



A Study for Children
on the Providence of God

By Sally Michael

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PREFACE



Over the years in our ministry together, my husband and I have seen professing Christian adults respond to the difficult storms of life—a miscarriage, a cancer diagnosis, physical affliction of their child—in different ways. Some are unshakable rocks in the face of tremendous heartache while others succumb to spiritual defeat even in the face of relatively small crises. In this latter group, some question the goodness of God, others lash out in anger at God, and some even question the very existence of God. Inevitably, the culprit—that which causes them to falter spiritually—is poor theology. The cry of their hearts time and again is, “How could a good God let this happen to me?” They have no conception that an all-loving, gracious God could be acting in love when cancer strikes or a young child dies. There is no understanding that everything that happens to a child of God comes from His fatherly heart of love for His children. He is not powerless to act, He is not asleep or ignorant of our plight, nor does He take pleasure in our suffering. Rather, God has promised to carry us through the storms of life, He directs everything to serve His good purposes, He will turn all things for our good, and He mourns with those who mourn. In His love, God has chosen His children and will carry them through to maturity in Christ. God leaves nothing to chance; He has so orchestrated the details of our lives that His good work in us will be brought to completion (Philippians 1:6). However, without theological underpinnings, faith often falters in the hard times.

This curriculum was born out of a desire to give children a solid theological foundation so that when the difficult storms of life hit them, they will be prepared. If our children can understand that nothing is outside the control of the all-powerful, all-loving God of the universe, and that all things He brings into their lives is for their good, they may weather the storms of life filled with faith. May they, like the apostles, rejoice *because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name (Acts 5:41)*. May they triumphantly proclaim in the hard times, *Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal (2 Corinthians 4:16-18)*. May our children see the eternal, unseen things of God rather than the temporary, seen things of this world!

Our children need to see that God has the right to work in any way that He pleases and all that He does is right. He does not need anyone’s permission or blessing or even approval for His

actions. He has sovereign rights over His creation. To question His purposes or His ways is to question His right to be God.

May it be that not only would our children accept the ways of God without question, but may they also excitedly embrace the purposes and work of God—whatever they are, and no matter how it affects them personally. What a joy it would be to see children who grow to be adults who have an unshakable faith in the purposes and the promises of God. May they look with anticipation toward God's "summons" in their lives, realizing that they are part of God's wonderfully designed plan for the world. May the truth of *Isaiah 46:9b-11* be their confidence—*I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me. I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please. From the east I summon a bird of prey; from a far-off land, a man to fulfill my purpose. What I have said, that will I bring about; what I have planned, that will I do.*

MY PURPOSE WILL STAND was written to help children see that God is not an idle God. He is actively fulfilling His purposes. He is not "hoping that things work out," He is at work "making things work out." My prayer is that after studying *MY PURPOSE WILL STAND* the response of the children will be a sense of awe that the sovereign God of the universe who has so carefully orchestrated His acts in this world works His good purposes through them. May there be an anticipation of the purposes of God in their worldview that their continual, humble response is, "God, what are you up to in this situation?" May they so trust His purposes, His power to bring about His purposes, and His heart for His people, that they are unshakable in their confidence in God. May they trust in God all the days of their lives, and may they know His surrounding love.

Those who trust in the LORD are like Mount Zion, which cannot be shaken but endures forever. As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the LORD surrounds his people both now and forevermore. —Psalm 125:1-2



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"Providence of God," by Wayne Grudem	A1
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TAKE HOME SHEETS: Growing in Faith

Note to Parents

A Word About "Growing in Faith" Sheets

*Underlined lessons are lessons which can be omitted if time does not allow for all forty lessons. If you are omitting lessons that use puzzle pieces, be sure to include those pieces at a later date.

LESSON 2 THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD



SCRIPTURE:

Psalm 11:4; Proverbs 15:3; Hebrews 1:10b; Deuteronomy 3:24; Genesis 21:14-19; Genesis 8:1; Nehemiah 1:3; Nehemiah 2:1-8

MEMORY VERSE:

Psalm 103:19—The LORD has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all.

KEY THEMES:

God is watching over the universe and He is working in the universe.

WORSHIP SONGS:

See the Appendix for a list of suggested worship songs. Songs that show the greatness of God and encourage children to worship God are appropriate songs to use.

VISUALS & MATERIALS:

Bible; letter cards to spell PROVIDENCE (See Resource Packet); picture of an eye and a picture of a hand (See Resource Packet); chalkboard or white board and chalk/marker; camp stove, electric burner or frypan; cook-and-serve pudding; milk; saucepan; spoon; bowl; eye/hand cards (eye on one side and hand on the other)—enough for all children in class (See Resource Packet); *GROWING IN FAITH* sheets; activity--letters for bulletin board title.

