function in a *dividing asunder* type manner—and can actually start sorting some things out—and can provide for being a *discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart*.
 - And can put the son in the position where he can actually begin to recognize that **there's some things that he's never even thought about**—that hasn't even **dawned** upon him—in connection with the effectual working of God's word.
 - And I'm saying all that to you—not to just repeat myself, or even to deal with any of those things yet—but just to make it so that we all realize that as we deal with this: **we take it one step at a time**—in the **order** of step-placement that God has set it forth in!
 - ... Otherwise, what the Father has designed to take place, **won't** take place!
 - Those 5 questions have got to be dealt with in the **order** in which God has put them—because He's performing 'open heart surgery' on the son's heart. (And He starts at the first muscle mass at the front of the heart—and He doesn't stop until He gets to the back of it!)
 - Therefore, we can't come along and anticipate too much in advance: or assume too much in advance: — and not be dealing with stuff as if it's dealing with more than what it actually is dealing with! (which is the tendency)
 - And so—to bring us back to our matter at hand in (:29-30) - as we noted before, there are 5 things mentioned in them—and those 5 things aren't supposed to be thought about by anything other than the context before us—which means to chase down some kind of categorical/systematic doctrine of those 5 words and study out everything that could ever be said about them—that will do nothing but get us deeper in the woods and totally lost.
 - But more than that—by getting a healthy respect for the **order** of them—and that our Father has ordered them in the way He has—which means that we're supposed to recognize that what you've got here—in the 2 verses that are designed to be a **proof** (to prove the reality and the validity of what (:28) has declared): that what you've got here are **5 STEPS** to get that job done!

- For whom he did **foreknow** — Step 1
- he also did **predestinate** to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. — Step 2
- Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also **called**: — Step 3
- and whom he called, them he also **justified**: — Step 4
- and whom he justified, them he also **glorified**. — Step 5

- Foreknow—Step 1
- Predestinate—Step 2
- Called—Step 3
- Justified—Step 4
- Glorified—Step 5

- And you're not supposed to look at those 5 words and suddenly 'vapor-lock' in your brain! — As if God suddenly stopped talking about Himself as a real Father, and just snapped into some kind of a discussion about Himself in His God-ness! NO! He's still talking as any father would talk to his son when he wants to finish his son's establishment!

- Therefore the **context** is critical to not getting lost—and the **order** in which God sets them forth is critical to not only not getting lost, but to get the effectual working of this proof to be fully proven and to make (:28) a reality in which you know exactly WHY *all things work together for good* to you as God's son!

- Now—with all that in mind—you should therefore recognize right off the bat, that (:29-30) are only going to say things within the realm of which (:28) has predicated things (or has laid the groundwork for things).

- In other words, because (:28), being taken within the realm of sonship—that means that (:29-30) has some real **restrictive** parameters that won't let you (if you're going to be honest with the context) - it won't let you think about those terms outside of the restrictive way in which they're used.

- Which means that whatever God's going to say in (:29-30) to validate & substantiate the reality of what He says in (:28) - its all going to be said within the confines of what (:28) has established. (No matter what those terms *could* mean, or *could* be used in other contexts.)

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- (In this context—those 2 verses [and everything in them] are going to be used solely within the confines of sonship itself—and the further confines within sonship that (:28) has set.)
 - And just to go back to what I said at the beginning of this whole thing (this morning's 1st session) — that means that (:28) [right now] is the most important verse in this entire gamut of verses we're going to be dealing with!
 - (“Most important” as far as what it does in initiating this 3rd & final component of sonship establishment that a father needs to deal with his son about—it initiates it).
 - It's the most important verse because what it says is going to confine our thoughts and regulate our thinking with respect to all the other things that are said following it—so that we don't misuse terminology; abuse it; misapply it; or do anything else that can be done when context is ignored—and initiating statements aren't given the weight that they are designed to be given when they begin a *form of doctrine* like is taking place right here.
 - Now—everything we've been doing in our last lessons have really been preparatory for dealing with the details of what (:29-30) set forth in order to fully prove and validate the reality of (:28).
 - We first of all had to deal with the general breakdown of the entire 12-verse section of (:28-39).
 - Then we dealt with the overall design of what each of the 2 components are designed to do—and the job they are to get done.
 - And then—because the terminology is such that if you don't have a real and deep appreciation (maybe 'skill' might be better) for how to handle such terminology—and to not get off track, and therefore not get the effectual working of this final component of sonship establishment—I've been spending a great deal of time harping on the issue of keeping the terms and phrases that make up this large section inside the parameters God has put them—(and if you don't, you will wind up 'lost in the woods' [so to speak]!)
 - Then we dealt with the details of (:28) and should have a very good grasp upon what it sets forth—why our Father brings this issue to our attention—and how very **limited** and **restricted** this powerful statement is, and exactly **who** (and only who) this applies to!

- Summary Statement of Romans 8:28—

In order to get His son to have implicit trust, confidence, assurance, and conviction in the Father and in the curriculum He put together for His son's education—the Father makes a declaration to His son (in order to start the process off of developing the kind of confidence that will make it so His son will never abandon the curriculum, no matter what) - He starts that process off with a statement that confronts us as His sons with the realization that this sonship education that He's going to give us is all designed to *work together* with everything that we're going to experience and involve ourselves with in the details of our life—and it's been so well designed so as to *work together* with those things for our *good—as a son*—and that's because we are, just as the last part of (:28) says, we are the ones who have been *called according to our father's purpose*.

- And by saying that to the son—and by saying it in the way the Father says it—that actually **initializes** the son's heart to go on and get the remaining information that fully produces the full measure of confidence, assurance and conviction ... but it's only the beginning!

- It's going to take another 11 verses following that—to cover all the information—and by that information—do all that needs to take place in the son's heart to actually produce the kind of assurance, confidence, and conviction the son needs to have.

- And then as we face the information contained in (:29-30) - I've been cautious (overly cautious) - due to the information and the terminology that's used in those 2 verses—I've been cautious to pound away at keeping all of it contained in the parameters that God has put it. (So that you don't get lost, and so that you fail to get the effectual working of the proof that it sets forth).

- And we've talked about keeping every word within the bounds of the **context** of sonship (especially sonship establishment).

- Secondly, that, since God puts it in a particular order (with sense and sequence) - that we deal with each step (and there are 5 of them in this proof) in the very **order** in which God gave it!

- And lastly, that we put ourselves in the '**point-perspective**' that God our Father wants our thinking to be in as we deal with each step of the proof information — and that 'point-perspective' is to view all of this (and I mean all of it) FROM THE VIEWPOINT/PERSPECTIVE OF THE FATHER HIMSELF—and we have to make sure that we understand & appreciate the **significance** of viewing things this way!

- So now—with our good grasp upon (:28) - and knowing that (:29-30) are going to prove and validate all that (:28) says—when it comes to proving the reality of (:28) - why does (:29) begin the way it does?

29 For whom he did foreknow, ...

- The “**For**” is a ‘for’ of further explanation and further amplification. So therefore we know that we’re dealing with setting forth a proof or confirmation for the reality of what (:28) has said.

- But just to use that technique I often talk about—if you were reading this line by line (with that 3 X 5 card) - and you came to the end of (:28) with the card still covering (:29) - even though you might not come up with the exact terminology at all—you should be able to, (based upon something that has already been said to you in [:28]), you should be able to say, “He’s got to say something to me about His foreknowledge!” (or something to that effect)

- Why?

- There’s something about the way (:28) ends that sets your thinking so that your mind goes to anticipating this issue that gets brought up in (:29) - and at the exact same time it sets your thinking in the proper **perspective** God wants it in, in order to make that proof He’s going to give you effectually work to produce the kind of confidence and assurance He knows you have to have!

- In other words, by saying what (:28) says, it generates the particular focus of your attention God wants you to have, and that you must have in order to establish that kind of confidence in you as His son.

- So again, why, in order to prove the reality of (:28), does (:29) start off with the issue of our Father’s **foreknowledge**?

- Once again—we should be able to come along and easily see that this *foreknowledge* is to kept within the context of sonship—and deals specifically with the Father knowing in advance about His sons—it applies to sonship—He’s not talking about creation in general or anything along those lines.

- That’s why it says, “*For whom he did foreknow*” - it doesn’t say, ‘*For what he did foreknow*’ — and that *whom* is **us**—it’s the English *whom* Plural, not singular.

- Now let's just address that word *foreknow* (or *foreknowledge*), and dispel any apprehension that you may have for such a seemingly highly technical and theological word. (difficult to understand)

- *foreknow* = [prosginosko] = to know in advance—therefore if you know about something in advance, simply put, that means that you've thought about it before—it's something that's been thought out before an event took place.

- Simple. Even a natural father can and does do this very thing in connection with his own sons.

- And as (:29) goes on—it takes that *knowing in advance*—and it **limits** our Father's *foreknowledge* of us to something more specific.

- Now with that said—I want to go back and make sure that we acknowledge something that's sitting in (:28) that not only makes this issue of God's *foreknowledge* being brought up as the 1st Step in producing the proof and the confidence in your heart, that what that 1st part of (:28) says is real and true—but at the exact same time, it fixes our **point-perspective** exactly as our Father wants it (and how it must be) in order to produce the full-measure of the kind of confidence and assurance we must have in Him and in His curriculum that He's about to deliver into our hands.

- In other words, to govern & regulate everything that He's going to say to us in these 12 verses, and 'color' and 'taint' (in a good sense) all the terms & phrases (as well as the 5 probing questions) - you have to deal with all those issues by viewing all that's said **from the Father's perspective!**

- (We may have acknowledged it already, but I don't think we've acknowledged it to the **degree** that we should or that we need to acknowledge it).

- Notice at the end of (:28) - that when the final defining description of us is given, it says, "*to them who are the called according to his purpose.*"

- Why does He describe it that way? Why doesn't He come along and say, "*For we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who he has made his sons.*"???

- Granted, He's talking about us in view of the fact that we are His sons—but He's talking about us, and describing us in a very particular way—that forces us look at our sonship **from a very particular perspective!**

- And if you're thinking, Well, it puts it in the perspective of the Father and what He sees when He looks at you as His adopted son—that right, and that's all well & good—but that's just the FACT of it—and that's not exactly getting down to the 'root' of it for why you have to view this from the Father's perspective—because you have to get beyond just the FACT of it to the WHY of it—why do you have to look at this from the Father's perspective?

- In other words—what's the significance of that? What's the significance of viewing everything that's said here from the Father's perspective? How does that go to producing confidence?

- To answer that—remember that the beginning of (:28) is making a statement concerning the fact that our Father has so designed it so that all the things we're going to encounter and go through in our lives can be put together with our sonship education—and come out for *good!*

- And His goal in telling us that is so that we can be assured concerning the reality of that—and know the reality of that, so we can **operate** on the reality of that.

- But when it comes to achieving that objective—we've got to be able to look at our sonship status and the living of our sonship lives on the basis of that curriculum from His perspective—(and here is the further issue of viewing it more than the mere fact of it—and here is the significance of it) — **when He put the whole thing together**—that is, **when He designed for that statement in (:28) to be so with us right from the beginning—even before we were ever born!**

- So therefore at the end of (:28) what He's after in saying what He does (and describe us as *them who are the called according to His purpose*) — is to not simply describe us as His sons—but to describe us as ones who, in being His sons, are now fitting into a purpose that He had for us, in our sonship, ... FROM WAY BACK.

- (And there's no need to put a time designation on it!)

- And it's only when we begin to think about (and contemplate) and view the living of our sonship lives on the basis of the curriculum for our sonship education: **from His 'point-of-design-for-it' perspective when He put the whole thing together**—that we will be able to be suitably convinced—suitably assured—and suitably convicted that it will do the job that He's declaring to us in (:28) that it's designed to do—and we'll get the *good* out of it that He declares it's designed to *work together* with the details of our life to produce for us!

- But the only way that suitable measure of confidence, assurance, and conviction regarding that, is **going** to be ours—is to understand & appreciate our sonship and the living of our sonship lives on the basis of that curriculum, from His designed point-perspective in connection with it.

- In other words—you can't be looking at this as a son looking at the Father and what He's done—you have to look at this whole constructing and designing and forging of the curriculum for sonship education AS THE FATHER HIMSELF! (Put yourself in His shoes).

- As if the Father says, "Son, don't look at me—look at what I did with I put the whole thing together—before you were ever born!"

- And so then, it is absolutely critical that you not only deal with this information strictly within its context & order—but that you deal with it from the point of view of the Father Himself when He put the whole thing together—because just as you first learned when He adopted you—that He is going to be to you a **Father**, and you are going to be to Him as **son** — and what He does and how He goes about doing it (viz., to orient you and establish you as His son) — how He goes about doing all that **is totally compatible with the way any father orients & establishes his own natural son.**

- And that has a diasi12 tallydow shes-13.4.4rs, and terms, and phrases that you find in (:29 & 30)!

- This isn't a dissertation or an analysis of God's Divine Attributes and God's Divine Decrees! (t2 3"will" of God)

- This is a description of what God did as our Father—and what He thought about (and thought through) when He first determined to have sons in t2 3first place, and to adopt t2 m and vocationally train t2 m to enter into business with Him, and one day take over t2 3running of His business!

- And therefore that means that everything that's brought up in (:29-30) are the **natural** and **normal** things that a father has to have his son come to understand & appreciate if the son is ever going to have full confidence and assurance in what his father is about to train him to do.

- And while I know I've said this before, and I know you have some appreciation for that — but you have to now think beyond just the FACT of that (that this 3rd component of sonship establishment is the normal kind of thing that goes on even in a natural father-son relationship) — but you have to now go beyond the fact of it, to now realizing what it is that takes place in natural sonship when a father engages in accomplishing this final component of sonship establishment with his son—and realizing that the same things a natural father would do with his natural son are the exact same things that you find here in Romans 8:28-39—that our own Father is doing with us.

