GENESIS PRACTICAL THEOLOGY | STUDENT HANDOUT

BONUS 2

THE SOVEREIGN ACTOR

Human Responsibility and the Providence of God in Genesis 1-15

MAIN IDEA **Genesis is filled with consequential human action, but God is the central Actor: people truly act and remain responsible, while God sovereignly advances his purpose.**

Lesson Objectives

- Trace God's major actions across Genesis 1-15.
- Distinguish divine sovereignty from fatalism and human responsibility from autonomy.
- Explain how judgment, preservation, promise, and covenant move the Genesis story forward.
- Identify how Babel and Abraham contrast self-made greatness with received blessing.
- Connect Genesis 15 to the apostolic teaching of Romans 4 and Galatians 3.
- Apply the doctrine of providence to obedience, suffering, planning, worship, and hope.

Teaching Overview

This bonus session looks back across Genesis 1-15. Listen for the repeated pattern: human beings act with real consequences, but God creates, seeks, judges, restrains, preserves, remembers, scatters, calls, promises, protects, blesses, and covenants. Record how each episode contributes to one coherent theology of providence.

Key Scripture Passages

- Genesis 1:1-2:25 - God creates and gives.
- Genesis 3:1-24 - Humanity rebels; God pursues, judges, and promises.
- Genesis 4:1-5:32 - Violence spreads; God hears and preserves.
- Genesis 6:1-9:29 - God judges, remembers, preserves, and covenants.
- Genesis 10:1-12:9 - God scatters Babel and calls Abram.
- Genesis 12:10-15:21 - God protects and confirms the promise.
- Genesis 50:20; Romans 4; Galatians 3 - Later canonical interpretation.

I. BEFORE HUMANITY ACTS, GOD CREATES AND GIVES (GENESIS 1:1-2:25)

- What divine actions occur before Adam acts?
- How are human dignity and delegated authority held together?
- Record the distinction between sovereignty and the denial of human agency.

Vocabulary

TERM	STUDENT NOTES
bara	
tselem	

DISCUSSION QUESTION **How does delegated dominion differ from autonomous control?**

THEOLOGY IN PRACTICE **Where should dependence on the Creator reshape your view of identity, work, or authority?**

II. HUMANITY REBELS, BUT GOD PURSUES, JUDGES, AND PROMISES (GENESIS 3:1-24)

- List the human actions and the divine actions in Genesis 3.
- How does Genesis 3:15 place hope within judgment?
- What is the difference between responsibility and sovereignty?

Vocabulary

TERM	STUDENT NOTES
zera	

DISCUSSION QUESTION **How does God's response keep human rebellion from becoming the final word?**

THEOLOGY IN PRACTICE **Where are you tempted to hide, cover, or blame rather than answer God truthfully?**

III. HUMAN VIOLENCE SPREADS, BUT GOD HEARS AND PRESERVES (GENESIS 4:1-5:32)

- How does God respond before and after Cain's violence?
- What does the mark of Cain restrain without excusing?
- How do Cain's and Seth's lines contrast?

Vocabulary

TERM	STUDENT NOTES
shamar	

DISCUSSION QUESTION **How can judgment and restraining mercy operate together?**

THEOLOGY IN PRACTICE **Identify one cultural good that must not be confused with spiritual redemption.**

IV. THE WORLD IS CORRUPT, BUT GOD JUDGES AND REMEMBERS (GENESIS 6:1-8:22)

- What is clear in Genesis 6 despite disputed details?
- Record how the ark displays both divine provision and Noah's obedience.
- Why is "God remembered Noah" the hinge of the narrative?

Vocabulary

TERM	STUDENT NOTES
zakar	

DISCUSSION QUESTION **How do grace and Noah's obedience relate without competing?**

THEOLOGY IN PRACTICE **What appointed means are you responsible to use while trusting God for the outcome?**

V. NOAH CANNOT SECURE THE FUTURE, SO GOD COVENANTS (GENESIS 9:1-29)

- What creation themes are renewed after the Flood?
- Who initiates and establishes the covenant?
- Why does Noah's later failure matter?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Vocabulary

TERM	STUDENT NOTES
berit	

DISCUSSION QUESTION **How does preservation differ from final redemption?**

THEOLOGY IN PRACTICE **Where might you mistake stability, order, or prosperity for salvation?**

VI. HUMANITY MAKES A NAME, BUT GOD SCATTERS AND CALLS (GENESIS 10:1-12:9)

- Compare Babel's "let us" statements with God's "I will" promises.
- How does Genesis 12 answer Genesis 11?
- Why is one family chosen for the sake of all families?

Vocabulary

TERM	STUDENT NOTES
barak	

DISCUSSION QUESTION **What does the name contrast teach about self-made and God-given significance?**

THEOLOGY IN PRACTICE **Where are you trying to secure identity or reputation apart from God's calling?**

VII. ABRAM ACTS, BELIEVES, AND FAILS, BUT GOD ADVANCES THE PROMISE (GENESIS 12:10-15:21)

- How does God preserve Sarai and the promise in Egypt?
- Record Abram's actions and God's actions in Genesis 13-15.
- Why does God alone pass through the covenant pieces?
- How do Romans 4 and Galatians 3 use Abraham?

Vocabulary

TERM	STUDENT NOTES
he'emin	
berit	

DISCUSSION QUESTION **Why does the promise survive Abram's weakness?**

THEOLOGY IN PRACTICE **What delayed promise requires faithful obedience without self-engineered fulfillment?**

THEOLOGY IN PRACTICE

SPHERE	APPLICATION PROMPT
Personal	Where must I replace self-reliance with responsible trust in God's providence?
Family	How can our household plan faithfully without treating our plans as sovereign?
Church	How should God's central action reshape our view of leaders, programs, conflict, and growth?
Ministry	Which appointed means must we use diligently while leaving fruit and timing to God?

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- What repeated divine verb or action most shaped your reading of Genesis?
- How does Genesis correct both fatalism and autonomous self-reliance?
- Where did judgment and grace appear together?
- Why can neither cultural achievement nor covenant representatives cure the human heart?
- How does God's promise to Abram answer Babel?
- What do Romans 4 and Galatians 3 make explicit about Abraham, faith, and Christ?
- What question about providence do you still need to study?

PERSONAL NOTES

KEY TAKEAWAYS

One truth about God:

One truth about humanity:

One key interpretive insight:

One connection to Christ or the gospel:

One remaining question:

One response of faith or obedience:

FINAL SUMMARY

Complete after the session: **Genesis 1:1-15:21 teaches that**

RESOURCES USED

- The Holy Bible: selected texts in Genesis 1-15; Genesis 50:20; Romans 4; Galatians 3; Hebrews 11.
- Kenneth A. Mathews, Genesis, New American Commentary; chapter-specific notebook resources.
- Victor P. Hamilton, The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1-17; chapter-specific notebook resources.
- No additional outside source was used.