

THE WHY BEHIND ALL

(Romans 8:28-29a)

- Whenever difficulty happens, the first question we usually ask is, “Why?”

The problem sincere Christians have with God often comes down to a wrong understanding of what this life is meant to provide. We naturally and wrongly assume we’re here to experience something God has never promised. More than perhaps ever before in history, we assume we are here for one fundamental reason: to have a good time—if not good circumstances, then at least good feelings. (Larry Crabb, *Shattered Dreams*)

- **Scripture provides a *general* reason for all difficulty that happens to us**

And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. ²⁹For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son. (Romans 8:28-29a)

- **Our overarching purpose is to become like Christ**

Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. (1John 3:2)

- **God uses difficulty to make us more like Christ**

Context—Romans 8:16-30 describes the help and hope available for those *in Christ*

Understanding Romans 8:28

God is in CONTROL
of

all things (28)

God has a PLAN
for us

for good (28)

*to become conformed to
the image of His Son (29a)*

Means

Vehicle
Process

End

Goal
Product

All of this applies *to those who love God, those who are in Christ*

- **Does Christlikeness look the same in every person, regardless of background, age, personality, ethnicity?**

I propose that...

- Like light passing through a diamond, Christlikeness looks differently shining through different jewels
- Christlikeness looks differently in different personalities, at different ages, and at different stages of life

APP

- This year you will face difficulty
- Don't fear it, lean in to difficulty
- During every difficulty ask,

“How might God want to use this to make me more like Christ?”

I will make an everlasting covenant with them: I will never stop doing good to them, and I will inspire them to fear me, so that they will never turn away from me.

(Jeremiah 32:40)