PREPARATION:

Study the scripture passages carefully and prayerfully. Ask God to make them real in your own heart. Be open to what God may be teaching you in this lesson. Study the lesson well. Pray for the children in your class.

Cut apart the PROVIDENCE letter cards. If you plan to have a contest between two sets of children, you will need to make a copy of the cards.

Copy the eye/hand cards and cut them apart. You will need a picture of an eye and a picture of a hand for each student.

Find/borrow a camp stove, electric burner or electric frypan. Collect the ingredients and utensils to make pudding.

Make enough copies of *GROWING IN FAITH* sheets for each child in the class.

INTRODUCTION

Give ten children the letter cards and ask them to spell a word that tells us something about God. (Or you could have two groups each with cards try to compete to see which group can figure out the word first.)

Explain that you will be studying the PROVIDENCE of God. (You may even want to have children try to define the word providence.)

Explain that although the word providence seems like a difficult word, there is an easy way to understand the meaning of the PROVIDENCE OF GOD.

If you do not have ten children, you can give the children more than one letter.

If the students are unable to figure out the word, you may have to give them some hints.

If your children are younger, you can hide the letters around the room and ask the children to find them. As they bring you the letters, you can then spell the word PROVIDENCE.

LESSON

Show the picture of an eye and a picture of a hand from the Resource Packet. Explain that if the children can remember to think about an eye and a hand, they will be able to understand the PROVIDENCE OF GOD.

Show the eye and ask the children what eyes do [see things]; then show the hand and ask what hands do [do things].

Tell the children that the Bible talks about the “eyes” of God and the “hand” of God. Have a sword drill with the following verses:

Psalm 11:4—The LORD is in his holy temple; the LORD is on his heavenly throne. He observes the sons of men; his eyes examine them.

Proverbs 15:3—The eyes of the LORD are everywhere, keeping watch on the wicked and the good.

Hebrews 1:10b—In the beginning, O Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands.

Deuteronomy 3:24—O Sovereign LORD, you have begun to show to your servant your greatness and your strong hand. For what god is there in heaven or on earth who can do the deeds and mighty works you do?

Ask the children what these verses say about the eyes and the hand of God. [eyes—God sees everything; hand—God made everything and God still works in this world; God does things] Use the term “universe” if the children you are teaching can understand it. If you are teaching younger children, you may need to use the term “world.”

See sword drill directions on p.13.

Explain to the children that this is a picture of the PROVIDENCE of God. Take the two pictures again of the eye and hand and explain PROVIDENCE as follows:

God's EYE is on the universe/world (Show the eye picture.)
God's HAND is in the universe/world (Show the hand picture.)
God's EYE is watching over the universe
God's HAND is working in the universe

Use the term "universe" if the children you are teaching can understand it. If you are teaching younger children, you may need to use the term "world."

Explain that the PROVIDENCE OF GOD means that God sees everything and God works in everything that happens in the world.

THEME: God is watching over the universe and He is working in the universe.

Write the word PROVIDENCE on the board and ask the children if they can find a word they know in the word providence. [provide] Explain that God's providence is His act of providing for the universe; it is God "taking care of" the universe

Give the following example of the PROVIDENCE of God:

Put a pan of cook-and-serve pudding on a lit burner of a camp stove. Explain that you are "watching over" your pudding. You know that it will come to a boil. Note that while you are watching the pudding you will also occasionally stir the pudding to keep it from burning. If the burner goes out, you will relight the burner. If the flame is too high, you will turn the flame down, etc.

The pudding should already be mixed with the milk and in a pan. You may want to use a small amount of pudding to speed up this illustration.

Explain that this is a picture of your providence over the pudding. You are not only watching the pudding, but you are working for the pudding. You are acting; you are doing something.

Explain that God's providence over the universe is something like your providence over your pudding. God not only sees all that is in the universe, but all of it is under His care.

Pass out to each child an eye and a hand card. Read the following scripture passages. Ask the children to identify the providence of God in these stories; God's eye is watching over the universe; God's hand is working in the universe. As they identify the "eye" and "hand" of God, ask them to hold up the appropriate side of the card.

Genesis 21:14-19

eye—God heard Ishmael crying; God saw Ishmael and Hagar in the wilderness
hand—God opened Hagar's eyes to see a well of water

Genesis 8:1

eye—God remembered Noah and the animals in the ark
hand—God sent a wind over the earth and the water went down

Nehemiah 1:3; 2:1-8

eye—God saw the condition of Jerusalem and Nehemiah's desire to rebuild the wall
hand—God gave Nehemiah the king's favor

Review that the PROVIDENCE of God is
God's EYE is watching over the universe
God's HAND is working in the universe

God's providence is His act of providing for the universe; it is God "taking care of" the universe

APPLICATION

What do you think about God seeing everything in the universe? Is that a good thing or a bad thing? Why?

