

God Is Involved in Our Lives

Phil. 2:12, 13, "... for it is God who works in you both to will and to work His good pleasure."

Introduction.

A. Divine providence: Joseph, Gen. 50:20, "you meant evil against me; *but* God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as *it is* this day, to save many people alive." Only "miracle" was Joseph's power to interpret dreams. But God was very much involved. Look at the "links" in the chain of providence.

B. Divine providence: Esther 4:14, "Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for *such* a time as this?" The term "God" not found in this book, but He was very involved in saving His people from extinction. No miracles recorded! But again: consider the "links" in the chain of providence. "His hand is in it all."

C. Divine providence: Acts 23:16, "But the son of Paul's sister heard of their ambush, and he came and entered the barracks and told Paul." Proposed ambush of 40 assassins would have been successful without intervention of God. But How did He intervene? With a miracle? "Happy coincidence"? "Fortunately"?

D. God's involvement does not require miracles. He can and does work without performing miracles. If we submit ourselves to the "thoughts" and "ways" of God, we are letting Him be directly involved in our lives. To care for us, bless us and use us in His service. Deut. 8:3; Matt. 4:4, Live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

I. Isaiah 55:8, "thoughts, ways" of God.

A. God is involved through His "ways" – His works, His teaching, His institutions . 1 Thess. 2:13, "the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe."

B. But we must PERMIT God to work in us. We can prevent it if we walk in our own "ways."

C. The teaching of God (if we obey it) provides many benefits. Obey the gospel – pardon, reconciliation, "all spiritual blessings in Christ" Eph. 1:3. Then accept and walk in all the ways of God.

D. Much suffering, failure, misery result from ignoring the teaching (the "ways") of God. 1 Pet. 3:10, "He who would love life And see good days, Let him refrain his tongue from evil, And his lips from speaking deceit. Let him turn away from evil and do good; Let him seek peace and pursue it." We say "Good morning" (have a good morning). Here's how!

E. 1 Pet. 1:13, "be sober." Produces great benefits. Whatever damages the mind (whether alcohol or cares) exposes us to great dangers. Lk. 21:34, "But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly."

F. 1 Tim. 4:8, "godliness is profitable for all things." Think of how it protects from vices (smoking, drinking, drugs, fornication).

II. God is involved in godliness!

A. Marriage and the home. Gen. 2:18, “helper suitable to him.” Gen. 2:24, “leave... cleave to wife.” Eph. 5:23-28, “husband...head... love as Christ loves church... as own body.” Eph. 5:22, 24, “wife submit to husband...as church is subject to Christ.” We must LET God be involved in our marriage!

B. Eph. 6:1-3, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right” -- “that it may be well with you, and you may live long on the earth.” Prov. 10:27, “The fear of the LORD prolongs days, But the years of the wicked will be shortened.”

C. Prov. 13:15, “the way of the transgressor is hard.” Sin has consequences. Every road leads somewhere!

D. The church – what a tremendous blessing to be members of the body of Christ... God is very much involved as we worship Him, build ourselves up, evangelize, help needy saints. To reject the church is to eliminate God from our lives.

E. To be citizens in His kingdom. To be sheep in the Good Shepherd’s care. To be involved in His work, 1 Tim. 3:15.

F. Civil government, God’s establishment. Dan. 4:17, “The Most High rules in the kingdoms of men.” Rom. 13:1-7, “Be subject... appointed by God... God’s minister to you for good.” Also, 1 Tim. 2:1-2, Pray for our rulers “that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life.”

G. Work. Employment. Gen. 2:15, “tend, keep...” Eph. 4:28, “labor, working with his hands... give to him who has need.” 1 Thess. 4:11, “mind your own business, work with your own hands as we commanded you.” One of the greatest blessings of God. As we obey this, God involved in our lives.

III. God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) lives in us.

A. 1 Jn. 3:24, “he who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him.” Eph. 3:17, “that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith” Rom. 10:17; Rom. 8:9, “if the Spirit of God dwells in you...”

B. This is communion or fellowship with God (1 Jn. 1:7), with Christ (1 Cor. 1:9), with Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 13:14). This means the enjoyment of and participation in spiritual matters.

C. It’s the figure of speech of putting the cause (God) for the effect (the benefits received from God). In this way God is in us and we are in God . We are near to God . He lives in us and works His good pleasure.

D. He gives us joy and peace. Rom. 15:13, “Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing , that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” John 14:27, “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you ; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” He shares His peace with us if we let Him . How does God fill us with joy and peace? Rom. 5:1, “justified by faith , we have peace with God” through Christ.

E. “Justified” – made right with God. By an obedient faith. Rom. 1:5; 16:26. When did they rejoice? Acts 2:37, 38; 8:39; 9:19; 16:34.

F. Those of the world obtain temporary joy and peace but what do they do during the storm? Their sun is converted into darkness. They should listen to James (4-7-10), “purify

hearts...Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.”