- The only real difference is the fact that—there's a measure of 'infiniteness' to what our Father has done with us—compared with what a natural father could do with his natural son.

- (A natural father can only go back so far—in connection with preparing for his son's adoption.)

- And that's what's going on here in (:29-30) - our Father, just as any natural father would do, is putting us in the position of seeing all that He did in preparation for adopting you as His son!

- And, our Father, in view of who He is—and in view of the fact that He's not dealing with us immediately in the overall outworking of His plan & purpose—but the overall outworking of His plan & purpose has all been going on for quite some time—even before He suspended His program with Israel and brought in this "*mystery*" aspect of His business (that we're a part of) —

- ... and so when it comes to that—our Father, when he does the very same thing a natural father does with his son—to make it so that the son thinks about the curriculum & his sonship life from the perspective that the father had when He originally designed it—well, when our Father does that with us, He has to take us back to **before** the dispensation of grace began—to even before His program with Israel began — because, **we're not an 'after-thought'** in His plan & purpose (and neither was Israel) - but the point is, that we've been planned for, (in this dispensation of grace), long before this dispensation of grace came into effect — in fact, we were planned for in the mind of God—(and this is true for Israel, too) — even before Israel came into effect!

- And all I'm simply saying in all that—(without putting a stamp of time on anything) - is that all I'm after here is the parallel concept in what goes on with a natural father and his natural son—and our Father and us!

- So in order to handle (:29-30) properly, you have to view what takes place in order for the 3rd component of sonship establishment to occur — even before you would ever deal with any of the details much beyond (:28) itself—you would have to expect that, our Father, when it comes to getting us to be able to view things from His perspective—would have to come along **and take us back to the time when He originally thought about us.**

- Because that's what a natural father does with his son.

- When a natural father adopts his son & produces within his son the 3 general components for sonship establishment—and gets that 3rd issue: where he's going to have his son look at the curriculum, (not for its Table of Contents, general thrust, or sense & sequence of what it contains), — but solely **for its ability to do its job** — he comes along and he tells his son **what he did when it came to composing that thing.**

- And he tells his son what he did, therefore, **before his son was ever born!**

- He tells his son, In view of the business that he had in effect (before his son came along) - that when, in connection with preparing to have his sons—so that he could have a business that he would train them in, and transfer over to them—**he made certain preparations**—**he thought about them in advance!**

- And that's what our Father is doing with us here.

- Because the only way a son can have the kind of confidence, the kind of assurance, and the kind of convictions **in the ability of what his Father has done** to succeed with his sonship life—is to view it from the exact same perspective the Father Himself has when He put it together!

- And in this final component of his establishment, the son is given information that makes him think about all that went in to preparing it, and writing it, and composing it, and delivering it to his son—to think about it exactly like his Father did when his Father did all that work, ... before His son even came along.

- And this 'point-perspective' I've been hammering away at is so critical—because that's the **only** thinking—and the only depth and extent of thinking that will be able to produce the kind of assurance/confidence/convictions that the Father wants the son to have.

- And that's because the Father Himself has that exact same confidence and that exact same assurance and that exact same convictions—because He's the one who designed it & put it together!

- Now I know that a lot of what I've just said to you isn't something that you're unfamiliar with—but the issue is, that you've got to make sure that every thought that occurs in your mind throughout the scope of (:28-30) falls within those parameters!

- ... And is colored and is tainted (in a good sense) with that issue! Because that's what's taking place here!

- And that's why (:29 & 30) do what they do—they take you right back into the thinking of our Father when He originally thought about us (like a natural father does) in connection with His business—when He plans on having sons who are going to participate with Him and labor with Him in His business down the road.

- No father, if he's smart and functions as a father should, ever comes along and in connection with his business—makes **no** preparations in advance for the carrying on of that business! (That's a **dumb** father; that's a **foolish** father!)

- A wise father—in connection with his business—does a huge amount of work in advance—he plans in advance—and he makes preparation in advance—for not only the success of that business, but also for **the participants** that are going to succeed with him in that business—and enjoy it. (And that's his own family—and especially, his **sons** who are going to be *heirs* with him in it.

- And once his children have gone through childhood—and at the time appointed by the father, he gives them the adoption of sons—so that now he begins to deal with them as adults—and begins to deal with them so that they think like he does—and so that they're business-minded, and business-oriented (like he is) - and so that they're occupied with their inheritance in his business—and are occupied with their vocational education & training in that business—

... the last thing he does (before he begins to commence their vocational education & training) - is to come along and say,

“Now, sit down, son. I want to teach you something about this curriculum. You know the basic scope of it, and everything along those lines—but you need to know something else about this thing. You need to know **what I went through**—and **what I thought**—and **what I put into this thing**, preparation-wise, insight-wise, perception-wise, discernment-wise, ... to make it so that this thing is going to do its job with you—and so that you’re going to get the training out of this thing, and the education out of this thing in my business—so that you can function in it, just like I’ve designed before you ever came along.”

- “And the way I’m going to do that, son—is to tell you what I did before you ever were born to tell you what I did when I first thought about you—and prepared for the time when I would adopt you as my son, and start vocationally educating you & training you in my business.”

- **That’s what’s going on here in Romans 8:29-30!** (In essence, that’s what verse 28, 29, & 30 do by their effectual working!)

- And then—just like a natural father would do after he’s done all that—he would come along and ask his son some probing questions on the basis of what he has just taught him.

- And a father would do that—to perform that ‘open-heart surgery’—and go in there, and remove from his son’s heart, any impediment, any hindrance, & anything that is there that would not allow for full confidence, full assurance, and full conviction in that curriculum to operate there in his son’s heart.

- And by asking those probing questions—he’s having his son engage with him in that ‘open-heart surgery’ — because his son is going to give him back some answers to some questions he’s going to ask.

- And they’re designed (once again) to make it so that son looks in his heart—and matches up what’s there in his heart with what his father has just taught him perspective-wise, with respect to this curriculum—**and he’s looking for any snags**—and the son is supposed to intelligently do that, and the father wants him to do that, in fact, the father explains to him in advance what these questions are all about—and he does that, once again, to make it so that the son can come along at the end of it and say, “I AM PERSUADED, Dad, that this thing is going to work!”

- Now—once again—that’s the gist or scope of what’s going on here in Romans 8:28-39 — and I’m going over it once again just to underscore the fact that what’s going on here is the natural thing that goes on between a father and a son—and there’s nothing odd about it, or peculiar, or unusual, or unique—it isn’t something that doesn’t have a frame of reference already in existence for it—it’s something for which, if you understand sonship, a frame of reference for it is already there—and if you properly understood sonship to the degree you should—you’d realize that as you finish off (:28), you would anticipate that the very next thing my Father is going to say to me is something about all the **work** and all the **preparation** He did in advance before I was ever born (and even before this dispensation of grace ever came into effect) - because this dispensation of grace is not an afterthought on His part; we’re not an afterthought on His part—we’re something He has thought about & planned for - (He just kept it a *secret* since the time He made the preparations for accomplishing His business) - and He just didn’t say anything about it until He suspended the 1st aspect of His business to bring the 2nd aspect in.

- What that means, therefore, when it comes to accomplishing the 3rd component for sonship Establishment—to give us, as sons, in this dispensation of grace, the same kind of confidence & assurance & conviction that He Himself has concerning the success and ability of the curriculum to do its job — He’s going to have to therefore **take us back to the time when He originally planned for us and purposed for us to be a part of His business**—and that take us right back to the time in which He originally **implemented His business plan!**

- And that’s why (:29 & 30) go back into “*whom he did foreknow*”.

- And that’s why *predestinate* is the normal, natural term to use to describe the 2nd ‘link’ in His ‘chain of provision.’

- And that’s why the terminology in (:30) are the normal, natural sonship terms to use in connection with our sonship in this dispensation of grace.

- Because those terms supply the **chain of production** that our Father went through—and that has already been accomplished—and that we are now beneficiaries of up to the point where we are right now, in which we’re expected to evaluate it; assess it all; let it do its heart-probing work in us; and produce the full measure of confidence, assurance, and conviction we need to have before we crack open the textbook and deal with Lesson 1 (instruction in godly *wisdom*).

- Now, I say it all that way so that when we deal with these verses—we put it in the viewpoint and the perspective we have to have in order to deal with all of the terminology you encounter in not only (:28-30), but also in those probing questions of (:31-39) - and get out of them all that we're supposed to get out of them!

- And that kind of viewpoint & perspective has to be crystal clear in order for this passage to do what it's designed to do!

- (That's why I hammer away at it so hard)!

- And with all that in mind—you ought to have some further realization into why (:29) says what it says when it begins to explain the reality of what (:28) has declared.

- So since (:28) begs the question Why should I believe that to be true? — the natural thing is for the Father to describe to His son **the work He did** to produce a '**chain of provision**' or 'chain of preparation/preparedness' all in advance of His son's arrival & adoption.

- And (:29-30) give you 5 major "links" in that chain! Maybe not every detail—but enough to produce the kind of confidence you need, and answer Why? (:28) is true and can become the principle upon which you will live your sonship life with this curriculum!

29 For whom he did foreknow — this is the 1st link in that chain of preparation & preparedness.

- This takes you back to the time in which the Father originally put His business into effect—and determined that He was going to have **sons participate with Him in His business**.

- And when a father (even a natural father) does that—he foreknows his son—whom, after he has intimate relations with his wife, 9 months later is going to be born—and then is going to go through 12 years of childhood—and then is going to receive the adoption of sons.

- In other words—at least 12 years before the son ever gets the adoption of sons, his father foreknew him!

- (And that's what's going on here in [:29]).

- Our Father is coming along and saying, “In the context of sonship, I want you to think about what I’ve done with you like a natural father does with his own son. — I put together my business plan for My creation—and when I put it forth, I determined I would not be the only one participating in it and enjoying it and laboring in it. I would have—some sons. And when I thought that, I foreknew you.”

- (That’s what He’s doing—and that’s all He wants you to think.)

29 For whom he did foreknow, **he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, ...**

- Now we get to the 2nd “link” in the chain of provision/preparedness—the issue of our Father *predestinating* us.

- ***predestinate*** = [PROORI,ZW] = to predetermine, to fix, settle, decide, or determine beforehand. = to set some particular destiny in advance.

- This is another one of those daunting, scary theological terms that can just derail you and get you lost in the woods trying to deal with the eternal, determinate councils of God and His Divine Decrees. (doctrine of God’s Will)

- But again, that’s not what’s going on here at all—and when we allow the context to control & regulate the way words are used—this isn’t a scary word—this isn’t even a difficult word or phrase at all! (In fact, this is still something that a natural father would be able to say to his son).

- So, once that 1st link in the chain of preparation has been given to you (the son) - and it has produced a measure of confidence all by itself—now, (building on top of that), the Father goes on to tell his son about the next link of His work and preparation for having sons and adopting them to join with Him in participating in His business.

- And so the Father says, “When I *foreknew* you—I didn’t just *foreknow* that you were going to come along. But I *foreknew* you within the plan of My business (that I would have sons) - therefore, I also *predestinated* you unto the issue of **sonship!**”

- So our Father ‘set the destiny in advance’ for you as His son! (And he made all the necessary arrangements for that to happen and for that to be successful for you and for His business plans!)

- And the ‘destiny’ here is NOT eternal life—the ‘destiny’ (as it says here) is to be *conformed to the image of his Son*—the destiny is to **sonship**, and the **results** of it!

- And that’s again what a son needs to hear! A son needs to realize that his Father has not just thought about this in advance—but that He **provided for it** in advance!

- (You can think about something in advance—but do absolutely nothing about it!)

- (like my ‘Watching your neighbor’s house’ illus.)

- And you’re to recognize and be impressed with the fact that your Father didn’t just *know* about you in advance (but then do nothing about it—like a foolish father) - but that He went to work, and did a whole bunch of work provision-wise and preparation-wise so that when you arrived, all that He’s been telling you—about the ability of His planned-out curriculum for your sonship education to succeed and to work and to do it’s job—just like He declared in (:28) - He produced and provided for you a curriculum and, along with that His very Spirit living within you to *lead* you through this curriculum—and that curriculum has the capacity and the ability to the tune of all our Heavenly Father’s careful provision & preparation going into it so that it’s going to *work together* with *all things* for *good*!

- And in the context of sonship—*foreknowledge* of a son is for the purpose of making **advanced preparation for that son** when he comes along.

- So when our Father *foreknew* us—that’s not simply an expression of His Godness (that He could know that by His foreknowledge & omniscience) — but that’s Him coming along and saying to us,

“Look—since this is being looked at in the context of My business and My determination to have sons with Me in my business and *heirs* with me in my business—when I *foreknew* you, I just didn’t *foreknow* you in that most simplistic sense of having *foreknowledge* about you (knowing about you in advance) — but **I foreknew you as my son** coming along down the road, who would be adopted by me. And therefore I **predestinated** you **unto sonship and its results**. **Therefore, I made intelligent preparations for what you were going to go through—and what you were going to need, once I adopted you!**”

(s-l-o-w-l-y !!!)

- “Hence, son, this curriculum I’ve put together—this contains **all the wealth** of my advanced preparations and full knowledge & awareness and recognition and discernment and wisdom and insight and perception—as to what you are going to need—and what you are going to go through—and what you are going to require—as My son—when it comes to living every detail of your sonship life!”

- “And the only way you’re going to perceive those things, son—with the measure of confidence & assurance & conviction that ought to come out of that when you do perceive these things—is to view it from my perspective.

