

UNIT 2: God's Creating Work

Section 15: **Providence:** The Continuing Work of God

Theological Works:
Berkhof, Boyce, Calvin, Culver
Erickson, Grudem

INTRODUCTION:

In this 2nd unit of our systematic theology study we have talked about God's Planning Work (the End for which God created the world), and God's Originating Work (the Doctrine of Creation, including angelology and anthropology). Now as we draw this unit to a close, we will discuss God's Continuing Work – what is referred to as the Doctrine of Providence. We use this term to summarize God's ongoing relationship to Creation, the manner in which God sustains that which He has created.

Many doctrines found in the scriptures have been occasions for much discussion in theological circles, and this one is no exception. **Grudem** explains, "It should be noted that this is a doctrine on which there has been substantial disagreement among Christians since the early history of the church, particularly with respect to God's relationship to the willing choices of moral creatures." So we will proceed cautiously, attempting to provide Biblical justification for understanding the extent of God's work of Providence. **Calvin** provides us with a good start:

The carnal mind, when once it has perceived the power of God in the creation, stops there, and, at the farthest, thinks and ponders on nothing else than the wisdom, power, and goodness displayed by the Author of such a work, or on some general agency on which the power of motion depends, exercised in preserving and governing it. In short, it imagines that all things are sufficiently sustained by the energy divinely infused into them at first. But faith must penetrate deeper. After learning that there is a Creator, it must forthwith infer that he is also a Governor and Preserver, and that, not by producing a kind of general motion in the machine of the globe as well as in each of its parts, but by a special providence sustaining, cherishing, superintending, all the things which he has made, to the very minutest, even to a sparrow.

Q1: *What is God's relationship to His Creation & Events?*

Q2: *What impact does Providence have on our beliefs and behaviors?*

I. Defining Providence

A. Useful Definitions

1. **Boyce**, "By acts of providence, [God] simply preserves these creations, or permits or causes decay or change in them, to such an extent, and within such limits as he has purposed; and, at the same time, in fulfillment of like purpose, he directs, controls, and guides them in accordance with the natures He has given them, and the laws He has imposed upon them."
2. **Erickson**, "The providence of God means the continuing action of God in preserving his creation and guiding it toward His intended purposes."
3. **Berkhof**, "Providence may be defined as that continued exercise of the divine energy whereby the Creator preserves all His creatures, is operative in all that comes to pass in the world, and directs all things to their appointed end."
4. **Grudem**, "God is continually involved with all created things in such a way that he (1) keeps them existing and maintaining the properties with which he created them; (2) cooperates with created things in every action, directing their distinctive properties to cause them to act as they do; and (3) directs them to fulfill his purposes."

B. Profitable Explanations

1. **Boyce** explains that the very nature of God Himself also provides testimony to his providential actions. God alone is independent. Everything depends upon God for existence. It is impossible for God to create a self-existent, self-sufficient world not in need of his support and care, for to do so would be to confer on it his own nature. And similarly to virtue of being “omnipresent” God is not simply capable of being everywhere, but renders it absolutely certain that He is everywhere. He cannot be absent from His creation.
2. Each of Grudem’s sub-definitions appropriately describe the three sub-categories that we find under the topic of Providence: (1) Preservation (2) Concurrence (3) Government.

