



Kingdom Education Network

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THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD AND KINGDOM EDUCATION

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Bible scholar J. Vernon McGee defines providence as “the means by which God directs all things — both animate and inanimate, seen and unseen, good and evil — toward a worthy purpose, which means His will must finally prevail.”ⁱ Noah Webster, in his original *American Dictionary of the English Language*, defined providence as “the care and superintendence which God exercises over his creatures.”ⁱⁱ

As Christian educators, we might ask, “What does divine providence have to do with education?” From the definitions provided, two aspects of providence are revealed, which are foundational to the education of children from a Kingdom perspective. First is the concept of the sovereignty of God (Rom. 11:36; Eph. 4:6), from which emanates three important tenets regarding the relationship of mankind to Him:

1. God is the Supreme Authority in all matters (Dan. 4:17, 5:34-35; Rev. 11:15-18).
2. God’s ways are higher than man’s ways and His wisdom is greater than man’s wisdom (Isa. 55:9; I Cor. 1:19-21).

3. God has a plan for every person, which aligns with His purposes (Eph. 2:10; Phil. 1:6).

Theologian James Boice posited that when it comes to the Christian concept of God, there is no point of greater contention with contemporary worldviews than that of God’s providence.ⁱⁱⁱ Generally, people do not like to come under another’s authority, and that certainly includes what may be deemed an unseen and arbitrary God. Christian educators must actively preserve the proposition of the existence and sovereignty of the living God of the Bible as the foundation upon which all learning is based (Psalm 111:10; Prov. 9:10). Recognizing and affirming God as the source and purpose of all things in every curricular discipline is a key component of authentic Kingdom education.

A second aspect of divine providence relevant to Kingdom education is that of care and superintendence. This facet of providence reveals much about God’s character and is instructive to our becoming “imitators of God” (Eph. 5:1), a key educational objective for Kingdom citizens. The Bible contains a rich repository of illustrations that demonstrate God’s parental care

and oversight over His creation (Gen. 1:31; 2:8; Job 38-39; Matt. 10:29-31). The most dramatic of these expositions of God's care and concern is His preemptive love for humanity.

Divine providence is a reflection of God's loving nature. Christ's Great Commands (Matthew 22:37-39) set the standard of love by which human beings reach their highest potential and ultimate destiny in Him. Learning to love God and others is the crux of true Christian education. The education process must be more than gaining academic knowledge about school subjects. In a Kingdom-focused school, children grow in their love of God by learning how to know and obey Him, hear the voice of His Spirit, and worship Him through all they do. Students come to rely upon the Holy Spirit to bear fruit in their lives as they allow Him to reign sovereignly in their hearts. Students learn to love one another by practicing such things as preferring others above themselves, honoring others, rejoicing and grieving together, carry one another's burdens, not holding a grudge, and believing the best about others (Rom. 12: 10; I Cor. 13; Gal. 6:2). Kingdom-oriented teachers

discern or establish teachable moments that facilitate the development of Spirit-led, Kingdom-oriented living in the classroom and beyond.

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An understanding of the providence of God provides a solid foundation from which students come to full maturity as citizens in God's Kingdom (Eph. 2:11-22; 4:7-16). Divine providence includes an understanding of God's sovereignty as well as His faithful, loving care and provision. As students come to love and trust their Heavenly Father, they learn to allow His Holy Spirit to rule in their hearts and depend on Him to produce the fruit of the Kingdom in their lives (Gal. 5:22-25).

ⁱMcGee, V. "Providence is the Hand of God." *Thru the Bible with Vernon McGee*.

Retrieved from: <http://www.oneplace.com/ministries/thru-the-bible-with-j-vernon-mcgee/read/articles/providence-is-the-hand-of-god-11044.html>

²Webster, N. (1995). *American dictionary of the English language* (1828 facsimile ed.).

San Francisco: Foundation for American Christian Education.

ⁱⁱⁱ Boice, J. K. "God's Providence." Retrieved from http://www.the-highway.com/providence_Boice.html