

Central Idea

Developing Trust

1. a. What is God's providence?
 - b. What is the purpose or objective of God's providence?
 - c. Describe a situation in your life when God's will and your best interests seemed to be in conflict.
 - d. How was this conflict resolved?

2. What do the following verses say about God's providence?

KJV Psalm 31:15 My times *are* in thy hand: deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me.

KJV Psalm 147:8 Who covereth the heaven with clouds, who prepareth rain for the earth, who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains. 9 He giveth to the beast his food, *and* to the young ravens which cry.

KJV Acts 17:24 God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; 25 Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; 26 And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; 27 That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: 28 For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.

KJV 2 Corinthians 9:10 Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for *your* food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness;)

3. What specific evidence of God's sustaining presence in the universe is most dramatic to you? (Illustrations from science would be appropriate here.)

4. a. In what ways do people see God's providence as limited?

b. Do you think of God's providence as limited? Explain

c. In what ways do you act as though God's providence is limited even though you may believe that it isn't?

5. a. Restate Matthew 10:29-31 in your own words.

b. Think about a person who sees chance or randomness as the explanation for all that happens. How would this philosophy affect his or her life?

c. What would such a person value?

d. How does Matthew 10:29-31 refute such a perspective?

6. a. Do you believe that God is active in the daily affairs of your life?

b. What evidence do you see, from your past or present for His involvement in your life?

7. There is an invisible war being waged between God and Satan, and our lives are often the battleground. What do the following passages say about Satan's ability to touch us?

KJV Job 1:12 And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath *is* in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD.

KJV Job 2:6 And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, he *is* in thine hand; but save his life.

KJV Luke 22:31 And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired *to have* you, that he may sift *you* as wheat: 32 But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.

8. God never permits people to act contrary to His Sovereign will. How do the following verses support this statement?

KJV Proverbs 16:9 A man's heart deviseth his way: but the LORD directeth his steps.

KJV Proverbs 19:21 *There are* many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand.

KJV Lamentations 3:37 Who *is* he *that* saith, and it cometh to pass, *when* the Lord commandeth *it* not?

KJV James 4:13 Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: 14 Whereas ye know not what *shall be* on the morrow. For what *is* your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. 15 For that ye *ought* to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.

9. What Conclusions about God and what He does can you draw from these verses?

KJV Job 42:2 I know that thou canst do every *thing*, and *that* no thought can be withholden from thee.

KJV Psalm 115:3 But our God *is* in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.

KJV Psalm 46:10 Be still, and know that I *am* God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.

KJV Daniel 4:34 And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom *is* from generation to generation: 35 And all the inhabitants of the earth *are* reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and *among* the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?

10. In his book *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*, Rabbi Harold Kushner concludes that God cannot be both sovereign and good, and so Kushner chooses to believe in a God who is good.
- What do you think about Rabbi Kushner's conclusion?

 - How do you reconcile God's goodness and His sovereignty? That is, if God is able to prevent evil, and if He is committed to good, then why doesn't He prevent evil?
11. We need to be very sensitive in teaching others about the sovereignty of God and encouraging them to trust God when they are in the midst of problems or pain. It is much easier to trust in the sovereignty of God when it is the other person who is hurting. We need to be like Jesus, of whom it was said, "A bruised reed he will not break" (Matthew 12:20). Job lost his children, his wealth, and his health. His friends preached to him about God's sovereignty. Read Job's response to his friends in Job 6:14-27.
- What did Job's friends do wrong? How did they "bruise" him?

 - If you had a friend in Job's position, how would you deal with him when he questioned God's sovereignty and goodness?

Trust in Action

Choose one to do this week.

- Choose one of the following Bible characters and read his or her story. Briefly summarize how God guided the events in this person's life. Remember that these stories were given to us for encouragement (see Romans 15:4). What God did for these people He will do for you.
 - Joseph: Genesis 37; 39-45

- Esther: Ester
- Ruth: Ruth

2. Think of someone you know who is in a difficult situation. Express God's love to him or her in a tangible way (prepare a meal, write a note of encouragement, offer to help with household repairs, and so forth).
3. Memorize Romans 8:28-29