II. Defending Providence

A. Preservation

1. By “preservation” we mean that God keeps all created things existing.
2. This is another distinctive of deity. Just as the original creation was an act that only God could fulfill, so only God can continue to uphold the things created.
 - a. **Neh 9:6** “You alone are the LORD. You have made the heavens, The heaven of heavens with all their host, The earth and all that is on it, The seas and all that is in them. You give life to all of them And the heavenly host bows down before You.”
 - b. **2 Peter 3:5-7** For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God *the* heavens existed long ago and *the* earth was formed out of water and by water,⁶ through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water.⁷ But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.
 - c. **Heb 1:3** explains that Christ “is the radiance of [God’s] glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power...” The universe is continually being born along by Christ’s power.
 - d. **Col 1:17** explains that Christ “is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.” Christ keeps all things existing w/o His continuing work we would cease to be.
 - e. **Psalm 36:6** Your righteousness is like the mountains of God; Your judgments are *like* a great deep. O LORD, You preserve man and beast.
 - f. **The same truth is affirmed by Paul who said in Acts 17:28** “for in Him we live and move and exist...”
 - g. **Elihu’s wisdom in Job 34:14 also reiterates this truth:** “If He should determine to do so, If He should gather to Himself His spirit and His breath,¹⁵ All flesh would perish together, And man would return to dust.
 - h. ***See Ps 104**
3. In this action, God maintains the properties of the things He created. This provides the basis for scientific inquiry – God has made and continues to sustain a universe that behaves in “predictable ways.”
 - a. Can you imagine what it would be like to live in a world where things were continually changing their properties?
 - b. This ought to be an occasion for us to thank God for the wondrous order he put into the very fabric of the universe and the steadfast way in which He upholds that order

B. Concurrency

1. By “concurrency” we mean to explain that God is working in all created things in their every action, directing their distinctive properties to cause them to act as they do.
 - a. We use the term concurrency to explain the manner by which God works to bring His will to pass... He works through the distinctive properties of every created thing to bring to pass that which He desires.
 - b. We use the terms “primary/first cause” and “secondary cause” to describe this concurrency. God is the “first cause” of all things, but this does not remove the reality of “secondary causes.” Without God, no one can do anything!
 - c. So in this way, we can affirm in one sense that an event was fully caused by God and simultaneously in another sense fully caused by the creature as well.
 - (1) **Grudem believes it best to explain that**, “... God causes all things that happen, but that he does so in such a way that he somehow upholds our ability to make *willing, responsible choices*, choices that have *real and eternal results*, and for which we are *held accountable*. Exactly how God combines his providential control with our willing and significant choices, Scripture does not explain to us. But rather than deny one aspect or the other (simply because we cannot explain how both can be true), we should accept both in an attempt to be faithful to the teaching of all the Scripture.”
 - (2) **Some object that if God is directing all events** then that makes our choices not “real.” Can a man make a “willing” choice if God ordains all we do?
 - (3) **Calvin says YES**. He distinguishes between “necessity” and “compulsion” in regards to the will. Unbelievers necessarily sin, but no compulsion forces them to sin against their will. The good deeds of God (who necessarily does good) are not compulsory.
 - d. Some theologians consider concurrency just a part of “preservation.”
 - e. No event in creation falls outside of God’s providence. Nothing occurs except that which God Sovereignly wills to occur.
 - f. **Berhof** explains, “Augustine led the way in the development of this doctrine. Over against the doctrines of fate and chance, he stressed the fact that all things are preserved and governed by the sovereign, wise, and beneficent will of God. He made no reservations in connection with the providence of God, but maintained the control of God over the good and the evil that is in the world alike. By defending the reality of second causes, he safeguarded the holiness of God and upheld the responsibility of man.”
2. Natural Occurrences:
 - a. **Weather: Job 37:6-13** "For to the snow He says, 'Fall on the earth,' And to the downpour and the rain, 'Be strong.'⁷ "He seals the hand of every man, That all men may know His work.⁸ "Then the beast goes into its lair And remains in its den.⁹ "Out of the south comes the storm, And out of the north the cold.¹⁰ "From the breath of God ice is made, And the expanse of the waters is frozen.¹¹ "Also with moisture He loads the thick cloud; He disperses the cloud of His lightning.¹² "It changes direction, turning around by His guidance, That it may do whatever He commands it On the face of the inhabited earth.¹³ "Whether for correction, or for His world, Or for lovingkindness, He causes it to happen." See also **Ps 135:6-7** **Also Matthew 5:45** so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for

He causes His sun to rise on *the* evil and *the* good, and sends rain on *the* righteous and *the* unrighteous.