— And to view everything that I’ve done with you already—up until bringing you to the point of adopting you as my son — **so that you see that perfect chain of preparation/preparedness & provision all laid out, link by link**—so that, as you can recognize the **perfection** of each preceding link, you can recognize the **perfection** of this final link that I’m putting in your lap right now: **which is the curriculum!**

— And son, either you’re going to be a **weak link** in that chain, and NOT depend upon it—or you’re going to be a **strong link** and **fully** depend upon it!

- (And that’s what’s going on here.)

29 *For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, ...*

- This is the very goal of our curriculum!

- “**conformed**” = to form, shape or fashion according to a pattern or model—to make something of the same form or character—to make like something.

- So you have a pattern—and you make something else like it—you shape it—you fashion it according to this pattern.

- And the pattern here is *the image of his Son*—your destiny (as one who’s involved in this) - your Father who knew you’d come along has set your destiny in this education process to be formed according to or shaped into the *image of his Son* (the Lord Jesus Christ himself)!

- **“image”** - Notice that He doesn’t say, “*to be conformed to the likeness of his son*” - even though those are very similar terms— (“*And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness:*”) [Gen.1:25]
- **“image”** = a thing in which the aspect, form, or character of another is **reproduced**; a counterpart; a copy—a **living image**, i.e., a person with striking resemblance to another; a ‘*spitting image*’.
- (Which fits in nicely with ‘*conforming*’ to something.)
- But aside from the dictionary definition—what makes this such a powerful word is in what it suggests or implies (connotes) - and when we talk about *image in this sense* and in this context—the discriminating difference between *image* and *likeness* is that when you’re talking about *image in its most basic sense*, an *image* is something that you **see**—it’s material and tangible—it’s something that you **see with your eyes!**
 - Whereas *likeness* is most commonly considered an abstract term; *image* is a positive term, and a more specific term than *likeness*.
- *Image* is, when people look on—they **see** something.
- And your destiny that has been set by your Father when you participate in this curriculum for sonship edification is: *to be conformed to the image of his Son* (the Lord Jesus Christ).
- And it’s no surprise that this is the destiny of it all—that the very thing that you want, and that your Father wants—and that He thought all about in advance and just how to get that accomplished—He knew in advance all about who would enroll in this education—and He planned & purposed in advance your destiny is that you would be *conformed to the image of his Son*.
- And so He gave you some things to get that accomplished—He gave you the *Spirit of adoption* for the very purpose of *leading* you through a curriculum **He designed** for the goal of complete *conformity* to the *Son* of God!
- And when you’re talking about being *led by the Spirit*—you’re, by definition, going somewhere—and there’s got to be a destination that you’re being *led* to: *to be conformed to the image of his Son* (LJC)!

- II Corinthians ch. 3

- Now I want to do something that seems like it violates my understanding that you're not supposed to go ahead in God's word to prove something—or to not get the 'cart before the horse' type thing - but really that's not what I'm doing because when you think about it, since the Corinthians were having problems with their own sonship lives—and since some of the problems they were having stems from not fully having the effectual working of the very portion of God's word that we're dealing with here in Romans 8—I believe it's valid to be able to go here and get an appreciation for some of the things Paul does when he corrects their erroneous thinking and confronts the problems they were having—and that's the case with the passage we're going to look at.

- II Cor. 3—the context (as the ch. opens up) is Paul setting forth the issue of us being beneficiaries of the New Testament—and the 1st component of that gets brought up: 'Heart-Writing'

- (scan through :1-11) (lots of sonship terminology here)

- But what I'm after here is at the end of the ch.—in regard to us as sons being *predestinated to be conformed to the **image** of his Son.*

- II Cor. 3:18—*But we all, (in contrast to what he's talked about under Israel's program; under that Old Covenant) with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same **image** from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

- Here you have an *image* that we are *changed into*—and when it comes to finding anything in the context that can be something that we actually **see** with our eyes—what is it?

- Notice that expression: *with open face beholding* (that's the issue of actually seeing something) - what is it you see? *as in a **glass** the glory of the Lord.*

- That *glass*—or that which is being likened to as a *glass* (“*beholding **as** in a glass*”) - my understanding is that in this context, the *glass* are these *epistles of Christ*—that you are able to look at clearly (there's no *vail*) - but with *open face*, you see the *glory of the Lord*.

- But also—you look in there at those epistles—and you read about how Christ would handle the details of your life through the epistles of Christ as His mind and His mentality and are given to you—and there's a **change** that takes place! — a change into that same *image* of the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

- And you've got that final expression full of sonship terminology: *from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord*—that is, from one degree of *glory* to the next one—that's how your edification works!

- Interestingly, you first learn that you go, (as it were), from one *good* thing working for you, to the next, and to the next. But later on, you learn that that *working together* of the curriculum with the details of your life for *good* is more than *good*—it's *glorious*!

- And really, that issue of being *changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord*—that's an apt description of how you, as a son, are being *conformed to the image of his Son*!

- Because when you actually look at and see the *epistles of Christ* (**the curriculum for sonship edification**) given to you by Paul—and you're *led by the Spirit* through them—there's all kind of changes that are taking place into that exact same *image* of the Lord Jesus Christ!

- You're being *conformed—from glory to glory* into that same *image*—and it's done *by the Spirit of the Lord* that's leading you.

- Therefore our sonship curriculum (and God the Holy Spirit as that *Spirit of adoption* to lead us through it) is designed to fashion us from one degree of *glory* to another—in order to perfectly manifest the life of the Lord Jesus Christ in this dispensation of grace.

- And that word *image* then—in turn—that's going to be seen and perceived by others—so that the issue is that **Christ is seen** in the lives of the sons of God—**to the chagrin of Satan himself**! Because the way you handle the details of life—the way you respond to things — that means that the way you look to the creature (and all those in it) is that they see the Lord Jesus Christ when they see you!

- And don't let those 2 little words go by without your noticing them:
... *he also did predestinate **to be** conformed to the image of his Son,*

- **to be**—that tells you that this is **NOT** an instantaneous thing that happened the moment you got saved/justified—but rather, on the contrary, this is a **PROCESS**—a process that takes a **curriculum** and it's **effectual working** to bring about this being *conformed to the image* of the Lord Jesus Christ!

- (back to Romans 8:29)

- And think about that in light of the kind of **confidence** that produces when you realize that this curriculum for sonship education that your Father is putting into your hands—**it has the capacity to produce the very image of his Son in you!**

- And I say that that produces tremendous assurance and conviction and confidence because if it can do that—then how powerful is it? how much thought and work and preparation and prudence and foresight etc., went into all this, if it can produce the very *image of his Son* in such a one as you? (as me)? — this thing isn't just 'thrown together' - but it's been carefully and wisely crafted and designed—with our Father knowing in advance that his curriculum is to produce the *image of his Son* in the likes of us!

- So, in order to prove the reality of (:28) - we have:

- 1st Link in our Father's 'chain of provision/production':
29 For whom he did foreknow,

- 2nd Link:
... *he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son,*

- And again—just to underscore the context of being *predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son*—we know that the vast majority of saved, justified, bona fide Christians/believers in Christ will never be *conformed to the image of his Son*—right? because the context here is only talking about believers who have become aware of their sonship status, and then, by properly crying, *Abba, Father*—they have committed themselves to their Father to educate them as His sons—and they are going to pick up that curriculum, and by being *led by the Spirit of God*, they are going to be oriented, established, and educated into the *vocation wherewith they are called!*

- And to be brutally honest about it—the way the Bible is viewed, and studied, and taught today by the vast majority of Christians—that can't possibly produce being *conformed to the image of Christ* — it's just impossible—because they simply do not and will not follow God our Father's curriculum! (they are not co-operating with our Father's design for producing the *image of his Son* in them!)

29 *For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, ...*

- When you read that—what do you think? Especially when you read “*the image of his Son*” - what is the *image* that you have in your mind when you read this?
- Is it Jesus—as He was and existed on earth in Israel's program?
- The common way this is taken is that we're supposed to be conformed to the Jesus that sat on the mount and delivered His sermon as in Matthew 5-7! (or some other aspect of Jesus as He lived His earthly life back in the gospel accounts).
- But this is talking about the risen Christ who is now God's Son in a **new** and **different** (*mystery*) capacity!!! (As head of the *new creature of the church, the body of Christ!*)
- Most folks never think about the Lord Jesus Christ as God's Son in connection with His program for the new creature of the church the body of Christ in this mystery dispensation of Gentile grace!
 - And along with that—there is little recognition of the fact that Christ's sonship roll in connection with God's program for *the new creature* requires that even God the Son (the Lord Jesus Christ himself) was instructed in and operates upon the same curriculum for His sonship life as we do for ours!
 - In other words, Romans through Philemon is the exact same curriculum & information that the Lord Jesus Christ is now, and will continue to operate upon in connection with this dispensation of grace! (Far different from Israel's prog!)
- And that should produce a great amount of **confidence** in you! (that is, If He operates upon it—and it works for Him ... how much more should you trust it and operate upon it!)

- And it's my understanding that the *image* of the Lord Jesus Christ that we're *predestinated* (as sons) *to be conformed to* is the risen, resurrected Christ; (fully educated by **our** curriculum and fully qualified to function as "*the head over all things to the church, which is his body*" — the One who takes the same curriculum we operate under today, and together with Him, we *suffer with him, that we may be glorified together*—the One with whom we will be *joint-heirs* with, and enjoy a joint-inheritance in the dispensation-of-grace-aspect (the *mystery* aspect) of our Father's business! (in that *creature* out there in the heavenly places!)

- But the issue of being *predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son*—is that this firmly fixes in our mind—in a very concise, succinct (short, clear statement) that this sonship education (and the results of it: *conformity to the image of his Son*) — that's my destiny (as a son) - this is what my life is all about—and my Father has crafted a perfect 'chain of provision' for this to succeed from way before I was ever born—He *foreknew* (knew about it in advance), and then He made it so that when I would respond positively & properly to it, and *participate* in the education—He set in place, (in the very curriculum He puts into my hands), a 'chain of provision' such that He can **by** it 'determine & fix my destiny' (and your destiny) *to be conformed to the image of his Son*.

- And remember that this isn't talking about that, you were once a lost person—and then you got saved—and all along, this was your destiny—NO! — Rather, the issue is that when you got involved in His sonship program, He say, "Look, I've had all this planned for anyone who would get involved this: and this is now what you're destined to be!"

- "*he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son* — that's supposed to be a very powerful and wonderful thought—(as well as a powerfully **confidence-producing** thought)!

29 *For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, **that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.***

- This is really one of the most fascinating things said to you here—and one of the most ignored—and that's that the Lord Jesus Christ is to have the pre-eminent position as *the firstborn*—but the purpose of God is that He would be *the firstborn **among many brethren!***

- Our Father didn't just determine to have His Son (Jesus Christ) operate alone with Him in His business—but He determined to have many sons (*many brethren*) **after** His Son to come along and be *joint-heirs* with Him in the business!

- In other words—your fixed destiny in this program of sonship education is that you would be, not only *conformed to the image of his Son*—but that you also would have the privilege of sharing in Christ's own inheritance—and being identified as: **one of His brothers**—because you're both **sons**!

- And they're both linked—by means of He being an heir of His Father's business—and us being *joint-heirs* with Him.

- He's has the pre-eminent position: as *the firstborn*;

- (Q: Does that mean that the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ was first informed & educated all about this dispensation of grace and the Father's business aspect of it in connection with the *creature* (the heavenly places) — and then came Paul?)

- But the issue is, you're a *brother*! (Through adoption!)

- (And you don't have to be afraid of this word *brethren*—you don't have to try to find a better word for it—just to try to avoid the sappy, sloppy way that most Christians have used this word over the years!)

- Note: the truth is, this issue of being a *brother* to the Lord Jesus Christ—even in Israel's program, that is actually a New Covenant benefit, as well as it is in our program:

- see Heb. 2:9-12 (:11)

- Point being, that's a New Covenant benefit that we don't often think about—but if the Lord Jesus Christ is the pre-eminent, *firstborn* Son of God—and you're a son of God your Father—then that means that the relationship we have (business-wise) with Christ is one of being His *brother*! (Talk about '**A Band of Brothers**'!!!)

- And that all makes sense—especially in view of the business of our Father being given to His *heirs*: and those are all FAMILY members!

- But the point is—that we’re not so much supposed to be considering all the ins-and-outs of what it means to be *brethren* of God’s Son, the Lord Jesus Christ (and figure out all the ramification of that) - but the issue is—by not ending (:29) with the word *Son*—but by putting that final phrase on the end of it—**that he** (Jesus Christ) **might be the firstborn among many brethren**—that provides us with additional insight into the INTENT of our Father in putting the whole program and curriculum together the way He did - and by focusing now on this 2nd link in His chain of provision—He makes us aware that He didn’t just determine in advance that we would be *conformed to the image of his Son*—but in order to give us even more confidence in the power/might of the curriculum to *work together* with the details of our life so that *all things work together for good*—this curriculum is so powerful to work to do all these things—to the tune of vocationally training us up to a standard of proficiency to function/operate in our Father’s business **on par with Jesus Christ Himself!!!!**

- Now that builds & inspires confidence!

- Because there’s a very powerful issue involved in this last statement of (:29) — and that is that the Father could come along and say, “Look, I planned and made perfect provisions for my **S-o-n** to be intelligized and trained to go into business with me—but I didn’t just determine to have **one** Son—but a **whole bunch** of sons doing my business TOGETHER (in this dispensation of grace)!”

“So, son, in light of that—why should you ever doubt that curriculum’s ability to work for you?”

- Now, you have 2 of the 5 powerful ‘links’ in our Father’s ‘chain of provision’ that we’re being told about in order to produce in us a complete confidence that what Romans 8:28 says is, indeed, true and real!

