

To Glorify and Enjoy God

LESSON 10: DELIGHTING IN THE GOD OF PROVIDENCE

Intro:

“Because God controls the universe, chance is ruled out, and because it is God who controls the universe, fate is ruled out also.” **G.I. Williamson**⁷³

BIG IDEA: God is glorified by fulfilling His _____ in _____.

WSC Q. 11: What are God's works of providence?

A: God's works of providence are, his most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all his creatures, and all their actions.

WLC Q. 18. What are God's works of providence?

A: God's works of providence are his most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all his creatures; *ordering them*, and all their actions, *to his own glory*.

1. God the great Creator of all things doth uphold, direct, dispose, and govern all creatures, actions, and things, from the greatest even to the least, by his most wise and holy providence, according to his infallible foreknowledge, and the free and immutable counsel of his own will, to the praise of the glory of his wisdom, power, justice, goodness, and mercy.

- _____ taught that God created & then let it run on according to the laws He established.
- We believe that God not only created all things, but _____ all He created.
- In addition to upholding it, He _____ it to accomplish the purposes He had in mind.
- He _____ all things: put them in particular or suitable places ready for His purposes.
- All of God's _____ are on display, utilized, in the counsel of His own will.
- The Standards affirm a particular or _____ providence, not a general one.
- To accomplish His purposes, He ordains every part of the _____ not just the ends.

“He is not an isolated spectator who roots for us.” **R.C. Sproul**⁷⁴

“To walk by faith means to trust the character of God.” **R.C. Sproul**⁷⁵

⁷³ Williamson, pp. 47.

⁷⁴ Sproul, Vol. 1, pp. 154.

⁷⁵ Sproul, Vol. 1, pp. 151.

To Glorify and Enjoy God

...²⁵ nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. ²⁶ And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, ²⁷ that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, ²⁸ for “In him we live and move and have our being”;... **Acts 17**

- We see that God gave _____ to all of _____, not just to Adam and Eve.
- He disposes them according to His purposes, and _____ them.
- We see, in the quote from a poet, that He also upholds us by His _____.

2. Although, in relation to the foreknowledge and decree of God, the first Cause, all things come to pass immutably, and infallibly; yet, by the same providence, he orders them to fall out, according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily, freely, or contingently.

- The issue of _____ arises. Scripture speaks of God’s foreknowledge.
- Providence is more than foreknowledge, but _____ how all things will fall out.
- God is revealed at the ‘first Cause’ or uncaused cause who _____ upon all things.
- God does not always act immediately but decrees the use of _____ causes.

“In theology, however, providence is not foreknowledge. It is not limited to God’s ability to see into the future. Providence refers specifically to God’s care of the world and his ultimate supervision of it.” **R.C. Sproul**⁷⁶

“Doing no violence to the will of his creatures, God achieves his purposes through he chosen means.” **R.C. Sproul**⁷⁷

²¹ Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. **Exodus 14**

- He doesn’t just _____ it. He tells Moses to stretch out his hand. _____ on this act.
- God still didn’t just do it. He uses the _____ as a _____ cause as well.

3. God, in his ordinary providence, makes use of means, yet is free to work without, above, and against them, at his pleasure.

- God is not bound by any particular _____ and its _____.
- He can act directly,; _____ means.

⁷⁶ Sproul, Vol. 1, pp. 144.

⁷⁷ Sproul, Vol. 1, pp. 152

To Glorify and Enjoy God

- He can work _____ means, like the wind at the Red Sea.
- He can also work _____ an ordinary means according to His pleasure & wisdom.

“We are, therefore, bound to use the means which he has appointed, and if we neglect these, we cannot expect to obtain the end.” **Robert Shaw**⁷⁸

WLC Q. 19. What is God’s providence towards the angels?

A: God by his providence permitted some of the angels, willfully and irrecoverably, to fall into sin and damnation, limiting and ordering that, and all of their sins, to his own glory; and established the rest in holiness and happiness; employing them all, at his pleasure, in the administrations of his power, mercy, and justice.

4. The almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness of God so far manifest themselves in his providence, that it extends itself even to the first fall, and all other sins of angels and men; and that not by a bare permission, but such as hath joined with it a most wise and powerful bounding, and otherwise ordering, and governing of them, in a manifold dispensation, to his own holy ends; yet so, as the sinfulness thereof proceeds only from the creature, and not from God, who, being most holy and righteous, neither is nor can be the author or approver of sin.

- God’s providence extends even to the fall of men and angels, and all their _____.
- God had a _____ in the fall of Adam, and the rebellion of the angels.
- “not by a bare permission.” Part of his ordinary _____ & governing of the creatures.
- While they intend to commit evil God has His own holy ends or _____ in view.
- God was not simply making the best out of a bad situation but _____ it for good.
- The sinfulness proceeds from the _____, not the Creator.
- He ordains sin in light of the _____ of the creature. He doesn’t put sinful desires in.
- While He ordains our sin, for holy purposes, He does not approve of our sin in any way.

