

FAMILY WORSHIP HELPS

WEEK II

THIS WEEK'S FOCUS

QUESTION II: *What are the works of providence?*

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

MONDAY

Praise: Sing Psalm 103D

Scripture: Read Psalm 145:1-21

Key Thought: *God's works of providence are holy, wise, and powerful.*

Questions:

- Ⓒ What does the word "providence" mean?
- Ⓒ How is God's holiness seen in His providence?
- Ⓒ How is God's wisdom seen in His providence?
- Ⓒ How is God's power seen in His providence?
- Ⓒ If every circumstance proceeds from God's holiness, wisdom, and power, what confidence does that give those who trust in Him?
- Ⓒ How should you respond to this truth?

Prayer

Notes: Having looked at God's work of creation, we now return to a consideration of His works of providence. Explain to your children the meaning of the word "providence" which comes from the root "provide." God not only created the world, but He also provides for the working out of His plan among His creatures. He keeps all creatures in life, preserves them from danger, and overrules all their actions for His own glory. Since God is perfectly holy, wise, and powerful, these attributes can be seen in His acts of providence in the world. His holiness can be seen in His overruling of the evil acts of men for His own glory and the good of His people. His wisdom can be seen in His purposeful design of all His creatures and in His arrangement of events for His glory. His power can be seen in the extent of His control over every detail of life and in the triumph of His purposes despite the actions of rebellious men. Challenge your children to cite examples of God's holiness, wisdom and power that they have observed in the outworking of His providence in the world. Show them what great comfort there is for the people of God in knowing that God is purposefully working in every circumstance of life to accomplish His will.

Praise: Sing Psalm 103D

Scripture: Read Hebrews 1:1-14

Key Thought: *God's providence is preserving.*

Questions:

- ☪ What kinds of power make things run?
- ☪ Do these sources of power exist by themselves?
- ☪ What is the power that makes them work and that holds all things together?
- ☪ If Christ ceased to exist, what would happen to the world?
- ☪ Does any man or any thing have power that is not directly given by God through Christ?
- ☪ Since Christ upholds all things by the word of His power, what is every man's duty toward Him?

Prayer

Notes: Today's emphasis is on the preserving aspect of God's providence. The author of Hebrews tells us plainly that Christ is "upholding all things by the word of His power." The meaning behind the word "upholding" is that He bears it up, and keeps all things from falling into chaos. It is the active power of Christ that sustains the world and maintains its very existence. Explore the concept of "power" with your children, asking them to identify the sources of power in the world that make things run. Show them that all power in the world must have a source, and explain to them that the power of God is behind all the power at work in the world. Help them to see that since God created the world it is dependent upon His power, and that if He ceased to exist, the world could not exist either. The active work of Christ in upholding all things is absolutely necessary for the world to exist. The realization of the sovereign power of Christ shows us that there is no power on earth that is not given by God. This should produce within us great fear and reverence for the power of Christ, confidence in His ability to accomplish the purpose for which He upholds all things, humility in realizing that we have no power in ourselves apart from Him, and the desire to submit to the will of the One who holds all things in His powerful hand.

Praise: Sing Psalm 103D

Scripture: Read Psalm 103:1-22; Isaiah 9:6-7

Key Thought: *God's providence is governing.*

Questions:

- ☪ What does the word "govern" mean?
- ☪ What kinds of "governments" exist in the world?

- ☪ What does it mean that God “governs” all things and that “His kingdom is over all”?
- ☪ Can a human government rebel against God? Can they prevail?
- ☪ How should you respond to God’s governing of all things?

Prayer

Notes: There are some who believe that God’s providence is limited to His preserving of all things, but that He does not directly control all things. Contrary to this, the Scriptures and the *Catechism* affirm that God’s governs all His creatures and all their actions according to His purpose. Talk with your children about the meaning of the word “govern” which includes the concepts of authority and control. Ask them to list some of the kinds of governments that are seen in the world, which include civil government, family government, and church government. Explain to them that the authority and power of all human governments are derived from God and are limited by His will. Human governments may rebel against God, but they can never overthrow His purposes because even their rebellion is governed by Him. Show them that God has committed all governing authority to Christ, and that He rules over all things at the right hand of God. Not only does Christ uphold all things by the word of His power, but He governs all things for the accomplishment of His purposes. The recognition of Christ’s government should give us hope and confidence in knowing that He will overrule in all things and that His purpose will prevail. In the face of world events and personal circumstances, we can trust that He is governing for His glory.

THURSDAY

Praise: Sing Psalm 103D

Scripture: Read Jonah 4:1-11; Matthew 6:25-24; 10:28-31

Key Thought: *God’s providence extends to all His creatures.*

Questions:

- ☪ Where did the plant, the worm, and the east wind come from in Jonah 4?
- ☪ What did Jesus tell His disciples about lilies and sparrows?
- ☪ What does this teach us about the extent of God’s providence?
- ☪ What does this tell you about the details of your life?

Prayer

Notes: The extent of God’s providence is the focus of our lesson today. The *Catechism* affirms that God preserves and governs all His creatures. There is no part of God’s creation that is not directly controlled by His power. The passages from Jonah and Matthew illustrate God’s providential control of even the most minute details of the world. There are at least two applications to impress on your children. First, if God prepares plants and worms and winds

to do His will, how much more should we seek to be obedient to Him in all things? Second, God's children need not worry about His provision for them. We are not to be anxious for anything. If God providentially provides for the lilies of the field, ordains the life and death of every tiny sparrow, and numbers the hairs on each of our heads, we can be assured that He will provide what is best as we seek His kingdom and His righteousness. Challenge your children with these things, and encourage them to acknowledge specific ways that they have failed to trust in God's providence by being anxious. Pray together, thanking God for the extent of His providence and praising Him for His awesome power seen in His control of even the tiniest details the world.



FRIDAY



Praise: Sing Psalm 103D

Scripture: Read Acts 4:23-31; Proverbs 16:9

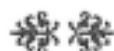
Key Thought: *God governs all the actions of His creatures.*

Questions:

- ☪ Why did Herod, Pilate, the Gentiles and the Jews put Jesus to death? Who controlled their actions? Were they responsible for what they did?
- ☪ Do men make choices and decisions? Who governs the actions of men?
- ☪ If we were not responsible for our actions, would God still be just?
- ☪ If God did not govern our actions, would He still be omnipotent?

Prayer

Notes: The fact that God governs all of the actions of His creatures is a mystery that can't be fully understood by the mind of man. Yet the Bible clearly affirms this truth. The passage in Acts shows how God overruled the actions of those who put Jesus to death, in order "to do whatever His hand and His purpose determined before to be done." Men remain completely responsible for their actions, but God's purpose is carried out in spite of their evil deeds. Help your children to see that if God did not govern all the actions of His creatures, He would not be all-powerful. Likewise, if men were not responsible for their actions, God would not be perfectly just. As we purpose to obey God's will by His grace, we can rest in God's power and perfect justice as He accomplishes His will by providentially governing all the actions of His creatures for His own glory.



Note: Only five lessons per week are included. You are encouraged to lead your family in worship seven days a week. On weekends, you may want to review or build upon the lessons from the previous week, discuss the sermon from Sunday morning, or work on questions from the Catechism or memory verses. These lesson suggestions are intended to provide a simple framework for parents to build upon. You are not limited to this content. The habit of morning and evening family worship is the biblical ideal. We hope you can use these lessons as a starting point for the development of a blessed practice of family worship in your home.