- b. **Stars: Job 38:31-32** "Can you bind the chains of the Pleiades, Or loose the cords of Orion? ³² "Can you lead forth a constellation in its season, And guide the Bear with her satellites?"
 - c. **Plants: Psalm 104:14-16** He causes the grass to grow for the cattle, And vegetation for the labor of man, So that he may bring forth food from the earth, ¹⁵ And wine which makes man's heart glad, So that he may make *his* face glisten with oil, And food which sustains man's heart. ¹⁶ The trees of the LORD drink their fill, The cedars of Lebanon which He planted,
 - d. **Animals: Matthew 6:26** "Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and *yet* your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they?" *and* **Matthew 10:29** "Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And *yet* not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father."
3. "Random" Events
- a. That which is completely "random" from human perspective is nonetheless an outcome decided by God...
 - b. **Prov 16:33** "The lot is cast into the lap, But its every decision is from the LORD."
 - c. Even the way the bible describes "unpremeditated murder" is interesting: **Exodus 21:13** "But if he did not lie in wait *for him*, but God let *him* fall into his hand, then I will appoint you a place to which he may flee.
 - d. **Esther 4:14** "For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place and you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?"
4. World Affairs
- a. **Job 12:23** "He makes the nations great, then destroys them; He enlarges the nations, then leads them away.
 - b. **Psalm 22:28** For the kingdom is the LORD'S And He rules over the nations.
 - c. **Acts 17:26** and He made from one *man* every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined *their* appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation
 - d. **Proverbs 21:1** The king's heart is *like* channels of water in the hand of the LORD; He turns it wherever He wishes.
 - e. **Ezra 6:22** And they observed the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days with joy, for the LORD had caused them to rejoice, and had turned the heart of the king of Assyria toward them to encourage them in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel.
 - f. **Luke 2:1-5** Augustus decreed his census... which fulfilled prophesy that Christ would be born in Bethlehem...
5. Human Affairs
- a. **Psalm 127:3** Behold, children are a gift of the LORD, The fruit of the womb is a reward.
 - b. **Psalm 139:16** Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; And in Your book were all written The days that were ordained *for me*, When as yet there was not one of them.

- c. **Job 14:5** "Since his days are determined, The number of his months is with You; And his limits You have set so that he cannot pass.
 - d. **Psalms 75:6** For not from the east, nor from the west, Nor from the desert *comes* exaltation; ⁷ But God is the Judge; He puts down one and exalts another
 - e. **Luke 1:52** "He has brought down rulers from *their* thrones, And has exalted those who were humble.
6. The lives of God's People:
- a. **1 Corinthians 4:7** For who regards you as superior? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?
 - b. **Philippians 2:13** for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for *His* good pleasure.
 - c. **Philippians 1:12-14** Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel, ¹³ so that my imprisonment in *the cause of* Christ has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else, ¹⁴ and that most of the brethren, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear.
 - d. **1 Corinthians 10:13** No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.
7. Evil
- a. If all activity occurs according to God's providence, then a question arises, "What is God's relationship to evil in the world?" There are also follow up questions asking if that makes God responsible for those evil actions...
 - b. **Grudem**, "We must remember that in all these passages it is very clear that Scripture nowhere shows God as directly doing anything evil, but rather as bringing about evil deeds through the willing actions of moral creatures. Moreover, Scripture never blames God for evil or shows God as taking pleasure in evil, and Scripture never excuses human beings for the wrong they do."
 - c. This statement from Grudem serves to protect us from wrongful conclusions regarding God's relationship to evil. God is not responsible for the evil we do, nor does He take pleasure in it, nor can He be blamed for it... God brings about evil but it is actually done not by God but by people or demons.
 - d. **Grudem**, "Perhaps this idea of judgment on sin can help us to understand, at least in part, how God can righteously bring about evil events. All human beings are sinful, for Scripture tells us that 'all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.' None of us deserves God's favor or his mercy, but only eternal condemnation. Therefore, when God brings evil on human beings, whether to discipline his children, or to lead unbelievers to repentance, or to bring judgment of condemnation and destruction upon hardened sinners, none of us can charge God with doing wrong. Ultimately all will work in God's good purposes to bring glory to him and good to his people. Yet we must realize that in punishing evil in those who are not redeemed, God is also glorified through the demonstration of his justice, holiness, and power (Ex 9:16, Rom 9:14-24)."