Why is God watching over the universe?

What does it mean that God's hand is working in the universe? What kinds of things do you think God is doing? How does that affect you?

Application can most effectively be done in a small group setting. The questions are just suggestions of possible directions to take the discussion. Pray for wisdom and ask the Holy Spirit to guide you. Be sensitive to the answers and the needs of the children.

Have the children work on their workbook pages while you discuss the questions. This will hold their attention longer and will encourage them to open up without having to look you directly in the eye. Also, if you uncover a particular need of one child, you can focus on that one child, and the other children will be occupied. Be sure to pray for the children and encourage them to pray for each other.

ACTIVITIES

1. If the children did not work on the workbook page during the discussion, they can work on it now.
2. Make a bulletin board with the title: *GOD'S EYE IS WATCHING OVER THE UNIVERSE; GOD'S HAND IS WORKING IN THE UNIVERSE.*

SEND HOME

GROWING IN FAITH sheet.

LESSON 2
THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD



SCRIPTURE:

Psalm 11:4; Proverbs 15:3; Hebrews 1:10b; Deuteronomy 3:24; Genesis 21:14-19; Genesis 8:1; Nehemiah 1:3; Nehemiah 2:1-8

MEMORY VERSE:

Psalm 103:19—The LORD has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all.

KEY THEMES:

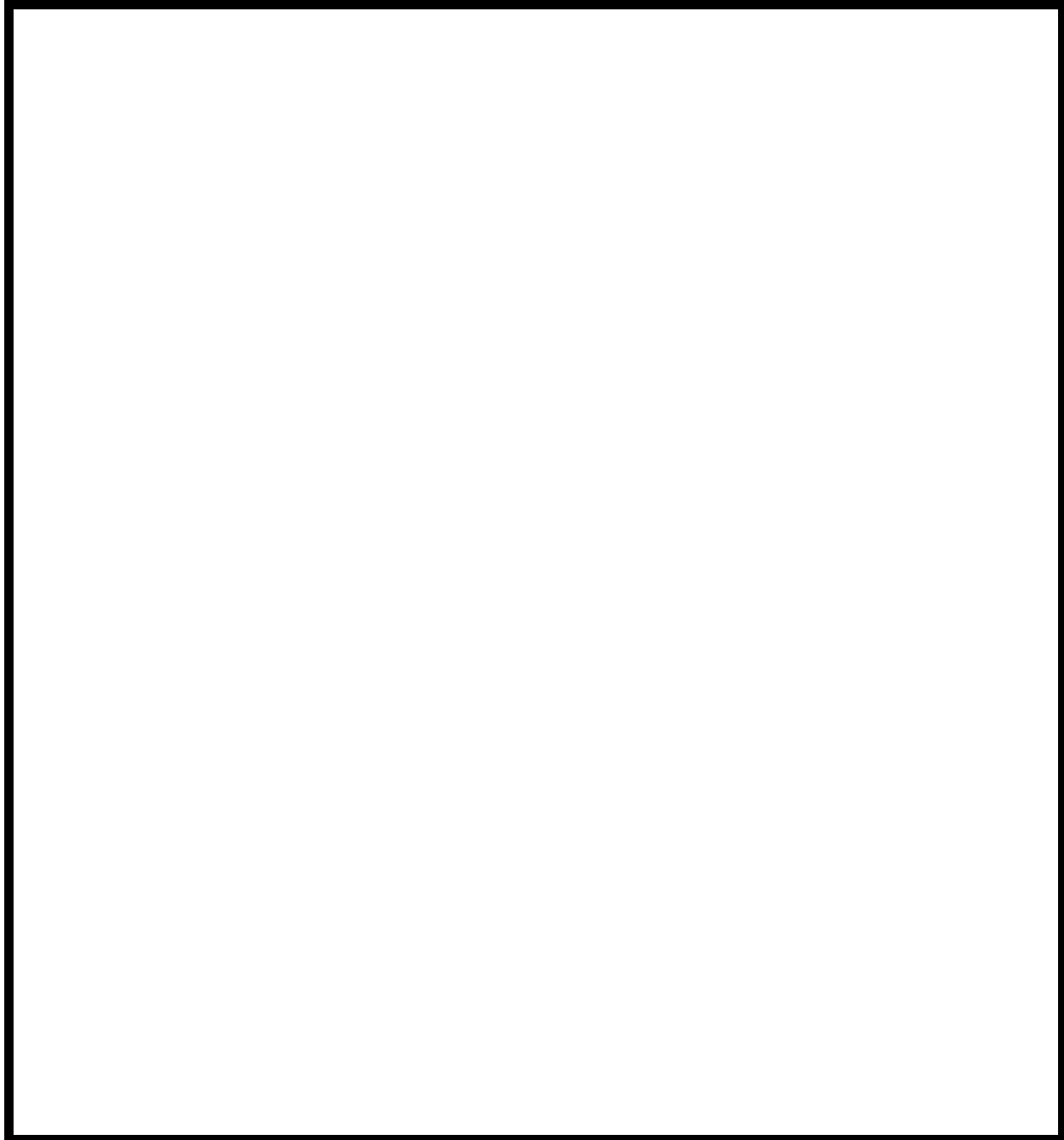
God is watching over the universe and He is working in the universe.



THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD

God's EYE is on the universe.

God's HAND is in the universe.



**GOD IS WATCHING OVER THE UNIVERSE
AND HE IS WORKING IN THE UNIVERSE.**

GROWING IN FAITH

LESSON 2 THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD



SCRIPTURE:

Psalm 11:4; Proverbs 15:3; Hebrews 1:10b; Deuteronomy 3:24;
Genesis 21:14-19; Genesis 8:1; Nehemiah 1:3; Nehemiah 2:1-8

KEY THEMES:

God is watching over the universe and He is working in the universe.

MEMORY VERSE:

Psalm 103:19—The LORD has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all.

Read *Psalm 103:20-22*. Find two things in these verses that tell you that verse 19 is true.

LOOK AND SEE:

Read the following New Testament verses that tell us that God's throne is in heaven: *Mark 16:19, Acts 7:49, Revelation 5:1*.

Read the following verses that says God's kingdom rules over all: *Matthew 28:18, Colossians 1:16-17, Revelation 7:14*.

TALK:

Talk over what you found with someone else in your family. Then ask Mom or Dad what kinds of things God rules over. (Be sure to think about the word all from the memory verse.)

PRAY:

Pray that God will allow you to see His work of providence (purpose) in your life and in your family's life.

JOURNAL:

Each day write about the events that have happened which show God's providence. Be sure to describe what happened and how you see God's purpose in the event. (These could be "maybe" statements because we as human beings cannot always see God's purposes clearly.)

ALWAYS LOOK UP

By Noël Piper

The young couple was snorkeling, for the first time ever, in the warm Caribbean bay, near a harbor where boats were coming and going. "The boat sounds seem very loud," Mrs. Clausen said. Another woman nearby, who had snorkeled many times, said, "Whenever you hear a boat, look up! Don't just assume that the boat is far away. Always look up to make sure." She had no idea how important her words would be the very next day.

The next day, Mr. and Mrs. Clausen went snorkeling again, this time in a place where no boats are supposed to go. When Mrs. Clausen heard the sound of a boat, God reminded her of the warning, "Look up!" She looked up and saw a boat speeding straight toward her. There was no time to swim out of the way! Immediately, she dived straight down, hoping to get deep beneath the boat. The propeller of the motor hit her legs and cut them very severely.

If she had not heard the warning the day before, she would have ignored the boat. Then the injury would have been to her head or body, probably killing her. The warning that God had given her through the other woman saved Mrs. Clausen's life.

What would happen now, though? She needed immediate medical attention, but this was a small island with no hospital and not much medical equipment. Usually, people who get injuries like hers get terrible infections. The infections can cause almost as much damage as the original injury.

God had prepared for this very moment in Mrs. Clausen's life. A couple was vacationing next to the beach. When the man saw the accident, he ran to get his wife. His wife was a highly-trained emergency room nurse. She knew exactly what to do to fight infection. She ordered the other vacationers, "Run straight to your cottages, and bring me glasses of water – lots of glasses of water!" Then she very carefully poured fresh water into and around and over every part of the wounded legs, cleaning away the bacteria-filled sea water.

Then the nurse rode with Mrs. Clausen to the clinic. Since she was there to help, the clinic doctor could concentrate on the most urgent medical needs.

It was a long time before Mrs. Clausen recovered completely, but today she is healthy and her legs are fine. When she remembers that terrifying moment of being hit, she says that there was only a split second to think about anything. The most important thing that flashed into her mind was, "I know God loves me."

(Suggestion: Keep your eyes open this week. Look for ways that God works things together for your good. Or listen for a story of what He's done for someone else.)