



# Does God Guide?

## Lesson Overview

FaithBuilder 2 | Lesson 14 | Divine Providence

### 1. Video

Watch *The Stream of Providence* online at [bitly.com/StreamProvidence](http://bitly.com/StreamProvidence) (1min 33sec).

### 2. Discuss

What is the 'stream of providence?' Are we aware of it?

### 3. Read

The Lord leads each person every single moment of life. p. 1-2.

### 4. True or False

Read statements about the Lord's leading and decide if they are true or not. p. 2.

## New Church Concept Providence

Peace has in its confidence in the Lord, that He directs all things, and provides all things, and that He leads to a good end.

*Arcana Coelestia* 8455

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## Discuss

1. Explain the phrase the 'stream of providence.'
2. Can a person be aware of the Lord's guiding influence? How or when might this be possible?
3. Does the Lord guide a person *every* moment? What about times when we hit barriers (rocks) or if everything seems to be going wrong?

## Read

Sometimes we might think that life would be easier if the Lord would just tell us what to do. If we knew what the Lord wanted, we would not have to make mistakes, and we would be able to get to heaven easily.

But this is not how the Lord works. If He did this, we would lose our freedom to choose whether to follow Him or not. We would feel forced into doing things we don't yet see the benefits of or just apathetically accept what happens.

The Lord leads us when *we* reach out to Him by going to the Word and making an effort to put the true ideas we find there into action through our daily choices. People may not choose the Lord's path. And those who often choose the Lord's path experience times when they are side-tracked. But regardless of what people choose, the Lord is constantly guarding *every* person's path of life, bending each daily choice towards the greatest possible happiness. In fact,

Unless people were led by the Lord every moment, yes, every tiniest fraction of a moment, they would perish. Every change of state of the human mind makes some change in the series of things present and so of things that follow. What, then, must it not do in the progression to eternity? It is like an arrow shot from a bow which, if it made the slightest deviation from the target at the moment of being aimed would deviate immensely at a distance of a thousand feet or more. So it would be if the Lord did not lead the states of human minds every fraction of a moment. See *Divine Providence* 202

The Lord's leading is so complete that "a person takes no step into which and from which the Lord does not lead" (*Apocalypse Explained* 1174:2).

When a person is trying to follow the Lord, he or she is carried along in the stream of providence.

People like this remain even-tempered whether or not they realize desires, and they do not grieve over loss. They are content with their lot. If they become wealthy they do not become infatuated with wealth. If they are promoted to important positions they do not consider themselves worthier than others. If they become poor they are not made miserable either. They know that for those who trust in the Divine all things are moving towards an everlasting state of happiness. See *Arcana Coelestia* 8478

We can listen for the voice of the Lord's leading in His Word. When we try to follow the path He sets out, we will be led toward eternal happiness in heaven.

## True or False?

*Circle answers that you think are true and discuss.*

1. If I want to be led by the Lord, I need to
  - a. listen quietly for His voice.
  - b. think about what other people I admire are doing.
  - c. read the Word.
  - d. go to church.
2. The Lord can speak to me
  - a. through the examples of people I know.
  - b. through good books.
  - c. through the Word.
  - d. through my conscience.
3. If the Lord told me exactly what to do, I might
  - a. get to heaven more easily.
  - b. be angry with Him.
  - c. feel frustrated because I couldn't do what I wanted.
  - d. be happy, because my life would be perfect.
4. The choices I am making today will
  - a. have no affect on things I might choose in the future.
  - b. determine my future.
  - c. move me one step closer to my eternal destination in heaven or hell.
  - d. change my life in subtle and/or major ways.
5. Having the Lord's Word in my mind means
  - a. knowing all the stories in the Word.
  - b. living from the guiding principles in the Word.
  - c. thinking about the Word all the time.
  - d. reading the Word often.
6. People who are in the stream of providence
  - a. don't care what happens to them.
  - b. don't worry about whether they have enough money.
  - c. trust that the Lord will take care of them no matter what happens.
  - d. are more concerned with eternal things than worldly things.

## New Church Concept

### Divine Providence

Divine providence works so subtly because if we sensed this, we would be outraged and enraged against God, and we would die.... This is why the Lord in His Divine providence is constantly leading us in our freedom, and to us it seems as though this freedom were our own. Leading us against ourselves in freedom is like lifting a massive and stubborn weight from the ground with jacks and not being able to feel the weight and the resistance because of their strength. Or it is like people surrounded by enemies intent on murder, unaware that a friend is leading them out by unknown paths and will later disclose the plan of their enemies. *Divine Providence* 211

### Divine Foresight

The Lord provides what is good but foresees what is evil, and since He foresees what is evil He also protects a person from it, otherwise a person could not be provided with good. See *Arcana Coelestia* 6489