

Football Sunday - Shoulder to Shoulder

TALK IT OVER

Start **talking**. Find a conversation starter for your group.

- In the Football Sunday message video Brock Huard talks about a “shoulder to shoulder two man block” that is no longer allowed to be used in the NFL. Have you ever seen this while watching a pro-football game? What are the pros for the players doing this type of block? What are the cons for the player this block is being use on?

Start **thinking & sharing**. Ask a question to get your group thinking and create openness.

- Read Romans 5:8. In Prince Amukamara’s story he talked about how he thought being a good person was enough to go to heaven. He said that a chaplain in college poured into him and he went from just believing in Jesus to following Jesus. Share a story in your own life where someone else stood “shoulder to shoulder” with you and helped you understand more about the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- Read Galatians 6:9. Nate and Lexi Solder shared that they have a son who was diagnosed with cancer, and that even right now his future is uncertain. Yet through all of this, God has opened up the Solders’ hearts to provide resources that help with the healing of children all over the world. Share a time when things were so hard that you were about to give up, and instead God showed you that there was purpose in your pain. How can our story as Christians, along with the resources God has given us, help us to reach out “shoulder to shoulder” to others in need?
- Read Romans 8:28. Benjamin and Lexi Watson shared that they went through a time of struggle when they felt God opening the door for them to have a 6th child. After 3 miscarriages, they were heartbroken and questioning whether they or not they had heard from God. They ended up getting pregnant again with healthy twin boys. Tell about a time when you questioned whether you heard from God. What was the outcome of the situation? Did you have a hard time understanding how a good God would allow this to happen? Could you finally see that God was working the situation for your good? What are some truths that back up this scripture verse? How is standing shoulder to shoulder with Jesus the most powerful relationship we can ever have?

Start **doing**. Commit to a step and live it out this week.

- If you are a follower of Christ, tell your story to someone whom you know who also needs a relationship with Jesus.
- God has given us purpose through Him. There are many ways here at Generations Church to reach out to others in need. If you are interested in these opportunities go to generationschurch.com/missions,

Start **praying**. Be bold and pray with power.

- Lord, I want to be more like You. Thank you that you came to earth, walked in our shoes and paid the ultimate price by dying on a cross for my sins. Help me to be willing to share my story of how you saved me with others so they can experience the same freedom I now have through you. Amen.

Start **digging**. For further study.

- Read the article on the back and discuss.

Key Scriptures from the Message:

Romans 5:8
Galatians 6:9
Romans 8:28

Start **reading**.

Romans 5:8 NIV

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Galatians 6:9 NIV

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

Romans 8:28 NIV

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

Question: "What does it mean that all things work together for good?"

Answer: When a Christian utters the phrase *all things work together for good*, he or she is referring to a portion of one of the most quoted, claimed verses in the New Testament, Romans 8:28: "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." Or, as the KJV translates it, "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."

God works all things together for good—both His good and our good. As God is glorified, His people benefit.

In Romans 8, Paul contrasts a life lived in selfish pursuits (the flesh) and one lived in league with, or in accordance with, God (the Spirit). He impresses upon readers that our sovereign God is all-knowing, all-wise, and all-powerful.

Those who love God can trust His goodness, His power, and His will to work out all things for our good. We journey together with Him.

The promise that God works all things together for good does not mean that all things, taken by themselves, are good. Some things and events are decidedly bad. But God is able to work them *together* for good. He sees the big picture; He has a master plan.

Neither does the promise that God works all things together for good mean we will acquire all that we want or desire. Romans 8:28 is about God's goodness and our confidence that His plan will work out as He sees fit. Since His plan is always good, Christians can take confidence that, no matter our circumstances or environments, God is active and will conclude things according to His good and wise design. With this knowledge we can learn to be content (see Philippians 4:11).

The fact that God works all things together for good means God's plan will not be thwarted. In fact, we are part of His plan, having been "called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28). When we trust God and His way, we can be sure that He is active and powerful on our behalf (see Ephesians 3:20).

God knows the future, and His desires will be accomplished. "I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say, 'My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please'" (Isaiah 46:10). Even when things seem chaotic and out of control, God is still in charge. We sometimes worry about what's happening to us because we do not know what is best for us. But God does.

The principle of God working all things together for good is well illustrated in the Old Testament account of Joseph's life. Early in Joseph's life, Joseph's jealous brothers sold him into slavery. In Egypt, Joseph rises to a position of responsibility. Then, he is unjustly imprisoned and forgotten about by his friends. God gifts him the ability to interpret dreams, and through that ability Joseph is once again raised to a place of honor and power. When drought forces Joseph's brothers to seek food elsewhere, they travel to Egypt and encounter Joseph, who eventually saves them from starvation and grants them a livelihood in his new land.

Throughout his life, Joseph trusted God no matter his good or bad circumstances. Joseph experienced plenty of bad things: kidnapping, slavery, false accusations, wrongful imprisonment, rejection, and famine. But in the end God brought things to a wonderful, life-affirming conclusion. God blessed Joseph's entire family through those painful circumstances and through Joseph's faith. (You can read about Joseph's life beginning in Genesis 37.)

Paul's life is another testament to how God works all things together for good. Paul suffered shipwrecks, beatings, imprisonment, murder attempts, temporary blindness, and more—all within God's plan to spread the gospel (see Acts 9:16 and 2 Corinthians 11:24–27). Through it all, God was steadfastly working to bring about good and glorious results.

After promising that God works all things together for our good, Romans 8 concludes with the wonderful fact that God trumps everything that comes against Him and those who belong to Him. The Christian is assured that nothing can ever separate us from God's love: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? . . . No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:35–39). God's love is everlasting, and His wisdom is infinite. It doesn't matter who or what attempts to thwart God's plan; no one and nothing can. God will work all things together for the good of those who love Him. Our decision to align our will with God's and to always trust Him will be rewarded.