- (1) **The evil actions of Joseph's brothers: Genesis 50:20** "As for you, you meant evil against me, *but* God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive.
- (2) **The Hardening of Pharaoh's Heart: see Ex 4:21, 7:3, 9:12, 10:20, 10:27, 11:10, 14:4, 14:8.** Note: even though Pharaoh hardens his own heart (**Ex 8:15,32; 9:34**) God promises to harden it before Pharaoh ever does... Also remembering our discussion on "concurrency" above it is equally true that Pharaoh hardened his heart and God hardened Pharaoh's heart. See also, **Ex 14:17** in which God hardens the hearts of the Egyptians.
- (3) **Samson's marriage to a Philistine: Judges 14:4** However, his father and mother did not know that it was of the LORD, for He was seeking an occasion against the Philistines. Now at that time the Philistines were ruling over Israel.
- (4) **David's sin & the Lord's Judgment: 2 Samuel 12:11** "Thus says the LORD, 'Behold, I will raise up evil against you from your own household; I will even take your wives before your eyes and give *them* to your companion, and he will lie with your wives in broad daylight.¹² 'Indeed you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, and under the sun.'" (fulfilled in **16:22**)
 Also, **2 Samuel 12:15-23** So Nathan went to his house. Then the LORD struck the child that Uriah's widow bore to David, so that he was *very* sick.¹⁶ David therefore inquired of God for the child; and David fasted and went and lay all night on the ground.¹⁷ The elders of his household stood beside him in order to raise him up from the ground, but he was unwilling and would not eat food with them.¹⁸ Then it happened on the seventh day that the child died. And the servants of David were afraid to tell him that the child was dead, for they said, "Behold, while the child was *still* alive, we spoke to him and he did not listen to our voice. How then can we tell him that the child is dead, since he might do *himself* harm!"¹⁹ But when David saw that his servants were whispering together, David perceived that the child was dead; so David said to his servants, "Is the child dead?" And they said, "He is dead."²⁰ So David arose from the ground, washed, anointed *himself*, and changed his clothes; and he came into the house of the LORD and worshiped. Then he came to his own house, and when he requested, they set food before him and he ate.²¹ Then his servants said to him, "What is this thing that you have done? While the child was alive, you fasted and wept; but when the child died, you arose and ate food."²² He said, "While the child was *still* alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, 'Who knows, the LORD may be gracious to me, that the child may live.'²³ "But now he has died; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me."
- (5) **Occurrence of Evil:**
- **Amos 3:6** If a trumpet is blown in a city will not the people tremble? If a calamity occurs in a city has not the LORD done it?
 - **Lamentations 3:38** *Is it* not from the mouth of the Most High That both good and ill [ra'ah] go forth?
 - **Isaiah 45:7** The One forming light and creating darkness, Causing well-being and creating calamity [עַל־רָע וְיִבְרָא רָעָה - wa bara ra']; I am the LORD who does all these.

- o **But even this verse should be understood** to mean that God ordained that evil would come about through the “willing choices” of his creatures, not that He himself does evil.
- (6) **Job’s response shows “concurrency” properly worked out: Job 1:21** He said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked I shall return there. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD." ²² Through all this Job did not sin nor did he blame God.
- (7) **Also Jonah demonstrates this: Jonah 1:15** So they picked up Jonah, threw him into the sea, and the sea stopped its raging. & **Jonah 2:3** "For You had cast me into the deep, Into the heart of the seas, And the current engulfed me. All Your breakers and billows passed over me.
- (8) **The Crucifixion of Jesus: Acts 4:27-28** "For truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, ²⁸ to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur." **Acts 2:22-23** "Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know-- ²³ this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put *Him* to death.
- (9) **Lying Spirit sent from God: 1 Kings 22:23** "Now therefore, behold, the LORD has put a deceiving spirit in the mouth of all these your prophets; and the LORD has proclaimed disaster against you."
- (10) **NT parallel: 2 Thessalonians 2:11-12** For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, ¹² in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness. **1 Peter 2:8** and, "A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE"; for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this *doom* they were also appointed.
- e. **We do well to remember God’s differing government of evil:**
 - (1) *Permissive providence* – **Rom 1** speaks of God “giving people up” to the lusts of the hearts and dishonorable passions...
 - (2) *Preventive providence* – **Gen 20:6** speaks of God’s keeping Abimelech from sinning against him.
 - (3) *Directive providence* – **Gen 50** God’s use of evil actions for good.
 - (4) *Limiting/Determinative providence* – Common grace by which God restrains the development and enactment of sin in individuals. God will ultimately restrain the ancient serpent as well (Rev 20:2-3). God shields his saints from excessive trials (1 Cor 10:13).