- Verse 30 will give us the other 3 links:

30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

- “**Moreover**” = one of those English ‘words of logic’ - and it tells us that (:29) could stand alone and make the point our Father wants to make—but now He’s going to strengthen that by what (:30) says—*Moreover* = that is not all, there is yet more to be said—more to go over.

- And your Father knows that in order to make (:28) the living reality in your heart that it's supposed to be—He shows you the first 2 links in the 'chain of provision' that He has forged for you (for you to gain the confidence, assurance, & conviction that His curriculum will succeed with you):

- 1) He *foreknew* you from way back before you were ever born—He's actually been thinking about this for thousands of years—and He's got it all worked out;
- 2) He *predestinated* (pre-determined & fixed your destiny) so that when you would become involved with & participate in being edified/educated as His son by means of the curriculum He wrote & designed for you—that your destiny would be *to be conformed to the image of his Son*—and nothing you will ever confront in your life will thwart that (or foil His efforts or prevent you from success in His business).

- He's planned this out—and put into place all the provisions you'll ever need in order for you to arrive at that final destination—which is what you naturally have some nervous fear about right now, at the outset. — (You may be thinking, "I really want to be involved in this, but I'm not sure that I can make it" — well, you can—because that's your destiny!)

- **The 3rd 'Link'** = "*Moreover whom he did predestinate, **them he also called (kale,w)***:"
- "**called**" = Remember that we're dealing with the context of sonship education—and I say that again because the most common thing people do when they see this word *called*—is to 'jump ship' from this context to one of thinking about being saved or justified unto eternal life.
- Granted, it is entirely proper to talk about being *called* in the context of justification—but that won't do you any good here—because even though you could say that being *called* justification-wise and sonship-wise occurred at the same time (because you were actually adopted as a son in your godly sanctification the moment you were justified unto eternal life) — but we're not dealing with justification here; and more than that, we're not dealing with confidence/assurance of justification—we are dealing with confidence/assurance of Rom. 8:28 working for you in **sonship establishment!**

- And therefore the proper context for being *called* here isn't being *called* unto salvation—but being *called as a son*—and being *called* **unto sonship education!**

- And in context, the proper & positive response to this *calling* wasn't your positive response to the gospel message, per se, but your positive response of “*Abba, Father*” to being educated and edified as God's son!

- And so this **is** the logical, natural next ‘link’ in the ‘chain of provision’ that the Father has forged for your success—and for the confident assurance that *all things work together for good* for you as His son and in this sonship education you're going in to!

- Notice also that by using the word *called*—our Father is beginning to generate some thoughts in our mind that will serve us well in the future:

- Because it just so happens that *called* is the one word that perfectly fits what you are in connection with entering into your **vocational training!**

- Interestingly enough, when you look up the word *vocation* in the OED, the very 1st definition of the word given is: ***Vocation = the action on the part of God of calling a person to exercise some special function, especially to fill a certain position.***

- And the word *vocation* or *vocational training*— as it's used in present-day English has unfortunately taken on a somewhat negative connotation (at least in comparison to “higher” forms of education and “higher” forms of occupations) — in that if you're not smart enough for ‘regular’ college education, then you have to ‘settle’ for a *vocation* (and *vocational* school or *vocational* education) — implying that vocational school is somehow ‘lower’ than regular college education—and a *vocation* is somehow ‘lower’ on the scale than a ‘career’ you get as a result of your ‘higher’ college education!

- But that's far from the truth—that's actually a great example of how our English language is de-evolving and degenerating over the years—in fact, so highly prized and so distinguished was a *vocation* that a very important discriminating difference existed (and was understood & appreciated) between a *vocation* and any other term: (ex., career, occupation, job).

- And that discriminating difference is that a job or a career or an occupation was viewed as something either temporary or at least easily changed—even today we talk about ‘changing our jobs’ as something we often do throughout our lifetime).

- But the excellency of the term *vocation* (and the discriminating difference between it and a job or career or occupation) is that a *vocation* **is to be something that, once it is embarked upon, is something you should never, and will never lay down or lay aside!**

- And later on, we’re going to be confronted with the fact that the business that we’re entering into with our Father is going to be called our *vocation* (our heavenly *vocation*)!

Ephesians 4:1

I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation (klh/sij) wherewith ye are called (kale,w),

- (The 1 & only time *vocation* is used in the entire Bible!)

- And it’s no surprise that every modern English translation of Eph. 4:1 changes the word *vocation* to “**calling**” - (*‘the calling with which you have been called’*) - hence wiping out the word *vocation* from the entire Bible!!!

- And it’s apparent that none of the modern English translators (scholars/pastors/commentary writers) have enough understanding & appreciation for the English language to perceive the excellency of *vocation* over & above the word *calling*!

- So we have: 30 *Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called:*

- We’ve been *called as sons* into this vocational training for our heavenly sonship vocation—and this 3rd link provides additional confidence, assurance, & conviction that (:28) is true, because God tells us here that, “As a loving, thoughtful, & wise Father, I never would have *called* you unto this vocation in my business (into such a serious thing as my business) if I hadn’t have already made perfect provision for you to succeed in *all things* that you will ever encounter!”

- The 4th link: ... *and whom he called, them he also justified:*

- Just remember that this isn't supposed to be a comprehensive and exhaustive analysis of each & every thing that goes into sonship edification—this is the Father getting you, His son, to view what He did in putting together a 'chain of provision/preparation' for your success in being educated by His sonship curriculum—and generating confidence, assurance, and conviction that that curriculum will do its job—(the same level of confidence the Father Himself has!)

- And the next 'link' in that chain of provision is: *and whom he called, them he also justified:*

- "*them he also justified:*" - and my understanding is that this *is* talking about being justified unto eternal life—but in keeping with the context, you know that it's not being brought up here for some kind of added confidence you're supposed to gain for being justified or for additional confidence in the issue of you being eternally secure in your justified position in Christ!

- Why? Because that was totally and completely settled back in Romans 5—beyond any shadow of a doubt—so that it never has to be stated again, or restated so as to get it to be more convincing!

- So why is being *justified* included in these 'links' of God's chain of provision for your confidence in the curriculum for sonship education?

- Well, for one thing *justified* (*dikaio,w*) is a legal term—and it means to make just or right in the eyes of a judge as supported by evidence.

- And one way that confidence is gained (especially when you're dealing with being adopted and receiving an inheritance) is to address the fact that **all of the legal requirements (the legalities, if you will) for this to be right, have all been met and accomplished!**

- In other words, you were not only made legally right in the eyes of the Judge in connection with the debt & penalty of your sins being paid by the Redeemer—and not only have you been identified with the Redeemer that way, but being *justified* also legally identified you with all of the sanctification issues of the Redeemer—which includes

- In fact, you can see the apostle Paul's own understanding and appreciation of how that redemption's biggest issue isn't being saved from the debt & penalty of our sins (and going to heaven when we die) - but the biggest issue of them all in redemption is this issue of being adopted as sons!

- Galatians 4:4-7 (:5)

- So this issue of *and whom he called, them he also justified* is no small matter—even in connection with being adopted and educated as a son—because sonship and sonship edification is the ultimate goal of the Redeemer setting all things right, legally (and morally), in the eyes of God — it's a necessary and important means to an end that our Father views as the greatest result of them all of being *justified: being adopted and educated as His sons!*

- Now we come to the final 5th link in our Father's 'chain of provision.'

30 *Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: **and whom he justified, them he also glorified.***

- Notice a couple of things:

- You don't have "sanctified" or 'sanctification' being mentioned in this list—why? — simply because that's where you currently are.

- And that's what the focus of attention is upon right now: that is, this sonship curriculum and this sonship education you're being offered right now that will produce godly edification—and the issue is, Do you have the appropriate degree of confidence, assurance, and conviction in that curriculum and in the Father who wrote it? Do you have the exact same degree of confidence in the curriculum that the Father Himself has?

- And by declaring in (:28) what this curriculum can do—and being 'hit in the face' with just how powerful & mighty & capable & able this thing is to *work all things together for good* to you—in view of that declaration, Do you **KNOW** without a shadow of a doubt that that is true— and a living reality in your life? Do you fully understand and appreciate that this curriculum you hold in your hand can do its job in your life? — that's the issue at hand, right now.

- Another thing to notice here is that all 5 of these 'links' are given to you in PAST TENSE!

- And when you come to the last one, (*them he also glorified*), you now come to the place where—all of the previous 4 links can be view by you as **past issues** as well—but now this 5th and final link—at least for you right now in time—is still yet FUTURE!

- But when you're told to view it from the Father's perspective and point of view when He put the whole thing together—so sure, and so certain, and so doubtless, and so confident is this curriculum to do its job and to do it to its completion & fulfillment—that even its final, yet-to-be-realized objective & goal & outcome of it all: (being **glorified**) - is viewed by the Father as a **past issue!**

- We use the expression: **It's a foregone conclusion!**

- Now this issue of *and whom he justified, them he also glorified* can be a place where you can easily get tripped up and go off track.

- And I say it that way because you have to bear in mind that we're not looking here at a comprehensive summation of all that's involved in being *conformed to the image of the Lord Jesus Christ*.

- In other words, this look at the 'links' in the Father's 'chain of provision' is not to be thought of as: *foreknowledge, predestination, calling, justification, & glorification*—that that's a comprehensive summation of God's plan & purpose for us—why? — because that leaves out all of the 'getting there' on your part—viz., the leading of the Spirit & the progressing through the doctrinal curriculum.

- And so keeping that in mind will make sense out of this past-tense use of us being viewed by the Father when He put this whole thing together—it will make sense out of that past-tense issue of us being viewed as "*glorified*."

- You can't just open up your Bible and point to these 2 verses and use that as a way to explain to someone what God's plan & purpose for their life is all about—no—this is simply a view of our Father's 'chain of provision' that He built into the curriculum and into the education for us as sons when we choose to participate with Him in it!

- So—what we’re looking at is our Father’s chain of provision for the **success** of your sonship education—and He says, “Look, I *foreknew* (and that’s done), *predestinated* (and that’s done), *called* (and that’s done), *justified* (and that’s done), and *glorified* (and as far as I’m concerned **that’s a done deal, too**)—and that’s how this thing will happen when you participate in it with me—and when I planned it, this is how it was planned and put together—I thought through it, and I knew what I had to do to get it done, and I designed it so that the final destination where you’d end up as each one of these links worked out is that you’re as good as *glorified* — and son, that’s how well this curriculum is designed to do its job in/for you!”

- And so, in this context—are we talking about being *glorified* in the sense of us receiving our glorified, immortal bodies and living with God in His heaven forever? ... NO!!! (Why???)

- Because the context is not about us being simply believers in Christ and justified unto eternal life—the context is about us being sons who are participating in and actively involved in the education our Father has for us as His sons—and you’ve already been confronted with the issue of being *glorified*—where? (:17)!

- So what does it mean here that *whom he justified, them he also glorified*—what does *glorified* mean here? **[see book]**

- So is there any doubt whatsoever that you will be a *joint-heir with Christ; if so be that you suffer with him* (going through all this sonship education in your sonship life) *that we may be also glorified together* with Him?

- And the point is that when you get your Father’s perspective on your sonship education—from His point-perspective when He put the whole thing together, and **how** He put it all together—He sees it all as DONE—as an accomplished FACT—no shadow of a doubt!

- In other words, it’s going to be no harder to get you to be *glorified* as His son—and get that done, than it was to *foreknow* you, or to *predestine* you, or *call* you, or *justify* you as His son!

- Our Father sees it from start to finish—knowing that He’s completely provided for it to take place—and so should we!

- **THAT CURRICULUM CAN BE COUNTED ON!**

(To finish its job—to cause you to be *glorified!*)

- And the Father says to you, “Look at how I put this thing together—and when you do—have the same perspective I have, son—and have the same confidence I have, son!”)

- Do you see what our Father has just done? — in sonship establishment, He’s actually presented you with the LAST LINK in His chain of provision FIRST (back in :17-25) - and now, when He wants to produce in you a galvanized, steeled confidence that you can and will succeed fully in this education—He sets before you each link in succession—and He ends up having you come back to that last link in the chain that He told you about first!

- It’s really a great technique of producing unshakable confidence and implicit trust in a human spirit!

- So the question you have to answer here is—Do you ***know*** that *all things work together for good* to you—and for no other reasons than for the ones laid out to you in (:29-30)?

- And along with that, — Do you have full confidence, assurance, and conviction that this education and this curriculum will do its job for you—to get you to the very end—of being *glorified together* with the Lord Jesus Christ (as a *joint-heir* with Him) out in that *creature*?

- Now—you need to take some time with this and settle each of these links out in your own mind—and talk to your Father about it all—and come to have that full confidence, assurance, & conviction that should be produced in you that Romans 8:28 is true and real and a mighty, living reality in the details of your life—and for the very reasons you’re told about in Romans 8:29 & 30.

- As far as the effectual working of Romans 8:28-30 —

- Questions? Comments?

Romans 8:31-39—THE 5 PROBING QUESTIONS:

- (read :31-39)

- As we have pointed out before—this final thing that a father does, in establishing his son, is to produce the kind of attitude in his son (just prior to the formal education getting underway) - the kind of attitude that consists of absolute and implicit trust, confidence, assurance, and conviction that the education he's about to receive from his father will do its job—it will do everything the father says it will do—and it will not fail to do it (even with you [his son]) — it is geared for your success—and nothing can thwart or hinder or prevent you from succeeding in attaining all of its goals, aims, and objectives—even to the point of receiving your joint-inheritance!

- This means that previous to this—you, as a son, have been confronted with enough information about what the Father's business is and how you're going to be involved in it—and how that by you actively participating with Him, you are going to one day receive a joint-inheritance with the Lord Jesus Christ and be glorified together with Him!

- And I say that just to say that this curriculum for sonship education/edification is all geared and forged for you to succeed in every way with that!