G.. He gives us a life without worry. Phil. 4:6, 7, “be anxious for nothing, but with prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

H. God is involved ... IF... “God will take care of you” – IF... Matt. 6:25-33, “do not worry about your life... look at the birds... the lilies of the field... seek first the kingdom of God... these things shall be added.” What does worry or anxiety indicate? “Oh you of little faith.” As if God not involved. As if He just put us on “automatic pilot” and turned His back on us.

I.. God gives us contentment. 1 Tim. 6:8, “And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content.” God makes it possible. Phil. 4:11, “I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content.” And Paul says, “be imitators of me.” God makes it possible and teaches it, Paul learned it. What about us? Heb. 13:5, “Let your character be free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU."

J. He gives us comfort. 2 Cor. 1:3, 4, “Blessed be... the God of all comfort... who comforts us in all our tribulation.” How does He do it? Rom. 15:4, Paul speaks of the “comfort (consolation) of the Scriptures”... 1 Thess. 4:18 , “comfort one another with these words” (concerning 2nd Coming).

K. God answers prayers (according to His will, 2 Cor. 12:8). 1 Jn. 3:22, “And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.” 1 Jn. 5:14, “Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.”

L. He gives us wisdom. James 1:5-7, “If any of you lacks wisdom let him ask of God, who gives to all...” 2 Tim. 3:15, “the Holy Scriptures which are able to make you wise for salvation”; therefore, Col. 3:15, “let the word of Christ dwell in you richly...” Yes, God does it! But not apart from His Word!

M. God prospers us. 1 Cor. 16:2, Each is to give “as he may prosper...” Deut. 8:18, “remember the Lord, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth.” 2 Cor. 9:7, “*So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. If we WILLINGLY give as God prospers us, He opens the windows of heaven and pours out blessings on us. Mal. 3:10, “try Me now in this,” Says the LORD of hosts, “If I will not open for you the windows of heaven And pour out for you *such* blessing That *there will not be room enough to receive it.*” So, again, it’s a matter of LETTING God be involved in our lives to bless us. We can, in a sense, tie His hands. We pray for the Lord’s blessings, but we ourselves can limit those blessings. Like the widow of 2 Kings 4:6, “Not another vessel. So the oil ceased.”*

BUT IF WE DO NOT OBEY HIM. Deut. 28:15, “if you do not obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes... V. 23, “your heavens which *are* over your head shall be bronze, and the earth which is under you *shall be* iron.” Haggai 1:6, “You have sown much, and bring in little; You eat, but do not

have enough; You drink, but you are not filled with drink; You clothe yourselves, but no one is warm; And he who earns wages, Earns wages *to put* into a bag with holes."

N. God opens doors for the gospel. Col. 4:3, "praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word." Rom. 1:10, "always in my prayers, if perhaps now at last by the will of God I may succeed in coming to you." God answered His prayer and opened a door in Rome (as well as Caesarea, etc.)

But how does He do it today? Through preaching, teaching AND the influence of Christians (Matt. 5:16)... He gives us favor with others (Joseph, Ruth, Esther, Paul), with unbelieving husband, employer, neighbors, friends. How again? By our practicing His ways!

O. God heals the sick. James 5:15, "the prayer of faith will heal the sick." But according to His will, 2 Cor. 12:8. All healing is divine. Doctors and medicine, technology – are from God. James 1:17, "every good and perfect gift." Plus: much depends on our practicing God's teaching (holiness, self-control)

P. God provides an escape from temptation. 1 Cor. 10:13, "way of escape." Miraculously? No, but through His ways, His provisions. For ex., 1 Cor. 6:18, flee (temptation of) fornication. How? 7:2, get married. 1 Cor. 10:14, flee idolatry. How? Seek first kingdom. Give generously. 1 Cor. 15:33, avoid bad company to avoid a thousand temptations.

IV. God opens hearts.

A. Acts 16:14, "And a certain woman named Lydia... a worshiper of God, was listening; and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul." How? Not by miraculous intervention, but by means of 1) her devotion to God, 2) her attention to the word, 3) the persuasion of Paul. But God did it.

B. But God also hardens hearts. Exodus 4:21, "I will harden his heart, so that he will not let the people go." How? Deliberately, arbitrarily hardened him? Was Pharaoh a mere puppet? No, but rather by what He commanded. What God's word does, He does. 2 Cor 2:16, "aroma of death or of life."

C. Consider the examples of the eunuch, the jailor. God is involved and works -- through His word, His teachings. We cannot separate God from His word. John 6:63, "The words that I speak to you are spirit, and *they* are life." 1 John 5:6, "the Spirit is truth."

Conclusion. "His hand is in it all" – IF!

A. We practice His "ways" (teaching): in the home, church, gov't, our work (profession, business)...

B. Lives in us: gives us joy, peace, contentment, comfort, life w/o worry.

C. Hears our prayers, gives us wisdom, prospers us, opens doors for gospel, heals, provides escape from temptation.

D. Opens/hardens hearts with His Word.