

Session 8 Providence

I. Discipleship Scenario

2. Discussion Questions

a. “*God’s Providence*” (Chap. 8 of Bible Doctrine)

Review Questions

- Define and give scriptural support for the doctrine of preservation. How does this teaching provide a basis for scientific activity?
- How can an event be fully caused by God and fully caused by a creature as well?
- How would you define the relationship of God to the evil in the world?
- From the perspective of the author, in what ways can we say that people have “free will”?
- If God is in control of all things, are human actions significant? Why?
- What is the primary difference between the doctrine of providence as defined in this chapter and the viewpoint of Arminianism?

Questions for Personal Application

- Has thinking about the doctrine of providence increased your trust in God?
- Has it changed the way you think about the future? Cite an example of a specific difficulty you are currently facing and explain how the doctrine of providence will help you in the way you think about it.
- Can you name five good things that have happened to you today? Can you see the role God has played in these things?
- Do you sometimes think of luck or chance as playing a role in the circumstances of your life? Does that thought increase or decrease your anxiety about the future? Think about some events that may have attributed to luck in the past and, instead, begin to think of those events under the control of your wise and loving heavenly Father. How does that make you feel differently about them or about the future in general?
- Do you ever find yourself in a pattern of “superstitious” actions or rituals that you think will bring good luck or prevent bad luck? Do you think those

actions tend to increase or decrease your trust in God during the day or your obedience to him?

- Explain how a right understanding of the doctrine of providence should lead a Christian to a more active prayer life.

b. “Does Divine Sovereignty Make a Difference in Everyday Life?”, by Jerry Bridges

Review and Application Questions

- The author says that God is not opposed to planning only *presumptuous planning* that ignores the purpose and sovereignty of God. Why is God opposed to this kind of planning? How often do you tend to plan this way?
- What is *exhaustive divine sovereignty*? What is the fundamental difference that believing in exhaustive divine sovereignty makes in the life of a believer? (See page 207)
- Do you believe that this perspective promotes irresponsible living?
- How does anxiety reflect a lack of trusting the character of God? Is it important to repent of anxiety? How does one practically do this? What does repentance look like?
- Does believing in exhaustive divine sovereignty mean that we should be indifferent to dangers and temptations since God allows them? Why or why not?
- The writer writes, “*the comfort God intends for us to derive from his sovereignty is dependent upon our believing it.*” What is the relationship between faith and comfort? How does trusting in God’s sovereignty provide a way of escape from bitterness.
- Why is faith in the “*infinite love and unfathomable wisdom*” of God essential if one is going to find comfort in the doctrine of sovereignty? What is the definition of God’s wisdom that we studied earlier?

3. Scripture Memory Verse

Romans 8:28 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.

4. Exercise

Take time to pray communicating trust in God’s sovereignty, using specific passages as a guide. Encourage the men to cast their cares on God, and invite them to repent where necessary for being anxious and lacking confidence in the character of God.



5. Assignment for Next Time

Read chapter 1 in Holiness, by J.C. Ryle; chapter 5 in Godward Life II, by John Piper; and chapter 11 in The Discipline of Grace, by Jerry Bridges.

Next meeting is _____.