

## IX. GOD'S PURPOSES IN SUFFERING IN BELIEVERS' LIVES

As soon as we speak of God's taking all things and making them subservient to His purpose, we are faced with the question, "What are God's purposes in the lives of believers? And what is His purpose in permitting suffering in their lives?"

- A. God's primary purpose in believers' lives is to mold them into likeness to Christ, so that they can bring honor to Him and enjoy Him, both now and forever.

Three Scriptures in particular help us to ascertain God's primary purpose:

Romans 8:29-- "For whom He (God) foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren."

II Corinthians 3:18 -- "But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory."

Colossians 3:10 -- "(you) have put on the new man which is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him."

It is God's primary purpose in the lives of believers to make them like Christ, to transform them into His likeness, to renew them after the pattern of Christ's glorious person

- B. God's secondary purpose in believers' lives is to do good to them, to seek their welfare, and to enable them to achieve their highest well-being.

A key Scripture that tells us this is, once again, Romans 8:28. Paul writes: "We know that, for those who are loving God, He is working together with all things to good."

Notice that Romans 8:28 does not say that there are no evil things or persons in the world, but rather that God takes evil things as they touch the lives of believers and overrules them so that they result in good.

What a wonderful promise! But what does "good" mean in this promise?