

The Reframe Principle

TRANSCRIPT (AUTO-GENERATED)

Wayform number five, the Reframe Principle. Romans 8.28 is a memory verse many of us have stored away. 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.

But the way it comes out is sometimes more like, we're pretty sure that in most things, God sometimes works for some people. The text says, in all things, God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purposes.

In this chapter, we're considering the renewal of the mind, part three, The Reframe Principle. What do you see when you look at a glass of water, half empty or half full? More technically, the question is investigating cognitive bias.

In my thinking on this particular day, in this particular season of my life, is my thinking skewed toward empty or skewed towards full?

What are the lenses I'm looking through at everything in my life, which is colouring, my view in such a way that due to the closeness of the glasses to my eyes, I don't even know I'm wearing them?

If you walked around the Church Ministry Centre Monday or Tuesday morning at NorthernLife a few years ago, and you saw a middle-aged woman doing air guitar or clicking her heels or doing random pull-downs, that would be the then playgroup

coordinator, Linda. Linda is a glass half full type of person, but it's more than that. Linda has learned through experience to look at life in a way that is faith-filled rather than through the lenses of unbelief.

Sometimes as you get older, you can lament every birthday. Linda says at every birthday, Yay, I'm still alive by the grace of God. Linda and her family lived through cancer and its scary potential and came out the other side.

Now every birthday is a gracious gift from God. The truth is you don't have to live through cancer to work this out. 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.

If we can believe this, it will reframe our thinking and consequently our daily lives. The thesis of this series, this book, is shown with this helpful diagram of spiritual formation.

In your book, you'll see it, the one we've been looking at, with the concentric circles with heart, spirit and will at the start and in the middle, and moving out through mind, emotions, body, social context and soul.

God wants to save us through the Gospel. And then over time, shape our heart, renew and transform our mind, which changes our dominant emotions, impacting our body and how we interact with our community.

We've looked at the easy yoke, which also involves hard work. We've looked at the importance of knowing that we are a child of God by grace through faith. We've looked at the replacement principle, identify the lie and replace with truth.

The rewire principle. Repetition rewires the brain. And now we're looking at the reframe principle.

Again, Romans 8.28 says, We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

These cool sounding principles like replacement, rewire and reframe, come directly from a book written by Craig Groeschel entitled Winning the War in Your Mind.

Wayform as a series is a conglomeration of many years of study in the area of spiritual formation for me and also practice. So I guess there's no one book that is the source of this series, but the mind part draws heavily from Craig's writing.

So to pay homage to my American brother, let me tell you one of his many poignant stories. Craig's dad was a baseball professional in the US, which gave Craig some pretty good genes for athletics, and in particular baseball.

Baseball was his dream, and he was a very promising pitcher.

When he was 12 years old, his baseball team was in the state final, and the night before the game, he decided to go into a batting net to face some super fast balls thrown from a ball machine.

He lined up with his bat, baseball style, and the first pitch was too close to his body, smashing into his pitching hand and shattering his fingers. The injury ended up taking him out for over 12 months, and ultimately finished his baseball career.

What on earth was God doing? Craig wasn't a Christian at the time, but still, what was the go? His dream was shattered like his fingers.

Craig's family moved to Ardmore, Oklahoma, apparently a sleepy part of America, and he ends up playing tennis instead of baseball.

This leads him to be part of a team which wins the state tennis championship and culminates in an all-expenses paid college scholarship to a prestigious university.

At this university, he meets Jesus and becomes a Christian, and also he meets the lady who is the love of his life and also a sold-out Christian.

Now, long story, I guess long, they planned a church called Life Church, which is now the biggest church in the history of North America.

If you took a photo the week after the accident, and you were a Christian, even simply a God-fearer, and you had shared your dream in prayer with God night after night of being a pro baseball player, in that photo, you could be forgiven for asking,

God, what on earth are you doing? I'm sure many of us can relate to the situation. We have a freeze-framed memory burned into our souls that asks, what are you doing, God? Or more accurately, with all due respect, Lord God, why have you done nothing?

It's a freeze-frame of pain, a freeze-frame of confusion and frustration and maybe anger, and it can lead to disappointment and ultimately unbelief. What do we do when God doesn't act the way we expect him to act?

The Apostle Paul had a strategic plan for advancing the Gospel. Go to Rome. If he could get to Rome and preach Jesus to the leaders there, the city would become a launch pad to spread the Gospel all over the world.

When Paul finally got to Rome, it wasn't to share Jesus with government officials. He went there as a prisoner. He was locked up under house arrest, chained to a rotating contingent of guards, awaiting a possible execution.

Paul's circumstances were out of his control. Have you discovered that circumstances are almost always out of our control? We've all been where Paul was.

Some of us are there right now. We're dealing with God's lack of perceived action. Paul wrote to the church at Philippi about what was happening to him.

He could easily have written, Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me is super disappointing. I wanted to spread the good news through preaching to government officials, but that did not happen.

As a result of this hell I've been through, I've decided prayer doesn't work and I'm never going back to church again. Paul didn't write that. Could have, but didn't.

Paul couldn't control what happened to him, but he could control how he framed it. Here's what he actually wrote to the Philippians. Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the Gospel.

As a result, it's become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I'm in chains for Christ.

And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the Gospel without fear. Paul was saying, I had a plan, but God had a better plan.

Paul reframes and realizes God has blessed him with prison guards who were chained to him. They have no choice but to listen to him, tell them about Jesus, and the soldiers have the ear of influential leaders.

Every eight hours, they chain a new guard to him. Was God doing nothing or something that looked with the wrong frame like nothing? What do you need to thank God for not doing?

