**“But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ…” 2 Peter 3:18 (KJV)**



**Question:** When we speak of the “providence of God”, what do we really mean? The actual meaning of the word can be understood in the prefix “pro” which means before and the suffix “vide” which means to see – like in the word “video.” So when we speak of the providence of God; we are talking about God’s ability to “see-before” or to know the future. Providence then is the power by which God both guides and sustains our destiny.

 **SPIRITUAL MATURITY SERIES**

 “The Overruling Providence of God”

 **Key Verses**: Genesis 50:20 Romans 8:28-29

**The Omniscient God**

Omniscient describes God’s infinite awareness, understanding and insight. God knows all things. Have you ever considered the fact the God never learns. There are a lot of things in life that we are not certain about. We don’t know whether the weather forecast will be correct or whether or not our favorite sports team will win. We don’t know whether or not our children will finish school or even if our own marriages will stand the test of time. We don’t know the formulas for cures of certain diseases, or whether we will even live to see tomorrow! The truth is our life is full of “uncertainties.” This is precisely why the Apostle Paul was writing to the church in Rome about. The Apostle points out the inherent ignorance of men. Because we cannot discern the future, we can never be absolutely certain about anything in our life.

**Rom 8:26**

**Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. KJV**

**QUESTIONS**: What makes a person “competent?” Do you consider yourself to be a very competent person? Why? Does God view you and I as being competent?

Paul tells us that God recognizes our weaknesses or “infirmities” especially when it comes to our limited knowledge and understanding of the events of our life. Because God understands this about us, the Apostle informs us the God “helps us.” The word “help” in this scripture means that God “pulls” with us or that God “lifts” with us. Furthermore, because of our ignorance of life’s future events, Paul tells us that we don’t even really know what to pray for concerning our life.

**QUESTION:** According to the verse, how does God solve this problem for us?

It is the person of the Holy Ghost that stands as our advocate and prayer interpreter translating our prayers before God in our behalf. It is in our broad ignorance that God steps in and divinely compensates for our blindness, leading us as our Good Shepherd.

**QUESTIONS**: How are we actually made to become wiser when we admit our ignorance? Why would owning ones ignorance be a step towards spiritual maturity?

**Some Things You’ve Got To Know**

Having pointed out the overwhelming ignorance of humanity, the Apostle offers us real assurance and confidence. Paul states “we know” that the Holy Spirit searches our heart and is an advocate for us before the Father.. but we also know something more…

**Rom 8:28**

**And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. KJV**

Although there are many things in life we just “don’t know,” or understand, the Apostle assures us that when it comes to this matter there can be no room for doubt in the mind of God’s people. God’s child must know that God is working all things out in their eternal best interest at all times and in all matters.

**QUESTIONS:** If a person didn’t know or understand this fact, how might such ignorance affect their spiritual maturity? Do you think Paul is telling Christians that we should just think positively or optimistically and simply hope for the best?

**ALL THINGS:** **God’s Plan Is Active, Harmonious And Inclusive!**

“All things work together for the good…” God uses every ingredient in our lives to accomplish his divine purpose. God is the only one who has the power to speak to all things and cause them to work together in harmony for good.

**QUESTIONS:** How does **Genesis 50:20** depict this very point? Does this spiritual truth of regarding “all things working together for the good…” necessarily mean that individually speaking, “all things” are good in and of themselves? Are we capable of discerning on our own what’s good for us?

**The Contingency Of the Promise**

**“to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”**

Apparently, this is not a blanket policy for everyone. Everyone is not eligible to apply this promise to the circumstances in their lives. Only the matters of those who have fallen in love with God and have responded to God’s calling upon their lives are able to claim the benefits of this promise. This promise requires true spiritual maturity concerning:

**LOVE FOR GOD:** John 14:15 and 1 John 5:2-3 **SPIRITUAL GROWTH**: Rom 8:30

**LIVING OUR PURPOSE:** 2 Tim 1:9

The spiritually mature Christian does more than merely accept God’s will, the spiritually mature Christian praises God and rejoices in the knowledge that “all things” are working for their eternal benefit. My friends, the spiritually mature Christian have learned how to dance in the rain.