- And that's to be **impressive**—that God's word—viz., Paul's epistles of Romans—II Thessalonians can do that!

- By the effectual working of that curriculum, you can be qualified to reign together with Christ in that creature—and to rule together, and to manage all of the affairs and operations of your Father's business as "Father & sons" and as 'brothers' together with Jesus Christ!

- And you can revel in that—and rejoice in that—and take great pleasure in that— ... but the truth is, when it comes to the issue of being *impressed* with that **to the degree you must be impressed with it**—and to really view your curriculum as having the power and ability and capacity to produce that in you—and to have the full measure of confidence, assurance, and conviction that it can do all that — the truth is, you still don't have that degree of certainty & confidence that you need to have—and **must** have in that curriculum! (Not yet—but you're about to!)

- And even though you have full assurance and conviction that Rom. 8:28 is true and is a working reality in the details of your life right now—even that confident assurance can be made even stronger!

- But there is another side to this issue of confidence, assurance, and conviction—other than the issue of confidence in realizing all of the positive things the curriculum offers to you (such as becoming that *wise man* and that *man of understanding* and all that goes with the joint-inheritance you'll receive with Christ) — and that other side of the coin (so to speak) is in connection with all of the opposition and resistance and hindrances and snags that are determined to see to it that you DON'T succeed in your sonship life!

- And that's also to be **impressive**—that God's word—viz., Paul's epistles has the power and ability to thwart any and all opposition to your success as God's son.

- And it may be that even at this point in your sonship establishment—that you can look at those positive things we just described, and you can rejoice and revel in them.

- And it may be that you can even perceive that there is going to be opposition and resistance out there—and you can think in your own mind that you're confident that you can face it and overcome it—and you may even have a real 'gung-ho' attitude about all that.

- And in connection with that—you have heard me say that the particular kind of confidence (or the nature of confidence) that the Father wants to produce in you by the time you get to the end of sonship establishment is one that no matter what happens to you—**you will never abandon this curriculum**.

- So therefore right at this point you may be reveling in the delight of the prospect of your joint-inheritance and how the curriculum you hold in your hand can produce that—and you may be impressed with the curriculum's ability to thwart any opposition to your success—and you may even entertain ideas that you would rather give up your life (die) than abandon this curriculum — but at this point—even after you have come to the end of (:30) so that you truly *know that all things work together for good* to you as a son—and the truth is, you can talk about that all day long, and you can glory & revel in that all day long as a goal to be achieved (and there's nothing wrong with that

and I'm not trying to minimize that) - but the truth is that until Rom. 8:28 **through (:39)** effectually do their job with you as a son, **all that is, is a concept—it's not a reality yet!**

- It's like the difference between looking at a picture of a 'princess-cut' diamond — and holding a 'princess-cut' diamond in your hand.

- Both of them look **marvelous**—but until you actually **hold** that diamond in your hand, you really don't realize that the picture doesn't do it justice! — And as soon as you're holding it in your hand, you're never going to look at that picture again—and why should you? - what's the use of it? - it was just a foretaste!

- And I'm saying all this to you just to underscore the **magnitude** of the transformation that takes place within a son by this last component of sonship establishment.

- And that issue that we've talked about so often—that this final component of sonship establishment is designed to generate in you an implicit trust in your Father—well, that's more than saying, I fully trust my Father—that's saying, I trust my Father with my life (with my sonship life)! [He knows best—He **ONLY** knows best!] And no matter what I think—His word will hold sway with me: **always & ALWAY!**

- And so what has to now take place is to get all that from just talking about it as a concept to getting that to be the mighty, living reality in you—because the truth is, your heart really isn't in that until you get to the end of (:39)! [Until then, you're just looking at the picture!]

- So to get all that kind of confidence produced in you—to the point where you will never abandon the curriculum, and where you **do** have implicit trust in the curriculum and in the Father who wrote it—that's what these final 5 probing questions are going to do—that's the beauty of those 5 questions and the way in which our Father asks them.

- And as you go down through them—each one of them becomes more and more involved—the 1st one is the simplest one of them all; (simple, as far as how much is involved in asking the question and the parameters of the information that the question limits itself to) - each one is profound & stupendous by what it does, but there's a building and a progressive order of development going on here.

- And once the 1st one does its job—it paves the way for the 2nd one—and the 2nd one has some complexities to it that the 1st one didn't have.

- And then the same thing takes place with the 3rd, and the 4th—and then the one with the most complexities of all is the 5th one.

- So (:28-30) have now **set the stage** for these probing questions that the Father knows now has to be asked of His son—because He knows that there are some things that you still haven't thought of in respect to both how this curriculum/education is going to provide for your success, and how it's going to provide for any and all opposition to you succeeding. (He knows all about it—but you really **don't** know all about it—that's why He now has to **probe** your heart)!

- And any time you 'probe' - you're probing deep into something—you're no longer dealing with the surface—it gets right to the heart of the matter.

- And granted, God's word always goes deep to the heart of an issue, but these questions in (:31-39) are actually designed (once :28-30 have done their job—and their job is to really set up the son's heart to go through 'open heart surgery' in a sense) - then the 5 questions actually go in to your heart—and with the skill of a highly skilled surgeon, they go in and make all of the adjustments, and make all of the re-structuring that needs to be made, and do all of the work that needs to be done to **enlarge that son's heart** so that it can embrace the curriculum with the implicit faith that it needs to embrace it with!

- And that's a BIG JOB (to put it mildly)!

- Because if you think about it—if confidence (and a kind of confidence that makes it so that you will never abandon this education) is what's being produced—that naturally means that there must be some amount of lacking in confidence in your heart—either as you think about your ability to succeed in being qualified to receive the reward of your joint-inheritance with Christ—or in connection to perceiving the kind of weakness on the part of someone or something in the back of your thinking—and you may be struggling with some kind of fear that this whole thing somehow just won't work. (That maybe I'm just not cut out for this kind of business, so what's the use? I'll just sit & sing until I'm dead/raptured)!

- But my understanding is that what's going on here isn't really dealing with anything that you already know or are aware of or are cognizant of—because you naturally come to a point where you think you've got it—but because **you're** the son and **not** the Father—you're actually blind to some things confidence-wise that the Father has to address.

- And (looking at this from the Father's perspective), as this final aspect of sonship establishment gets underway—from His perspective He knows that there are things that you have gained tremendous confidence in—and that confidence is real and genuine and it has been properly produced, and there's nothing wrong with it—in fact, it's 'sound as a bell' so to speak.

- Well, that's all well and good—and that's all necessary and useful. But that's not going to be good enough.

- Because what the Father knows that the son doesn't know—is that He knows some things as the One who put the whole thing together, and as the One who knows & understands everything there is to understand about sonship edification—He's aware of all of the hindrances and impediments and snags that **can** be encountered by His son.

- And you (the son) - you're just not aware of these things yet.

- At this point, the son just isn't aware of the hindrances and impediments and snags—those aren't cognizant things within your mind at this point.

- And I say all that just to say that since the son isn't even aware of these type things—then the Father has to do something to bring them up—and bring them to his mind—and get him to think about some things that he's never thought about before—in connection with what he's going to encounter as he goes through the curriculum for both having to believe and fully trust his Father when he's confronted with information that goes against the grain of everything that his 5 senses tell him, and that goes against everything that circumstances and the common popularly-held beliefs that the majority of Christians he comes into contact with dictate to him otherwise—but also when he's confronted with the kind of opposition & resistance that the Adversary & his cohorts are going to throw against him.

-
- The Father knows that these things just aren't in His son's mind yet.
 - And that all has to be in His son's heart & mind in order to really produce the fullness of the kind of confidence he has to have in order that he'll never abandon this curriculum (or Him) in the process of his education.
 - And so my understanding is that most, if not all, of these questions are dealing with issues that the son hasn't even thought of yet!
 - Truth is—you should come to the end of (:30) and say—Ok, I've got it—I've got complete confidence in this sonship education Father! Isn't it great? Isn't it marvelous? Isn't it powerful?
 - And the Father says, Yes it is, son. And yes, you do have full confidence to know that *all things work together for good* as you go through your sonship life—and for the very reasons you should know & have confidence in that powerful declaration.
 - But son, now that you do know that—there are still some things you don't know when it comes to just how powerful and able, and mighty this education/curriculum is—and in order to get you to really understand that so that it's not merely human bravado on your part, I'm going to have to probe your heart in connection with what you've just learned in (:28-30), and bring to your attention some things that will open your eyes and enlarge your heart so that you have the exact same kind of confidence in My curriculum that I, Myself have!
 - And when you come to see that curriculum the way the Father does, then (and only then) will you be able to say, (along with the apostle Paul) what is said in (:37-39)!
 - So my understanding is that these 5 probing questions are not issues that you should be anticipating would come up at all—but that they get some thoughts going and some issues brought up that, if they didn't ask what they do, would never get going in the first place!
 - Because the son, innately, doesn't have the capacity to get these things going—it takes the word of God to go into that heart and like that *twoedged sword ... discern the thoughts and intents of the heart*—and cause that son to think thoughts he's never thought about in connection with the power of the effectual working of God's word!

- So since this is 'open-heart surgery' - (to put it mildly), things are going to get **real personal** here!

- And that's because as your Father takes His scalpel (His word) and probes deep into your heart—as each one of these questions does its job within your heart—and because they are structured so that they build one on top of another (and there has to be 5 of them to do their job fully [not 4 & not 6]) - each one of these questions is designed to go to a specific place within your heart—and as each one of them goes to the various places they're designed to go—they probe down to areas (even though you may not know about it yet), they probe down to areas within your heart where there is some resistance, and inadequate comprehension, and weak perception—that could make it so that full confidence, and assurance, and conviction for the curriculum to do its job isn't going to exist as long as these things are there.

- So therefore, in a very real sense, each of the 5 probing questions act so as to probe into your heart—and to uncover some things you may not even be aware of (resistance-wise, and comprehension-wise, and perception-wise) - and they act to, as it were, 'seek & destroy' any of the problems they find there in your heart.

- Each one, in succession, goes into your heart and seeks out certain problem areas—finds it—and 'zaps' that problem and eliminates it from ever being a problem or hindrance or snag in your thinking when it comes to full confidence in the curriculum to do its job with you.

- And I say that they are structured so that one 'builds' on top of the one previous to it—or maybe a better way to say it is to say that as you get to the end of the effectual working of one question—it kind of 'opens up a door' that leads into the next question.

- And by probing your heart in that way—hopefully, you appreciate the kind of 'house-cleaning' that's taking place in your heart (as far as what these questions & answers are accomplishing) as you deal with what each one asks & as you deal with what the answer is—and you allow it all to work within you to do its job.

- And you have to (you absolutely must) take the time to think about each one of these things—and you must allow it to work effectually within you to bring to your mind exactly what it's after by what it asks—and then to be able to answer that question strictly in the context of the 'set-up' question—and to realize the problem areas it is

... uncovering in your heart—and then, if there are problems there, recognize how the answer to the question **removes** the problem or hindrance or snag, and **replaces** it with calm, godly, confidence & assurance!

- Each one of these question comes along and is ‘reading your heart’ - and exposes that, “Look, son, here’s a problem—now let’s deal with it!”

- And really, the more you think on each one of these questions, the more it uncovers! (Because that’s what a ‘probing’ question is designed to do!) — **A probing question is designed to find problems that are not obvious**—and by nature, a probe has to go after something that’s either undercover, or that’s latently there, but hasn’t had any reason for it to be exposed yet. (it may be dormant or undeveloped or inactive at the moment... but it’s there!)

- And this whole final probing by the Father is designed to get all those potentially latent issues exposed and to get them all out of the way **so that they don’t occur when you get into the curriculum!**

- Now at this point we need to once again remind ourselves of the way in which we have to deal with these questions—**(and I mean all of these questions)** — and that is to make sure that we ‘follow our Father’s instructions’ (so to speak):

- Keep in mind that we’ve just been given a powerful declaration of how our sonship curriculum is going to work together with every detail of our life and work it so that *all things work together for good* to us (as sons) *who love God, and who are the called according to his purpose*.

- And then we have had to view, (from our Father’s perspective **when** He put the whole sonship curriculum & sonship life together, and also **how** He put it all together in the ‘chain of provision’ He forged for us to succeed in every way in that curriculum)—we have seen 5 major links in that chain of provision that proved the reality of (:28) so that it is now a real & ever-present principle of how we are going to live our sonship life on the basis of it—that is, we not only **know** that (:28) is true & real in every detail of our lives, but we’re going to **operate** upon that reality every day of our lives—from now on!

- And I bring all this up once again just to underscore that it is absolutely critical to keep that Father’s point-perspective as you go through all of these 5 probing questions! (or they just won’t work!)

- So we have to keep that ‘point-perspective’ viewpoint of our Father throughout the remainder of Romans chapter 8.

- But as I said, we have to also, as it were, ‘follow our Father’s instructions’ on how to deal with all of these probing questions.

- And that ‘instruction’ is actually given to us in the very 1st questions (not a probing question), but the 1st question in (:31).

31 *What shall we then say to these things?*

- This isn’t counted as one of the 5 probing questions—because it actually acts as a way to set up how the following questions are supposed to be viewed and dealt with—or, as I said, it’s our Father coming along and telling us how He wants us to think about all of the questions He’s about to ask us.

- So the instructions on how to handle all of the 5 probing questions is that they are all to be thought about in light of the declaration of (:28) and the 5 links of the chain of provision proof in (:29 & 30).

- And if you ever slip out of that proper handling of these questions—all you’ll end up doing is answering them on the basis of logic or reason—and that’s NOT how they are supposed to be answered at all!

- In fact, anyone could come along and read these questions and come up with the right answers:

- 1) No one.
- 2) He shall.
- 3) Nobody.
- 4) No one.
- 5) No one.