C. Government

1. By “government” we mean the manner in which God directs all things so that they accomplish his predetermined purposes.
2. **Romans 11:36** explains, “For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him *be* the glory forever. Amen.”

3. **Ephesians 1:11** explains, "...we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will."
4. **Romans 8:28** And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose.

III. Valuing Providence

A. A Profit for Belief

1. A Guard against Deism
 - a. Some picture God's interaction with the world in a "deistic fashion." They believe that God put what was necessary into the creation to sustain itself.
 - (1) Deists believe that God left His creatures to work out their destiny by their own inherent powers, while He merely exercises a general oversight.
 - (2) Sometimes this view is illustrated by analogy to a "top"
 - (3) Another way to picture it is by analogy to a "locking switch" on a tool.
 - b. The Biblical answer is that God is continually upholding His creation.
 - (1) A good analogy to this is a "dead man's switch" – if pressure comes off, the device stops...
 - (2) Without God's continual "upholding" everything would cease to be.
 - (3) **Berkhof**, "The creature can never be self-sustaining, but must be upheld from day to day by the almighty power of the Creator. Hence it would not require a positive act of omnipotence on the part of God to annihilate created existences. A simple withdrawal of support would naturally result in destruction."
 - c. **Berkhof**, "Christian theism is opposed to both a deistic separation of God from the world and a pantheistic confusion of God with the world."
2. A Guard against Pantheism
 - a. When we speak of God's "continuing work" we ought not to say that God's preservation is merely a continuous new creation. He is not continuously creating new atoms and molecules for every existing thing every moment.
 - b. Rather, God preserves what He has already created.
 - c. To believe in a "continuous creation" would cause several disastrous effects:
 - (1) It would remove the relationship between *cause and effect*. **Boyce**, "No cause and its effect can have any relation to each other if both be separate creations of God. The former is not productive of the latter, nor the latter the result of the former. The one is not a cause, nor the other an effect."
 - (2) It would also lead to "pantheism" for everything that happens is actually God acting. It leads to the belief that God is everything.
 - (3) Pantheists absorb the world into God, or God into the world...
3. A Guard against Luck
 - a. **Berkhof**, "With its doctrine of providence the Church took position against both, the Epicurean notion that the world is governed by chance, and the Stoic view that it is ruled by fate."
 - b. There is no such thing as luck, chance, or fortune.
 - c. Chance is only a name which we use to describe something which we are unable to calculate, but meanwhile God knows exactly what the outcome will be.
 - d. **Calvin** provides a good qualifier though: "Though all things are ordered by the counsel and certain arrangement of God, to us, however, they are fortuitous—not

because we image that fortune rules the world and mankind, and turns all things upside down at random; but as the order, method, end, and necessity of events are, for the most part, hidden in the counsel of God, though it is certain that they are produced by the will of God, they have the appearance of being fortuitous, such being the form under which they present themselves to us, whether considered in their own nature, or estimated according to our knowledge and judgment.”

