

*This midweek study will help students understand how God sovereignly cares for and directs all things for His glory and our good. Use the following main points, Scriptures, teaching/discussion ideas, and questions to help students gain a better understanding of the essential doctrine for this session.*

### Essential Doctrine: God's Providence

Providence refers to God's continuing work and involvement in His creation. This includes, in various degrees, God's preservation of the created order, His governance, and His care for His people (Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:3; Gen. 8:21-22). Christians believe the world, and even the cosmos itself, is contingent upon God, incapable of existing apart from Him. Christians also believe in God's personal and direct intervention in the world—as opposed to a hands-off approach to creation—that affects not only the natural order, but also the individuals and events within human history.

### 1 God preserves and directs all of creation. (Gen. 8:21-22; Ps. 103:19; Matt. 5:45; Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:3)

#### Read Psalm 103:19.

- ▶ *Why is it sometimes hard time to believe that God rules over everything?*

Sin and suffering obscures God from our sight. In this world, we see through a glass dimly. There's so much that we don't understand.

- ▶ *How can the Scriptures help us in tough times?*

The Scriptures give us a long-term view of life. We see that suffering is temporary and that God can bring good out of it in ways we never could have imagined. Joseph's life is a good example of that.

- ▶ *What Scriptures do you find particularly encouraging?*

This is personal choice, but many people find the Psalms encouraging. Psalm 103 is a good one. The Book of Galatians is also an encouraging reminder of the gospel.

### 2 God governs the world, including all nations and people. (Ps. 66:7; Dan. 2:21; Luke 1:52)

#### Read Psalm 66:7.

- ▶ *How is God's providence related to His power?*

God's almighty power enables Him to govern the world as He desires.

- ▶ *Why are the rebellious playing with fire?*

Many people in this world who don't love God and are in rebellion against Him seem to be doing just fine. The thing to understand, though, is that God will judge justly sooner or later. Psalm 73 is a helpful perspective in that regard.

### 3 God cares for all people, especially those who trust Him. (Ps. 4:8; 145:15-16; Acts 17:26; Rom. 8:28)

#### Read Psalm 145:15-16.

- ▶ *Who does God provide for?*

God provides for all living things, including people in rebellion against Him. His common grace extends to all.

#### Read Romans 8:28.

- ▶ *Why is this verse so highly valued among God's people?*

"All things" really means "all things." We don't know how God will work things out, and it might not even happen in this life, but we can trust that He's good and that He's working for our good.

### WRAP IT UP

Understanding God's providence is largely what faith is all about. We interpret life according to God's promises and His character. We relax, knowing that He is in control and just asks us to trust and obey.

- ▶ *Google and read through the lyrics of William Cowper's classic hymn, "God Moves In a Mysterious Way." Which lines stand out to you most? Why?*