- But it’s quite possible to come up with the right answers, and still fail to handle them properly—and totally fail to have them probe your heart and bring to light the snags & problems that are deeply in there!

- God our Father—in view of that 1st opening question beginning here in (:31) to set up all the 5 probing questions: *What shall we then say to these things?* our Father is now forcing us to make some

comments; and to give an answer—based upon what (:28-30) said about being able to succeed with our sonship lives on the basis of the curriculum He's provided for us to operate upon.

- And what He's doing by asking the following probing questions is: He knows what He's going after—and at the exact same time, He's intelligizing us with the knowledge of what He's going after! so that we can intelligently work together with Him—and unlike what goes on on an operating table when you're unconscious (you've been put under anesthesia) - in this case, we're wide awake!

- And He expects us to intelligently feel the 'knife' of His word (so to speak) operating within our heart—and making the incisions that needs to be made in order to get to the things He's after!

- And all during the operation, He expects us to come along and say some things back to Him— for us to say, “Ok, I see this now” or something along those lines—in other words, to have an intelligent response that's one, first of all that's an awareness that, Yeah, there could be a problem in that area!

- And to, therefore, on the basis of what (:28-30) have said, think about that potential problem in view of that .. and then get rid of it! because you've come to realize that it's not a potential problem in view of what (:28-30) have said.

- And so when we think now about succeeding with our sonship lives, (which is what this whole 3rd Component in our sonship Establishment is all about, in essence) — everything that's being said here is to get it so that we not only theoretically realize that our Father has geared us for success—but that we're **fully convinced** that we can succeed—if we'll just implicitly operate upon what the curriculum says.

- But since the overall issue, once again, is convincing us that we **can** succeed—and **will** succeed if we operate upon it like we're supposed to—then the natural bend of your mind is to start making sure **that all known sources of problems have been accounted for by the curriculum**—and can be **addressed** by the curriculum—and can be **overcome** by it!

- And so that's what's going on here!

- And in order to address all those known sources of problems in your heart—it takes 5 things that have to be brought up to your attention, and it takes beginning with the general issue and then go on to more and more specific issues until all those sources of problems get probed in your heart and any and all snags in your thinking are brought out, dealt with, and dismissed **in light of what's sitting in (:28-30)** - and the result being they are never to be a problem again!

- And you really have to perceive that that's exactly what happens as you go down through these 5 probing questions—they go from the general to the specific.

- And the 1st one is the most general of them all.

- And you go from a general, "*Who can be against us?*" to a 'I can put my finger on some **specific** individuals that can cause me some real problems' — which is why there is a **shift** that takes place after the first 2 questions, to those last 3 "*Who*" questions. (And verses 33, 34, & 35 deal with them).

- And I say that just to once again underscore the fact that you're going from the general to the more specific & particular issues.

- So if that makes sense, let's look at that first probing question—the most general one of them all.

Probing Question #1:

31 ... If God be for us, who can be against us?

- Answer: No one.

- But again—the common mistake most folks make who teach this verse—and who write the commentaries about this verse—is to answer that question by pure logic—that is, Well, if God is God, and if He is all powerful & all knowing Sovereign God—well then, if God is *for* you, then nobody can possibly be *against* you—nobody can withstand His omnipotent power to stomp any attempt by any body or any thing to come against you! **(see II Chron. 20:1-17)**

- And even though that's the right answer, the problem with that is that this cannot be, and is not supposed to be answered on the basis of pure logic! And so even though that's the right answer, that's not the honest handling of this question—not by a long shot!

- First of all the context isn't one of assessing God's competence in sovereignly doing whatever He wants to do—and in our case, to intervene by His omnipotent hand into my affairs and manipulate the affairs and events and circumstances around me—and just go about stomping out any and all things that would oppose me!

- No. The context is sonship education in general—and sonship establishment, specifically! (It's a sonship issue!)

- And you can't just take that question and answer it like any old logical person would (believer or unbeliever or even an atheist)!

- This is about sonship and my success as my Father's son as I go through His sonship education and as I operate upon the curriculum for my sonship life!

- But secondly, you have to allow that 1st question (that sets up how all of these 5 probing question are supposed to be viewed) to dictate to you just how each question is supposed to be responded to and answered on the basis of! (*What shall we then say to these things?*)

- So we have to answer the 1st probing question in view of our Father's point-perspective (as laid out in :28-30) - and from the context of our sonship life!

- Therefore a logical, flippant answer of “No one” just won't work—because it doesn't allow for that question to probe deep into our heart by the context in which it was asked in the first place—and therefore it just won't **get at** what our Father wants it to **get at** in our heart if that's all we can come up with!

- So let's look at that question again—but this time from the view of properly handling it: *If God be for us* (that is, *for us* as Him being our Father and we being His son who is actively involved in and participating in our sonship education), *who can be against us?*

- That's a little better perspective.

- But to really get at the core of how we're supposed to properly handle this question is to—(in light of the context and in light of keeping in mind that we're supposed to be answering it BACK “*to these things*” in [:28-30]) — we have to be able to understand & appreciate 2 critical words in the question: “*for*” and “*against*”!

- So that does it mean for “*God to be **for** us*” (as sons)? ... but wait...

- What does it mean for “*God to be **for** us*” (as sons) in light of what (:28-30) have said???

- And when you can answer that ...

- What does it mean in this context of sonship education operating upon the curriculum for sonship education—and in light of what Romans 8:28-30 have said—what does it mean therefore when it says, “*who can be **against** us?*” — what in light of all this, what is the kind of being *against us* that this is speaking about?

- *If God be for us* = when kept within the context of sonship education & sonship establishment—and when regulated **only** by saying this back to what Romans 8:28-30 have said—far from any kind of idea that since God (being all-powerful, all-knowing, sovereign, all-existing God in His Godness) is going to externally intervene in our affairs/situations/circumstances by His omnipotent hand—this means:

- that God, as our Father who has adopted us as sons; and who has wisely and lovingly and graciously and thoughtfully crafted out and forged out a curriculum for our successful education & edification as His sons—one that has means that He *foreknew* us and went to work to provide for us by *predestinating* that this curriculum *would conform us to the image of His Son*; and furthermore *called* us and *justified* us so that we would receive the adoption of sons based upon the legal & moral cross-work of the Lord Jesus Christ; and then provides for us to be *glorified* when we receive our joint-inheritance with Christ

- ... all that is what it means for God our Father to be **for** us!

- Simply put, the “**for**” in (:31) stands for everything you were just told that He did in thoughtfully & wisely providing for you that ‘chain of provision’ that was just laid before your eyes in (:29 & 30) so that you *know that all things work together for good* to you!

- And if you try to make this mean anything else outside of that—then you’re just ‘lost in the woods’!

- God being *for us* = means God being *for us* **as sons** who are now in possession of the sonship curriculum that He has forged for our success!

- And the “*for us*” = means being *for us* in the sense of succeeding **in** and **with** and **by** the curriculum He has written for us—it means God is *for us* to **succeed** in reaching every goal, aim, and objective of our sonship life!

- And now, in view of that

- “ ... *who can be against us?*”

- The *who* here is very general & broad—it isn’t specific yet.

- It’s kind of like saying, ‘Can anybody be against us?’

- So therefore the issue isn’t so much identifying the *who*, but causing you to think, Is there anyone or anything that can be **against** you? in view of Me being *for* you?

- And that means that the critical thing you have to intelligently be able to answer is, What does it mean for someone to be **against** you? ... *against* you in what way?

- And the answer to that is: *against* you **as a son**—*against* you **fully succeeding** in your sonship education & sonship life!!! (in view of the ‘chain of provision’ laid out before you in Romans 8:28-30)!

- And if you think about it, what is the subject or focus of the 1st probing question? A: God—God our Father!

- And therefore, the 1st probing question is directing your attention to **the Father** and its probing is to probe deep into your heart as you think about His ‘chain of provision’ and cause you to be confronted with this question about Him!

- And what He’s asking you to respond to is a question about your **confidence**—and specifically your confidence in **HIM**!

- No matter what you do or what ever happens to you—you, as His son will never be in a position or situation or circumstance that God your Father will not be *for* you—He will always be *for* you—He will always be *for* your continued success as His son!

- And in light of that ‘chain of provision’ of Romans 8:29-30, no one and no thing can ever be *against* your succeeding as His son—and I mean NO ONE!

- And now with all that in view—in other words with an INTELLIGENT understanding & appreciation for what this 1st probing question is asking, you can intelligently respond to that question with the right answer for the right reasons: **NO ONE!**

- Now before we move on to the 2nd probing question—I want to see if you can see/perceive what else is going on here.

- Because, as you already know, the issue here in this final aspect of sonship establishment is to do what? (To produce a godly attitude of confidence in our Father and in His curriculum) - right?

- But there’s more to it than that. Something else is being developed in your inner man at the exact same time that that confidence is getting produced—what is it?

- If you’re talking about getting an education—and getting an education in order to be vocationally trained for an eternal vocation in our Father’s business—if a total confidence is established within you for it to succeed and for you to succeed in it—what does that also generate within you?

- Let me put it this way—if the kind of confidence that has to be produced within your heart is one of **never abandoning this curriculum no matter what**—if you’re never going to abandon your sonship education—by default, what does that mean you’re going to do with it?

- IT MEANS THAT YOU ARE GOING TO TOTALLY COMMIT TO IT!

- You should go through each of these 5 probing questions, and as you do, your commitment level to being educated as a son should **increase** with each intelligent answer to each question!

- And I want to pause here for a moment before going on to the 2nd probing question—because I think it’s the appropriate time to talk a little about some things that should now be occurring in your thinking—that you should recognize as the beginning of a transition (so to speak) —a transition that is going to take place from now until you’re fully and firmly and finally established in your sonship life.

- In other words—from now until we get to Romans 12:1.

- And it’s in connection with this kind of confidence that you get produced in you here—and the kind of commitment that should come out of it all.

- Because the truth of the matter is—right now, having a good, intelligent grasp upon sonship orientation and sonship establishment—and having a good, intelligent grasp upon this final aspect of sonship establishment—and having intelligently answered that 1st probing question—the time is right to stop for a moment and ask you about your commitment and your attitude toward some things that, ... well, that to all other Christians might seem rather blasphemous and even heretical!

- And the truth is, (teaching this to you as a *father* and not just as an ‘*instructor in Christ*’) I’m not too sure that you really are having occur to your thinking the kind of thoughts and attitudes that are in keeping with the kind of transition you’re supposed to be going through at this time.

- And what I’m talking about—especially in light of your attitude and commitment—is how you’re thinking about the current circumstances you’re in—and about the circumstances you think you **will** be in, in the future.

- When we think about our nation, for example, and the condition it’s in—and where it’s all going.

- Or when you think about yourself—and your own personal life and where it is and where it’s going. (things that impact upon you)

- And I just want to emphasize once again—how important it is that you **spend time** with each of these issues we’re covering in sonship establishment—because in order for it to do its effectual job, **you have to spend time with it.**

- You have to go over it on your own—in order for it to ‘settle out’ in your mind—and I mean that in the sense that you recognize that each item you cover is designed to have some real impact upon you—and to do some **work** within you before the actual education gets going!

- In other words—there's really some strengthening—and some making sure that all of the preparedness that sonship establishment has been able to provide for is as **strong** and as **settled** as it needs to be.

- Because even though we've talked about a son's level of commitment in the past—and even though you have a great appreciation for that in all that we've gone over—but the truth of the matter is: **commitment is a flighty thing!**

- (Commitment is a **very flighty thing!**)

- And the flightiness of it—and the fragileness of it—needs to be gotten rid of!

- Otherwise, the **rigors** of sonship education—(when the curriculum actually begins to be dealt with) **will devastate it**—(the rigors of the education will devastate the commitment, if it's still in that fragile, flighty state.)

- In other words, when (not if, but when) the time comes where you get knocked down in the course of your sonship education—or where some failure occurs on your part—if what you have is only a fragile commitment to your sonship education—you're going to find it **very tough** to pick yourself up, dust yourself off, **and get going again**.

- And this is important to think about—even here in Romans 8:31 (as we get to the end of this 1st probing question) — because you simply cannot allow any part of this to pass you by without recognizing the deepness of the effect it's designed to have upon your spirit and your inner man.

- And it prepares you—especially in the area of getting all of the fragileness and flightiness of your commitment out of the way—and leaving you with a commitment that's anything but frail—it's case-hardened strong—and it's not flighty or unstable—but it's reliable, dependable & stable in every way.

- So that, when you do get down to being instructed in the curriculum over there in Romans 12—the fullness of the renewing of your mind, and the sober thinking that develops within you takes place—and you begin thinking about yourself with that renewed mind (as well as others around you—and as well as having all these offices to function in, and so forth) - the issue is, when the sonship commitment is there to learn all that, and to spend the time with that, and to spend the fellowship of sonship prayer about those things with our Father—so that all that energy of effectual working is there to generate that full measure of selflessness & cherishing one another, and that full

... measure of wanting to be a benefit and a profit—and committing yourself to that—and to one another—well, when all of the sonship work in connection with all that information is engaged in by a son (to produce all that) - then all the effectual working of what comprises that first, initial component of instruction actually comes to pass within your inner man and is put into practice in your outer man!

- And that's just the beginning—because that all produces an enthusiasm and an excitement and an ambition & desire to then go on to the next thing, and the next, and the next.

- And each component of doctrine is designed to instill a powerful **passion** in you for going on to get the next one, and then the next, etc. — and you kind of chomp your way through this feast that's been laid out for you!

- And I'm describing it to you this way to indicate how that—if the full measure of commitment to the work necessary to get that education to do its job isn't there when that all gets underway — then when it comes to doing the sonship work of getting that information and getting it to be able to release its energy within you, you're simply not going to do that work!