- e. Good examples:
 - (1) Elijah predicted that the dogs would lick Ahab’s blood (I Kings 21:19). Later in battle, “a certain man drew his bow at random and struck the king of Israel between the scale armour and the breastplate... so the king died. Ahab’s body was brought back to Samaria where his blood-soaked chariot was washed and there the dogs came and licked up the blood (I Kings 22:34-38).
 - (2) Ruth 2:3 explains Ruth’s gleaning in Boaz’s field as “happening” without design, but meanwhile God purposed this event...
 - f. We should respond to “opportunities” by “redeeming them!” (Eph 5:16)
 - g. **Calvin**, “If one falls among robbers, or ravenous beasts; if a sudden gust of wind at sea causes shipwreck; if one is struck down by the fall of a house or a tree; if another, when wandering through desert paths, meets with deliverance; or, after being tossed by the waves, arrives in port, and makes some wondrous hair-breadth escape from death—all these occurrences, prosperous as well as adverse, carnal sense will attribute to fortune. But whoso has learned from the mouth of Christ that all the hairs of his head are numbered (Matt 10:30), will look farther for the cause, and hold that all events whatsoever are governed by the secret counsel of God.”
4. A Guard against Fate
- a. God utilizes means to bring to pass His ends...
 - b. We ought to follow the example of Paul in **Acts 27:22-31**. On the one hand Paul is certain that the lives of the crew will be saved and on the other sees it as necessary for the proper means to be undertaken. We too ought to combine a healthy trust in God’s providence with a realization that the Lord often uses ordinary means to bring His purposes to pass.
 - c. **Calvin**, “He obeys God, who, being instructed in his will, hastens in the direction in which God calls him. But how are we so instructed unless by his word? The will declared by his word is, therefore, that which we must keep in view in acting. God requires of us nothing but what he enjoins. If we design anything contrary to his precept, it is not obedience, but contumacy and transgression.”

B. A Profit for Behavior

- 1. A Guard against Anxiety
 - a. If we were all subject to blind forces of chance, what a miserable existence we would have. Any amount of problems might be ours at any time for no reason at all!
 - b. ***Read Matt 6:25-34**
 - c. **Calvin**, “Once the light of divine providence has illumined the believer’s soul, he is relieved and set free, not only from the extreme fear and anxiety which formerly oppressed him, but from all care... Gratitude of mind for the favorable outcome of things, patience in adversity, and also incredible freedom from worry about the

future all necessarily follow upon this knowledge... Ignorance of providence is the ultimate of all miseries; the highest blessedness lies in the knowledge of it.”

- d. **Hearty belief in God’s Sovereignty is a sweetness to the soul!**
 - e. Nothing happens but what God has knowingly and willingly decreed!
2. An Enthusiasm to Perseverance
- a. When troubles beset us, let us remember God’s allowance of that trial...
 - b. **James 1:2-4** Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, ³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. ⁴ And let endurance have *its* perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.
 - c. **Calvin**, “When unjustly assailed by men, overlooking their malice (which could only aggravate our grief, and whet our minds for vengeance), let us remember to ascend to God, and learn to hold it for certain, that whatever an enemy wickedly committed against us was permitted, and sent by His righteous dispensation.”
 - d. **Calvin also explains**, “[A man’s] confidence in external aid will not be such that the presence of it will make him feel secure, the absence of it fill him with dismay, as if he were destitute. His mind will always be fixed on the providence of God alone, and no consideration of present circumstances will be allowed to withdraw him from the steady contemplation of it.”
3. An Assurance for Hope
- a. If we were to say that God himself does evil, we would have to conclude that God is not a righteous and holy God, and therefore not God at all. But if we were to say that God does not use evil to fulfill His purposes, then we’d have to admit that there is evil that exists which God did not intend, is not under his control, and might not fulfill his purposes.
 - b. **Grudem**, “If evil came into the world in spite of the fact that God did not intend it and did not want it to be there, then what guarantee do we have that there will not be more and more evil that he does not intend and that he does not want?”
 - c. We would end up having no guarantee that God will ultimately triumph over evil...
 - d. On the contrary:
 - (1) **Romans 8:28** And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose.
 - (2) **2 Timothy 2:10** For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, so that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus *and* with *it* eternal glory.