Make no mistake, this is graduate Christianity. This is the real deal. What do you need to thank God for not doing?

I imagine we've all heard of collateral damage. Something bad happens, and the bad spreads through collateral damage. Innocent bystanders are impacted through the bad that occurs in life.

Reframing sees God's collateral goodness. God is always good, whether you notice his goodness or not. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says to love your enemies.

Part of the rationale for this is the fact that our Heavenly Father causes the sun to shine on the good and the evil people of this world, and he does the same with the rain. Be good to everyone, because God is good to everyone.

In the same way that there is collateral damage, there's also such a thing as collateral goodness. Did you know deciding to see God's collateral goodness is actually a habit? Looking at a glass half full or half empty is a habit.

It's a learned form of behaviour. Winging is learned. It's a habit.

It's a neural pathway. It's part of that neural plasticity we were talking about before. Gratitude for goodness is also learned through repetition.

Paul says a little further along in Philippians 4, I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need and I know what it is to have plenty.

I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

The secret to reframing is to know that God, who is good, is with us by his Spirit. And God is working all things together in an orchestral synergy. He's weaving moments in history together, events in our lives.

He is working them together for good, our good. He's always doing good and his good spills all over the place through collateral goodness. What frames in your life do you need to unfreeze and reframe to see God's hand at work?

By God's grace, we can reframe our past and we can pre-frame our future. To discover cognitive bias, we need to think about our thinking. What are the lenses you see the world through?

Is the glass half full or half empty? Have you discovered that most of the time, we find what we're looking for? When you think about your thinking, are you a vulture or a hummingbird?

Vultures soar high in the sky, searching. What does a vulture find? Vultures find dead things.

Vultures don't stop until they find lifeless roadkill. Vultures can sniff out a dead animal from more than a kilometer away and have been known to cruise 50 kilometers in search of rotting food. Is that the pre-frame of your life?

Ready to see the bad? Ready to live with unbelief? Ready to miss what God is up to?

Contrast the vulture with the tiny hummingbird. Its wings are flapping 20 beats a second. What do hummingbirds tend to find?

Not dead, disgusting, rancid meat, but sweet, life-giving nectar. Daily, each bird finds what it's looking for. I think that's a pretty cool analogy, don't you reckon?

We tend to find what we're looking for. When we reframe what happened in our yesterdays, it changes our todays. We're able to experience life without the old negative cognitive bias and start seeing life through the lens of God's goodness.

And we can pre-frame our future to look for the nectar, to look for God at work, because God is at work.

This life we're living which dominates our days, which is often what we're so worked up about, that is ourselves, this life is actually about God, His glory and His good news found in the story of His Son.

It's what the surrounding truth is telling us which forms the backdrop of the amazing verse we've been sitting in throughout this chapter.

We know that in all things, God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose. This isn't a random nice quote. It's in Chapter 8 of Paul's letter to the Church in Rome.

Paul began back in Chapter 1 by saying, Romans 1, I'm not ashamed of the Gospel because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes. First for the Jew, then to the Gentile.

For in the Gospel, the righteousness of God is revealed. Hear that? The good news is not just all about us.

Jesus didn't die and rise again just for us. He died to demonstrate the goodness, the absolute rightness of the Father. The good news is the righteousness of God revealed.

It is his collateral goodness. Then Chapter 2 and 3 of Romans unpacks how there is no one else who is righteous apart from God's son Jesus. In Chapter 5, God demonstrates how much he loves his world by giving Jesus to die in our place on a cross.

Chapter 7 tells us that we are all stuck, stuck in sin, stuck making the same old mistakes in ruts of sin. But Chapter 7 ends giving thanks for Jesus who has made a way for our salvation and leads in to Chapter 8, which begins with Romans 8 verse 1.

Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. This is the frame of reality. Romans Chapter 8 puts our lives into context.

It reframes our past and pre-frames our future. We saw a few weeks ago how in Chapter 8 verse 16, God by His Spirit testifies to our spirit that we are children of God. He affirms and confirms we belong.

We are saved by faith. We are okay. We are in the goodness of God.

And then Paul says in verse 18, it's not always easy to see God's goodness, but it's there. There's no reason to doubt him.

Paul says in Romans 8, I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed.

For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of

God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. You and I need to reframe. We need to know this, that God is saving the whole earth.

The earth itself, the plants and the rocks and the atmosphere, longs for redemption. That's the scale of His goodness. You wonder if He's good.

The rocks are crying out that He's good. Creation joins in a happy throng, every day acknowledging His goodness. Psalm 19 says, The heavens declare the glory of God, day after day, night after night.

They say, God is good, you know. He'll never stop being good. It's the great truth of human history.

The Creator of all things is good. He's so good.

And His goodness is most perfectly displayed in the glorious goodness of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who lived the life that He might die the death to pay for sin and who rose again, conquering sin, death and the devil.

Paul finishes this amazing chapter in verse 31, chapter 8 of Romans. What then shall we say in response to these things if God is for us, who can be against us?

He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all, how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things? 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'm 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. We need to be convinced that God is good. Reframe your past so that you can pre-frame your future. God is at work in your life, and he's up to something good.

God is at work in your life. Praise him for what he hasn't done, because God is at work in your life, and he's up to something good. See the grandeur of his works and the scope of his universal goodness, and give him the glory.

Express the gratitude oozing out of your grace-filled life. Enjoy his sovereign goodness. Embrace your kingdom purpose.

Move forward with an eternal perspective. Reframe, preframe. God is good all the time, and all the time God is good.

The glass is actually full and overflowing. We know that in all things, God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. Amen.