- And in describing things to you this way—I'm trying to get you to realize something that maybe you only realize theoretically right now—but you have to now be confronted with the **reality** of it:

- And that is, when I talk about this issue of sonship commitment—to getting the effectual working out of the information that we've been given:

IT DOES TAKE WORK ON THE PART OF THE SON!

- And here's the 'kicker' — **what takes place when you're here in the assembly and learning it from my ministry—that's not the work!**

- That's you (the son) coming to get the 'worksheet' to tell you the kind of work you've got to do!

- **The work is done *between* the assembly sessions!**

- And what sons need to realize & recognize is that that is the reality of the situation they're in!

- And (to get back to what I was talking about a while ago) - when this 'transition' takes place as you get to the end of sonship establishment and as you get to the beginning of dealing with the curriculum itself (in Romans 12) —my understanding is that there is to be some recognized changes in your thinking (some of which is going to be **greatly** different [putting it mildly] from the majority of Christian thinking [if there is such a thing]) - and there is supposed to be taking place in your inner man a settling down of all that—that is, a transition from just the mere enthusiasm of all your sonship education awaiting you, and so forth—to a sober realization **of the kind of commitment sonship education & sonship living amounts to.**

- And some of that may be happening right now—especially as that 1st probing question does its probing in your heart (in light of that great declaration of :28, that *all things work together for good*) —

- But that recognition of a change taking place in the way you think about things—that you recognize to be “**radically**” different from how most who call themselves Christians think—and along with that, this sobering up of the reality of the kind of deep commitment that sonship education & living amounts to — all that is supposed to become strong & settled out in your heart over the span of Romans 9, 10, & 11.

- And really—what the father is looking for (as a marker or indicator) in his son—is that cry of *Abba, Father* that his son initially made when he was made aware that he had been adopted (and the time of childhood was over; and the tutors & governors were dismissed; and now he can make decisions all on his own) - which is actually a cry of *Abba, Father* for the **relief** of childhood being over (looking back to the **past**);

- Well, now the father is looking for that cry of *Abba, Father* in connection with the son's passion & desire for what lies **ahead** of him in the **future!**

- And all I'm saying is that that 'transition' is supposed to be going on at the exact same time some other things are going on as you near the end of sonship establishment—and all I'm after right now is to put this in front of you, and make you aware of it—so you can begin to examine yourself and see if you can recognize some of these kinds of things happening to you as we go through this final aspect of sonship establishment.

- Because, just like there was at the end of sonship orientation—so too there is supposed to be a natural euphoria and enthusiasm and zeal at the end of sonship establishment (especially at the end of :28-39) for the son to cry *Abba, Father*—but this time looking **forward** to getting the education underway.

- And that's what you want to see—that's what the father is looking for!

- And that gets accomplished based upon these 5 probing questions doing their job—and to have the full persuasion & conviction (just like the apostle Paul) to say exactly what (:38-39) says!

- But you have to allow chapters 9, 10, & 11 to come along and give you some information (and to give you some **time** with that information) to get that euphoria and enthusiasm and emotion to wear off (as it's designed to do) and to then allow those issues that created all that enthusiasm to get settled down and strengthened in your heart and to become a sober reality.

- And if all that doesn't take place, the son simply won't have enough to sustain him for the **work** that Romans 12:3 is going to **demand** from him.

- That initial euphoria has to wear off so that that enthusiasm and eagerness that is there **ISN'T EMOTIONAL ... IT HAS TO BE PURELY SPIRITUAL!** (an operation of your **mind!**)

- So as we now have (or should have) the effectual working of Romans 8:28 now becoming one of the cornerstone **principles** of how we are going to live our sonship life from now on—and now that we've gotten a taste of what these 5 probing questions are going to get accomplished (having now gone through the 1st probing question) —

- with that being the case—when you think about that phrase, “*the battle is the LORD's*” and God coming along and intervening by means of His omnipotent power in the situations of your life—or to bless/curse a person or even our nation according to something like Deut. 28 (as if that's what it means for God to be **for you**, so *who can be against you?*) — you should be able to see **why** that's true—and necessary—and natural—but to see it more than just an issue *of rightly dividing the word of truth*—right?

- In other words—it's one thing to say that based upon an understanding & appreciation that, Well, that was in God's "*Time Past*" program with Israel, and He just doesn't operate that way in His "*But Now*" program with us, the members of the church the body of Christ — it's one thing to say that, but it's another thing to say, The major reason ***why*** God doesn't operate that way today is because of how that would be inconsistent with sonship living in this dispensation of grace in which we live today.

- And really it's only in the framework and context of sonship that you get the **wisdom** and the **genius** and the **naturalness** of ***why*** God operates that way today.

- And the truth of the matter is—as a son (and the only consistent thing to say and think as a son) is that you would come along in connection with "*God being **for** me*" - is to say & think: *If God my Father be **for** me, so *who can be against me?* means that His capacity (to write out and to forge out a curriculum for my education as His son) has made it so that He is **for** me being **successful** with His curriculum, and **for** me being fully educated as His son—so *who can be against me* succeeding in being educated as His son?*

- (when God, as my Heavenly Father has done this!)

- In fact, I recognize this so much (or to such a degree) that I not only understand **why** He doesn't operate that way (as in II Chron. 20) with me—but the truth is, as a son, **I don't want Him doing that—I need for Him not to do that**—in fact, He can't be going around doing that, if I'm going to get properly edified & educated as His son!

- Because if He does, then I won't get that situation to *work together* (with the curriculum) *for good* to me—and I won't get the benefit and the further vocational training that's in that situation to put my sonship life to work so that I gain in the inheritance in my Father's business!

- And in this way—sonship living really is radical—radical to most of the Bible—as far as how God determines to operate with those who have put their faith & trust in Him and in His gospel!

- So then—we should now have a clear grasp upon that 1st probing question—but the real question is, Does it have a grasp upon you?

- The 1st Probing Question:
If God be for us, who can be against us?

- And my understanding is that this 1st probing question is designed for us to focus our attention on God our Father:

- **Q #1:** Do you have any problem with the Father? Because the focus of attention is upon the Father's capacity.

- And if not, then the only natural thing to ask next is:

- **Q #2:** Do you have any problem with the Father's curriculum? or with the curriculum's capacity? Because the focus of attention of the next probing question is upon the curriculum and it's capacity.

- And in this way, these first 2 probing questions are a couplet—i.e., they are designed to go together.

31 What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?

- Any question? Comments?

Probing Question #2:

32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

- Again, it's an easy question to answer—and to answer correctly:

Answer: ***He shall freely give us all things!***

- But what does that mean? And how is it that we are to understand and appreciate exactly what this is asking (just like we had to do in that 1st probing question) - so that when we do come up with the correct answer, that answer is an INTELLIGENT answer?

- In other words: how do we answer this so that we're not thinking that this just winds up being Paul's way of describing Mat. 21:22 or John 14:13-14; 15:16; 16:23???

- Well, first of all, keep in mind the 2 major issues that keeps us on track and prevents us from getting ‘lost in the woods’:

1) The Context here is that of sonship establishment—and especially the final aspect of sonship establishment: to produce absolute confidence/assurance/conviction in the Father & in His curriculum. (strengthening our commitment)

2) The Controlling Question: (:31) ***What shall we then say to these things?*** — so this 2nd probing question has to be regulated and controlled (where every thought we have and everything we say about it) is regulated & controlled by, (and only by), what has been set before us in (:28, 29, & 30)!

- So then, the 1st probing question went right after any thing that’s in your heart in connection with any doubt, misgivings, snags, or whatever in regard to the **Father** and **His capacity** to bring about your successful education & edification as His son.

- And in view of (:28, 29, 30), it’s as if He says:

“Do you see anything there that would indicate to you a lack in my ability or capacity?”

“Do you see anything that would indicate to you how you being my son, and me educating you as my son, and you succeeding to be educated and useful to me as an intelligent son in my business—do you see anything that would indicate a weakness or a fault or miscalculation on my part, or misreckoning on my part—or any ‘Achilles’ heel’ in what I’ve laid out before you that could come along and actually prevent your success as my son?”

- So: *If God be for us, who can be against us?* No one.

- And it’s not that there is no one who is going to **try to be against** you—or that no one will ever attempt to be against you—but the way it’s worded is to imply the question, ‘***Who can successfully be against us?***’ — or to put it another way, ‘Who can prevent our successful education by our Father in His sonship program?’

- There **are** going to be some characters who are going to be *against you*—but the point is, *If God is for you*, they will not succeed in their being *against* you!

- Now before going on to the other thing to keep in mind—so that we don't get off track and try to make this 2nd probing question say something like, "Well, now that I'm a Christian, God is for me and no one can be against me, and now He's just going to freely give me all things—so goodbye debt, hello money, promotion, health, wealth, etc., etc., ad nauseam!"

- Well, before going on to the other thing I want to bring up that keeps us from mishandling and mutilating this passage (like that) - is to say that even though this is a lengthy question (26 words) - in my way of dealing with this 2nd probing question, it's almost begging us to start at the end of it and work our way back.

- In other words, it may be that the best way to deal with it is to first of all deal with that last phrase first: *freely give us all things?*

- And to be even more specific, the last 2 words: ***all things***
Just what are *all things* in this context?

- Are they money? power? prosperity? health? houses? land? a trophy wife who'll give me sex every night? an obedient, thoughtful, wishy-washy, handsome husband who knows how stupid he really is? trouble-free, good-looking, low-maintenance kids? lots of really cool friends????

- Well, to properly answer what the *all things* are—I just want to go back and pick up that first thing we have to keep in mind, and then get to this other thing that will keep us from going off track and getting lost in the woods:

- We said we have to keep in mind:

- 1) The Context of sonship establishment.
- 2) The Controlling Question: *What shall we then say to these things?* (in :28, 29, & 30).

- And now in light of this (and we'll tie this back in to being able to define what the *all things* are of this 2nd probing question) - but in light of this so far, we have to point out another thing about how these 5 probing questions are designed to work.

- And that is, each one—by what it asks—and by how we're supposed to think about it—and by intelligently answering it—each question is designed to naturally lead into the next probing question—and it gets asked in view of what the **preceding** question asked & answered.

- And what I'm after is—that you see, by appreciating the naturalness of having to ask this 2nd probing question in view of what the 1st probing question dealt with—that you see how that by appreciating the naturalness of the 2nd question, you see how to properly handle what the *all things* are—and to not, therefore, get off track and out in la la land attempting to stick in there anything and everything that you like and that you think should be included in the *all things* of (:32)!

- So let's think for a moment about the natural reason why—after that 1st probing question does its job—why this would be the next, natural question for our Father to ask us in connection with producing full confidence/assurance/conviction in Him and in His curriculum.

- (And also, why & how the 1st & 2nd probing questions go together).

- And if you think about it, the 1st probing question settled for us that when it comes to being educated by God our Father—in light of all that (:28-30) set before us—if we're talking about an education, then by viewing our Father's 'chain of provision' from His perspective when He put the whole thing together (and how He put it all together) we're supposed to see if there is anything in our heart that would cause us to think in any way that **His** capacity & **His** ability to educate us successfully by means of His provisions to do so are in any way in question or in doubt—and they most certainly are NOT!

If God be for us, who can be against us? No one.

- Ok—well then, since we're talking about getting an education and a vocational training—that therefore means that I may have complete confidence & assurance about the One who put the education and curriculum and training program together—but really, that's just the half of it (so to speak).

- Because that leads me to naturally think—“Ok, I've got this great and wonderful and thoughtful and wise Father who is going to personally teach me his wisdom and his ways—but since He's going to be a real Father to me and I'm going to be a real son to Him (and there's going to be no external intervening by Him into my circumstances or situations in my life) - that means that I'm going to need *some things* in my very hands to be able to do this with—and, Am I going to find myself in a position somewhere down the line where I don't have *the things* that I need to be able to succeed in doing all that this education/training asks me/demands for me to do?”

- And therefore this naturalness to the 2nd probing question (along with the Context & the Controlling Question) - makes it so that we have a real grip on what the *all things* is talking about!

- ***all things*** = all things necessary for my successful sonship education, edification, and vocational training!

- This may include other things than the curriculum itself, such as the leading of the Spirit and sonship prayer and the local assembly and the bishop of the local assembly and the saints of that local assembly and their offices, other divine institutions, etc.

- But my understanding is that the **primary focus** of attention of the *all things* **is the curriculum itself!**

- Therefore **built into this curriculum** is *all things* that I need to have in order to succeed in my sonship life, my sonship education, and my sonship vocational training!

- And in this way, (once again), you then have the 1st probing question probing your heart to see if you have any problem with the Father & His capacity/ability to successfully educate you as His son; and then you have the 2nd probing question probing your heart to see if you have any problem (in view of :28-30) with the curriculum and its capacity/ability to fully provide you all things necessary for your successful education & vocational training!

- Now—are there any questions about being able to identify or define what that phrase “*all things*” is about in (:32)?

- Questions? Comments?

- Well, with that being properly handled (and properly understood & appreciated) - now we should be able to go back to the beginning of the probing question and have a pretty good handle on those opening 2 phrases of this 2nd probing question:

32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all,

- Now given those things that we’ve gone over that control and govern and regulate each word of this passage—you should be able to perceive that this **isn’t** just making a statement about the grandeur and extent of God’s provision of the sacrificial death of the Lord Jesus Christ in connection with us being JUEL, and since He went to that extent to justify us, then it’s far less difficult for Him to give us *all things* that we need (whatever those *things* are).

- So how are we to understand & appreciate these opening phrases of (:32)?
 - Because it's critical to get this right in order to really get the full degree of how **impressed** we're supposed to be with this 2nd probing question—and critical to the probe going into our heart and uncovering any doubt or concerns about our success with our Father's curriculum for our sonship education.

