

THE GREENWOOD BULLETIN

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“Providence of God – God Only Knows”

By Dennis Carrow

We've all heard the expression. When one is faced with a predicament that seems to reach beyond their comprehension they throw up their hands and state, "God only knows." This can accurately define our limited knowledge when it comes to God's providence. As Deuteronomy 29:29 reminds us there are secret things that belong to God. However, the Scriptures also reveal that God has revealed all things that pertain to life and godliness. (2 Peter 1:3) So, while we may ask questions to which we do not know an answer, when it comes to things that relate to our walk of faith - we can know!

One of the things we need to constantly be reminded of is that God's word will accomplish that which He intends. It is a marvelous thing to realize the word of God is living and powerful, even discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart. (Hebrews 4:12)

While we may never be able to fully realize how God's word accomplishes everything that it does, we can know that it does!

It is this element of faith that will enable us to trust God and His word even when we do not understand a particular circumstance we are facing. It is from this perspective that we will find peace in times of trouble, and courage to persevere when facing life's greatest challenges.

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Our understanding of God's providential care does not always answer every question one may ask. However, it does give us the insight to know that God is with us and His way will deliver us from evil. When we feel compelled to say, "God only knows," may we realize indeed He does know and our faith and our trust should be immovable.

“Providence of God – The Casting of Cares”

By Dennis Carrow

In discussing providence we encounter the question, "how does God accomplish specific things in our lives?" It is through the written testimony that we have "life in His name." (These things are written that we may have life in His name... John 20:30-31). But that does not always satisfy questions that may arise regarding specific circumstances in our lives. At this inquisition it is best to realize that God sees things in their eternal, we see them in the temporal. Yet, we know that God, who made the world and everything in it has determined things in such a way that men would seek to do His will. (ref. Acts 17:24-34)

This being true, we acknowledge that even our most difficult situations call for us to seek God and anticipate His desired outcome in our life.

When Peter admonishes us to cast our care upon Him, he is not arbitrarily instructing us into some vague psychological exercise, but we are to petition the God of heaven who hears and answers our prayer. Our compliance to these instructions is in relation to our faith in Him. Do we trust Him?

There are so many things that we are anxious about in this life. Jesus spent much of His early ministry instructing His disciples to put things in their proper perspective. His message: "your Father knows your needs."

At the heart of His message was if we prioritize our lives - seek first the kingdom of God - everything else will fall into place. This does not insulate us from difficulties in this life. In fact, many of the

problems we experience we be a result of our walking by faith. What will be provided is a sufficient grace that will enable us to glory in our suffering for Christ sake. But all this is predicated upon our humbling ourselves under the mighty hand of God—we will be exalted in due time! (1 Peter 5:6-11)

Beware!

Ellis Long in Power For Today

"For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." (Rom. 3:23).

Christians are engaged in a lifetime struggle with sin. We must constantly be alert remembering that:

Sin is SEASONAL. Moses refused "to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a SEASON." (Heb. 11:24). This recognizes that there is some pleasure in sin but reminds us that the sorrow which comes at the end of sin's pleasurable season is never worth the pleasure of that season.

Sin is a SEEKER. The Bible warns, "Be sure, your sin will find you out." (Num. 32:23). In 1950 eleven men stole \$2,775,395 in the great Brinks robbery. For four years and 361 days it appeared they had committed a "perfect crime." But just four days before the statute of limitations expired and the crime could not have been enacted upon, the F.B.I. caught them. Sin always seeks out its doer and sooner or later destroys him.

Sin is a SEPARATOR. Isaiah lamented over Israel. "Your sins have separated you and your God." (Isa. 59:2). Sin subtly but surely brings a breach between man and God, until eventually the separation is for eternity.

Sin is SLAVERY. Jesus teaches, "Everyone that commits sin is the slave of sin." (John 8:34). Sin works like a vise in slowly binding its victim until escape is impossible. Let us ever be thankful that we can conquer sin.

It seems that some people think by the inch and talk by the yard.

Many people have more dollars than sense.

The most dangerous leap in the world is to jump to an unwarranted conclusion!

Spiritual growth soars best when we have fessed up, prayed up and made up!

Youth Ministers

(from The Beacon—by Frank Himmel)

The May issue of The Christian Chronicle carried an interview with LeGard Smith, now "Scholar in Residence for Christian Studies" at David Lipscomb University in Nashville. One item caught my attention. Smith was asked what he would say if he had the undivided attention of every member of churches of Christ for 10 minutes. Included in his answer:

" . . . I would call on the church to abandon youth ministries, which have toppled the spiritual hierarchy. Throughout Scripture, spiritual leadership is not only male, but it's elder. It's the wisdom of the years that leads and nurtures younger generations."

Abandon youth ministries. This is not the cry of some old fogey ultra-conservative who resists change at every turn. It is the counsel of one who is seeing among his peers the ripe fruit of an ill-advised tree.

Youth ministries typically feature two things: abundant recreational activities and shallow, entertaining instruction. What happens when teens who are accustomed to such things become adults? Will they immediately consider themselves too old for church-sponsored recreation, or suddenly insist on more sober

worship and meatier preaching? Of course not. As a result, today's "adult church" has in many cases become just a slightly toned-down version of yesterday's "youth church."

The Bible, of course, knows nothing of youth ministries, youth church, or church-sponsored recreation for any age. And it emphatically warns against ear-tickling preaching (2 Tim. 4:3-4).

This warning is timely. In recent years, increasing numbers of congregations which have stood opposed to institutionalism and church-sponsored recreation (things readily accepted by Smith's associates) are beginning to dabble in youth ministries. We don't call them that, of course, and in most cases we have not yet crossed the line into unauthorized activities. But the trend is cause for concern.

Special meetings for young people call for certain speakers, those whose presentations are more entertaining. The truth is slightly repackaged - less Bible reading and exposition, more stories and humor, and lessons that are mostly application with content limited to "relevant" (daily living) themes. Parents provide ample food and entertainment.

Do not misunderstand. No one opposes occasional sermons targeted at a particular segment of the audience, nor do we underestimate the value of young Christians getting together. However, when meetings for young people consistently take on a more entertaining air, when the add-on recreation becomes expected, when we advertise it along with the worship (even though it is not paid for from the church's treasury), and when brethren begin to say that we may lose our young people without such events, we have gone farther than we think down the wrong path. —