¹³Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God,” for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. **James 1**

“Stupid is as stupid does.” **Forrest Gump**

“Sinner is as sinner does.” **Pastor Steve**

5. The most wise, righteous, and gracious God doth oftentimes leave, for a season, his own children to manifold temptations, and the corruption of their own hearts, to chastise them for their former sins, or to discover unto them the hidden strength of corruption and deceitfulness of their hearts, that they may be humbled; and, to raise them to a more close and constant

⁷⁸ Shaw, pp. 69.

To Glorify and Enjoy God

dependence for their support upon himself, and to make them more watchful against all future occasions of sin, and for sundry other just and holy ends.

- There are times when God _____ us to manifold temptations & _____.
- The sin is in our hearts, He simply withholds some measure of _____ to _____ it.
- One purpose is to _____ us because He loves us & wants us to experience the misery.
- Another purpose is to help us see the power & _____ of our corruption.
- He _____ us by our inability to prevail over particular sins.
- He wants us to grow in our _____ upon Him by revealing our self-reliance.
- God has wise, good and holy purposes in ordaining our sin: our _____.

²⁸ And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good for those who are called according to his purpose. **Romans 8**

- God's _____ here is clear and all inclusive. God works all things together for good.
- All things are not good. All things include our _____ & times we are _____ against.

“Yet the fact that evil exists in a universe governed by a perfectly holy God must mean that he has good purposes in mind.” **R.C. Sproul**⁷⁹

6. As for those wicked and ungodly men whom God, as a righteous Judge, for former sins, doth blind and harden, from them he not only withholds his grace whereby they might have been enlightened in their understandings, and wrought upon in their hearts; but sometimes also withdraws the gifts which they had, and exposes them to such objects as their corruption makes occasions of sin; and, withal, gives them over to their own lusts, the temptations of the world, and the power of Satan, whereby it comes to pass that they harden themselves, even under those means which God uses for the softening of others.

- God acts as a _____ towards them on the basis of their former sin: executing justice.
- He blinds & _____ them thru and in their sin. This is the Romans 1 cycle!
- He withholds _____ to them, and sometimes withdraws any gifts they have.
- People are given over to their _____, the temptations of the world and Satan's power.
- They _____ themselves by rejecting grace offered in the Word, and pursuing sin.

⁵ But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. **Romans 2**

¹⁸ So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills. **Romans 9**

⁷⁹ Sproul, Vol. 1, pp. 157.

To Glorify and Enjoy God

By rejecting this, some have made shipwreck of their faith,²⁰ among whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme. **1 Timothy 1**

³⁰For we know him who said, “Vengeance is mine; I will repay.” And again, “The Lord will judge his people.” ³¹It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. **Hebrews 10**

- Wicked people store up _____ for themselves due to their hard impenitence.
- God hardens whom He chooses to. He withdraws grace so _____ fall on _____ ears.
- Some are even handed over to Satan, in _____, in the hope of repentance.

“This may be the hardest and most controversial section in the confession.” **R.C. Sproul**⁸⁰

“Far from taking away their free will, he delivers them over to their free will, by which they choose to do the evil desires of their hearts.” **R.C. Sproul**⁸¹

“This he does, not by infusing any wickedness into their hearts, or by any direct and positive influence on their souls in rendering them obdurate, but by withholding his grace, which is necessary to soften their hearts, and which he is free to give or withhold as he pleases.” **Robert Shaw**⁸²

7. As the providence of God doth, in general, reach to all creatures; so, after a most special manner, it taketh care of his church, and disposes all things to the good thereof.

- At times it seems as if He _____ the Church because she is in _____.
- But God continues to preserve a _____, and works all toward Her good.

Do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he appeals to God against Israel?

³“Lord, they have killed your prophets, they have demolished your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life.” ⁴But what is God's reply to him? “I have kept for myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.” ⁵So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace. **Romans 11**

How does all this help you to glorify & enjoy God?

28. Q. What does it benefit us to know that God has created all things and still upholds them by His providence?

⁸⁰ Sproul, Vol. 1, pp. 164.

⁸¹ Sproul, Vol. 1, pp. 166.

⁸² Shaw, pp. 71.

To Glorify and Enjoy God

A. We can be patient in adversity, thankful in prosperity, and with a view to the future we can have a firm confidence in our faithful God and Father that no creature shall separate us from His love; for all creatures are so completely in His hand that without His will they cannot so much as move. *Heidelberg Catechism*