32 *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, ...*

- What is that telling you? or maybe the better question is, What is it that the Father is **impressing** upon you by saying this to you?
 - "*He that spared not his own Son,*" — that's an amazing and impressive statement! But what is He after in saying this to us as the first thing of the 2nd probing question?
 - Well notice that word *spared*—and again, this is one of those words in our English language that, whether we are aware of it or not, it's a word that we use 'sparingly' (no pun intended) - and a word that we just naturally reserve for certain circumstances (or contexts).
 - When we use the word *spared*—we naturally use that term and reserve that term for situations or circumstances where someone is facing real, personal **harm, danger, and/or evil!**
 - And, (unlike the word *saved*), *spared* is used in connection with an authority or one who has the power to remove that person from harm or danger or evil.
 - Someone can be *saved* either by design or by **accident**—but someone can only be *spared* by the **intentional** use of another's power or authority to remove that person in peril from that harm or evil.
 - And, as Charles Smith describes in his book, Synonyms Discriminated, he cites the following example of the discriminating difference between *saved* and *spared*: "He was to have been shot as a deserter, but the clemency of his commander *spared* his life." and "He was struck by a bullet, but the watch in his pocket *saved* his life." The difference may be seen at once in the two phrases, "it *saved* my life," and "he *spared* my life."

- Therefore, in our verse, God our Father is telling us that He is the One who has the power and the authority to remove His Son from the evil and harm that He is going to have to go through—where? — on the cross — but even though He had that power/authority to do so, ***He spared not his own Son*** — He *spared* **NOT** — that is, He allowed His own Son (the Lord Jesus Christ) to be delivered to all the evil and harm that could be thrown at him!

- And this was necessary if you were to ever get justified unto eternal life! It was necessary if the Redeemer was to fully perform your redemption!

- And redemption was the necessary means for you to not only get the debt & penalty of your sins forgiven and receive the righteousness of Christ imputed to you—but it was the necessary means for you to get your sanctified position in Christ—the ultimate aspect of which is your adoptions of sons!

- ***He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all,***

- And the reason that's supposed to be the **impressive** thing that it is at this point in this 2nd probing question—is because nothing can underscore to you and illustrate to you any more than this act of the Father not even sparing his own Son, but delivering him up for you, — nothing can illustrate and underscore to you any more than that, that when it comes to your Father providing for you what you need to succeed as His son: **THAT HE WITHHOLDS NOTHING FROM YOU!**

- If He didn't *spare* his own Son—if that's the degree of the investment He's made, and the degree of the provision He's made for your success—then what could possibly be withheld from you to fully and completely be successful as His son?

- Do you think that you're ever going to come to a point where that curriculum He puts in your hands doesn't have the power or the capacity or the ability or the provision for you to succeed in or with whatever comes your way?

- Do you think that there will be something that will come up where failure will be imminent? or where danger or harm or evil will be able to succeed in becoming your demise as His son? NO! (why? because "*He spared not his own Son*")!

- And you're supposed to not only be suitably impressed with your Father and His capacity—but now He's making it so that you look hard at the curriculum He's putting into your hands (and that's going to effectually work in your inner man) and now become suitably impressed with what **it** can do—and the capacity & ability He's designed in that curriculum: in that nothing is withheld from you for it's power and might and capacity and ability to cause you to be successful no matter what comes your way!

- Now again—this is an easy one to just pass over lightly and not really think about very deeply—but you have to allow this 2nd probing question to really probe your heart—you have to spend some time with it to allow it to do that!

- God your Father *spared not* the thing most dear to Him—his Son—as your Redeemer—so that you could be justified, sanctified, and adopted as His son—to make this sonship life possible!

- To make it possible to have that magnificent 'chain of provision' make it so that *all things work together for good* to you! (availing yourself of that chain of provision)

- And then we have the next 4 words come along and say, **"how shall he not ..."**

- ... *how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?*

- That expression ***how shall he not*** is like coming along and saying, In light of God *sparing not His own Son, but delivering him up for us all* — in light of that, it would be **ridiculous** to think He would do all that and give all that so that you would fall short because some where or some place down the line, you don't have ***all things*** you need in that curriculum for something you face that could cause you to fail—that wasn't ***freely given*** to you and provided for you to instead **succeed**—provided for in the very words of that curriculum you hold in your hand! (DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE IT!)

- "... *how shall he not **with him** also freely give us all things?"*

- "***with him***" = I've given this a lot of thought—and my understanding is to stick with the simplest reading of the passage—and that is that *with him*—(the word *with* [sun] being a primary proposition denoting union) - hence, it means *with him* in the sense of *him* (the Lord Jesus Christ) being the successful Redeemer and you who are now in living union with Him.

- Therefore: *how shall he not with him* (the successful Redeemer who you are now in living union with and fully identified with) *freely give us all things?*

- Any questions so far?

- Notice: “*how shall he not with him also **freely** give us all things?*”

- *freely* = without reservation; without constraint; plentifully, abundantly, generously, liberally!

- And the ***all things*** you already know is referring to the curriculum itself and that the *all things* are all the things necessary for your successful sonship life.

- So once again, the 2nd probing question:

32 *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?*

- Now—can you **intelligently** answer that question?

- Answer: **He shall** *freely give me all things.*

- But has this question really brought to the surface any and all snags that may be in your thinking in regard to your estimation of the curriculum for your sonship education?

- Let's see.

- One of the things that should cross your mind—(and probably has) - is that this curriculum has the capacity (from just what we know about it from the Table of Contents) to take me all the way from a newly adopted, empty son all the way to that *man of understanding*.

- And these letters (epistles) of the apostle Paul—these form the curriculum for my sonship education—and they really do have all of the power and the strength and the might of God Almighty—(even greater power than ‘creative power’???) Do you recognize that?

- Is your estimation of these letters the same as God's estimation of them? (That the power to produce *godly edifying which is in faith*—and the power to produce godly wisdom, justice, judgment, & equity, etc. in your inner man is the greatest function & display of God's power that there is?)

- **Eph. 3** — I want to point out to you something you may not have realized—that power of God vested in the curriculum—as the greatest manifestation of His power available—that’s not something that you just settle on one time as you begin your sonship life and is just never an issue ever again.

- Look at what Paul tells the Ephesians as he prays for them:
Eph. 3:14-21

- Here are Level II sons who are receiving ‘subtilty’ and are about to come to that ‘young man’ status and get ‘knowledge and discretion’ - and even at this point Paul reminds them that their Father is able to do *exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think* — *according to the power that works* (works where??? upon you? upon your circumstances? upon your external situations?) no! ***in you!***

- And notice (:16)! (*in the inner man*)

- The further you go along the way through this sonship curriculum, the more situations you’re going to find yourself in—that every fiber in your being says, “It shouldn’t be handled this way!” — and that you’re going to have to rely on God’s power as vested in this curriculum to provide for your success—and even if you can’t ask it or think it—He can accomplish it thorough this power that works ***in*** you!

- And my point is—if you **underestimate** the power of God vested in the curriculum for sonship education—it will lead to failure sometime and someplace (either by becoming pessimistic, or discouraged, or depressed or having a sense that somehow you’re just in some kind of a disadvantage) to ever succeeding in this thing.

- And what I’m saying by all that is that you will ultimately have your **confidence** shaken—and lose your enthusiasm & ambition!

- And the road to having that happen all starts with you not estimating the real power and value of this curriculum—and underestimating its power and might that’s been vested in it by God your Father in order to have you succeed with it in your sonship education!

- It is the most powerful thing God can do—more powerful than speaking things into existence—(to take His living words, write them on your heart & produce His life in you as His son!)

-
- Or to put it according to our passage in Romans 8—to cause you to be *conformed to the image of his Son* (the Lord Jesus Christ)!

 - And you can go back to those exhortations in the book of Proverbs and see how they parallel with these first 2 probing questions:
 - Pro. 2:6 — parallels with *If God be for us, who can be against us?*
 - And in Israel's program, they are to understand that all of *wisdom, knowledge, and understanding* they are ever going to need will be given—*God is for you*, and He'll provide all you're going to need to be successful as you begin this sonship education & begin your sonship life.

 - Pro. 2:7ff — parallels with Rom. 8:32
 - *He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous...* — you're going to **freely** get *all things* you need—that **sound** wisdom is laid up for you who are righteous—in anticipation of a future need, it's all there, and it's ready to be *freely* accessed, and it's so wisely been put together that it's ready to be used to overcome any and all things you will ever face!

 - And the point is—that in light of Romans 8:32—you're being told that even though you don't have need of *all things* yet, but when the time comes and you do need it: if He spared not His own Son, what's He going to withhold from you when you need it?

 - Again—**do not underestimate the power/ability of this curriculum!**
 - You can complete the course—you can attain unto all of the aims and goal and objectives throughout your education—and all the things you need to do just that will be *freely given!*

 - Now—are you underestimating the power and the capacity & ability of this curriculum?
 - No? Well, I think you do—at least some of you do.

 - How do I know that? Why, you've told me you do! (Remember that I told you that this gets real personal???)

- Now what have you expressed to me that would make me say that you do have some misgivings or that you underestimate the ability and capacity of this curriculum to do its job—especially, for you to fully succeed in your sonship life?

- (Maybe you just haven't thought that what you were saying was an expression of underestimating the curriculum—and I'm not trying to be critical of you [I did the same thing, and worse] — but I'm going to use this to just point out to you how these probing questions really do go after any and all snags in your thinking!)

- So back to my question—what have you said that indicates that you don't really esteem this curriculum to have the ability to do its job with you?

- You've said that **you don't think you have enough time** to get to the end of the curriculum—to finish your course! (I've just come to this doctrine too late in life!)

- Or what about—Paul had all these opportunities that we don't have in this country?

- Paul lived in countries where his physical life was on the line for living as a son of his Heavenly Father—I don't.

- I don't live in Iran/Iraq/Saudi Arabia/Sudan or other countries where Christians are actively sought out and killed just because they're Christians—so I'll probably never be in a position where I'm going to have to die for the cause of my sonship life!

- Or I don't live in countries where electricity and water and automobiles and education are at a premium—but I live in this prosperous country of the USA—so I don't have the kind of opportunities for God's power to operate like that!

- Or what about—I'm just a housewife, and I only see about 4 people day after day? — or my life is just like the movie "Groundhog Day" and I just don't have a lot of areas of opportunity for putting my sonship education into effect!

- But really if that's your thinking—then you **are** underestimating this sonship curriculum!

- The truth of the matter is—every opportunity you will ever need will be there—and every demand for your Father’s wisdom (*sound wisdom [Pro.2:7]*) that those opportunities present—all those “*things*” that you need in order to be successful and godly in all those situations—all that will be *freely given* to you by means of, and built within this sonship curriculum!

- And that’s very important because you should understand and appreciate how different what you do as a son is (as far as learning and utilizing the Father’s curriculum for sonship education) than how most Christians approach the study of God’s word.

- (This is why—when you are at this point in your sonship establishment where you are to *perceive the words of understanding*, that when it comes to your Father *freely giving you all things* in the curriculum He’s putting into your hands—this is why He says that He *lays up sound wisdom* for you—because there are going to be a whole bunch of competing wisdoms; and competing ‘*forms of godliness*’, but they *deny the power thereof*—they deny that this sonship curriculum is the way it’s supposed to get done!)

- And the truth is—for most believers who study God’s word—and even seriously study it—they study books of the Bible, or study doctrines of the Bible—and even some of them may even pray about the information they learn (they talk to their Father about it) - but then once it’s been learned, it becomes just another intellectual ‘box’ that gets stored in the attic of their soul.

- And you do understand that that’s **not** what it means to make progress in godly, *sonship* edification—right? (Because you don’t progress on in your education that way—right?)

- Because all that’s doing is learning it as a believer for the sake of learning it—that’s NOT learning it **as a son!** (Do you know the difference?)

- The difference is that learning *sound wisdom as a son* is for the purpose of not merely learning it—but learning it for the purpose of putting it to **use** in the details of your life—(and even that’s not all there is to it).

- Because as a son, you learn it in order to not only **use** it in the details of your life—but you’re doing that in order to demonstrate **skillfulness** with that *sound wisdom* (doctrine).

- And your Father has so wisely and ingeniously written this sonship curriculum so that no matter what your life is like—or when or where you live out your life—that every opportunity will be there for your proper education and training—and when you face situations and circumstances (and opportunities) in your life where it demands the application of godly sonship *wisdom* (sound wisdom), or *justice*, or *judgment*, or *equity*—(and later on, *prudence*, *subtily*, and *discretion*) - every thing you will ever need to be successful in your sonship education and training will be **freely given** to you!

- Because it's all built in to the curriculum itself!

- Again, **do not underestimate this curriculum!**

- It can train, equip, and qualify any believer to be able to labor with your Heavenly Father in His business!

It can train:

- men, women, young, old, (fill in the blank)_____

- Our Father *spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all*, and He didn't do all that just so that as time goes on, and as His curriculum gets older and older—(and is viewed as archaic, out of date, and irrelevant) - He didn't do all that just so that you would come along and somehow be in some kind of a **disadvantage** because you seem to either lack opportunity to apply and use the information in the curriculum, or you lack the information itself that you need to use to apply to your opportunity! (*this is another great example of how God had to **preserve** His word—every word of it!*)

- No—you are *freely given all things* that you need to fully succeed being educated, edified, trained, and qualified to think, live, and labor with God your Heavenly Father in all His business! (And the **guarantee** He put on it is that “*He spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all!*”)

- It doesn't matter that you live in 21st Century United States of America—you can still be exhorted just like the Corinthians were:

*Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, **always abounding in the work of the Lord**, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord. (1 Corinthians 15:58)*