

LEANING INTO GOD'S LOVE: WEEK 3

“When you put your faith in Christ, God commissions himself to protect, provide, and care for you (Phil. 4:19). God always provides for his children, though often it is not in the way we expect or hope.”

Matt Brown

“God, by his benefits, gently attracts us to himself, giving us a taste of his fatherly sweetness.” John Calvin

“We can’t predict what type of sustaining graces God will provide for us. And we can’t expect that the kind of sustaining grace someone else receives will be the same kind of care we will receive. We can only trust that the provision will come.” Louie Giglio

EARTHLY PARENTING AND PROVISION

1. Parents seek to provide for their children.
2. Parents don’t need coerced into provision and generosity.
3. Parents listen to the desires of their child’s heart.
4. Parents exercise wisdom in knowing what to give and withhold for their child’s good.

GOD IS A LOVING PROVIDER

1. God is a good Father who provides for his children.

Jesus describes the Father as a good and generous provider.

In Matthew 6:25–34, Jesus encourages his followers with the reminder that if God takes care of the birds, how much more will he take care of us as his children. A few verses later he adds:

“Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰ Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? ¹¹ If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!” (Matt. 7:9–11)

The Bible’s shepherding language points to God’s fatherly provision

In the Bible, there’s a good amount of overlap between shepherds and fathers. Shepherds care for, protect, provide for, and nurture their sheep in ways similar to how parents care for their children (with obvious differences). Psalm 23 is a great example of how God is our shepherd, and this shepherding looks and sounds a lot like how he acts as a loving Father. God is with us, protects us, feeds us, sustains us, and provides for us through everything in the psalm.

“The LORD is my shepherd; I have all that I need” (Ps. 23:1; NLT)

God’s provision for his people is a common theme in biblical stories.

A few examples would be Abraham’s declaration that God is Jehovah-Jireh (our provider) in Genesis 22, how God provides for Israel through the twists and turns of Joseph’s life in Genesis 45, the countless examples of God providing for his people in the wilderness (manna, quail, water, protection), how God provides for Elijah through ravens or a poor widow (1 Kings 17), the way Jesus miraculously provides food for 5,000 (John 6:1–15), how God provides safety and deliverance for the disciples and apostles throughout Acts, or how God supplies all the needs of Paul throughout his missionary journeys.

“Throughout scripture, God reveals several names for Himself to be used by His people. This could be Yahweh, the name He gives when He establishes Moses as leader for the Israelites. It could be more of a title, such as ‘Alpha and Omega’ or the ‘first and the last.’ But one name is significant throughout scripture and for our lives today: Jehovah Jireh – the Lord provides.” David Appelt

2. God promises to provide for his children.

The Bible tells us that God’s people will lack nothing that we need. God’s promises to provide include our material, physical, emotional, and spiritual needs. He is a loving Father attentive to the needs of his children. See Deut. 29:5; Ps. 23; 81:10; 104; 107:9; 145:15–16; Prov. 10:3; Rom. 8:32; Heb. 13:5. Not every want is a need, so we should remember God’s promise to provide doesn’t mean he will always provide the exact way we think, expect, or demand.

“And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. ²⁰ To our God and Father be glory forever and ever” (Phil. 4:19–20).

“For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD bestows favor and honor. No good thing does he withhold from those who walk uprightly.” (Ps. 84:11)

“I have been young, and now am old, yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken or his children begging for bread.” (Ps. 37:25)

“Oh, fear the LORD, you his saints, for those who fear him have no lack! ¹⁰ The young lions suffer want and hunger; but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing.” (Ps. 34:9–10)

3. God proves his commitment to provide in the cross.

As we saw last week (The Father’s Love in Sending His Son), the greatest, costliest, and most valuable of all the gifts the Father ever gave was his Son. The sending of Jesus to save us is the greatest demonstration of God’s generous, gift-giving, and loving heart that provides for our needs and seeks our good. Not only that, but Jesus is the answer to so many of our deepest needs: forgiveness, reconciliation, rest, eternal life, fellowship with God and his people, a new identity, etc. And when we consider this gift, it’s meant to give us confidence that if God gave the gift of his Son—a gift we didn’t deserve and do not pay for—then he will give us anything else we need. If he gave us the greatest gift, he will certainly not fail to provide gifts that are whole lot less costly.

“He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?” (Rom. 8:32)

“When we are tempted to doubt the Father’s faithfulness, we have no further to look than His provision of Christ. All of God’s gifts of grace in our lives are intended, like bread crumbs, to lead us down a path to a hill called Calvary where we see God’s ultimate gift in the person of His Son Jesus who lived, died, and rose to give us the gift of eternal life. In Christ we have the promise that One day we will be in that place where the river never runs dry because it flows from the throne of God Almighty. May we forever rest in the God who provides for His children.” Garrett Kell

4. God is a generous, gift-giving Father.

God is not a reluctant provider but an eager, caring provider. He provides out of love and kindness, not obligation and duty. He is also not a penny-pinching, bare-minimum provider who only gives us enough scraps to barely survive. He is a generous giver. He gives good gifts and does so for our pleasure and joy. Everything we have comes from him, and all good things should lead us back to him in thanksgiving.

“Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father” (James 1:17; cf. 1 Cor. 4:7; Matt. 7:9–11).

All good things come *from the Father*. Everything the Father gives to us is *good* and *perfect*. The Bible states God’s generosity and good gift-giving both positively—he gives what is good (Ps. 85:12)—and negatively—he withholds no good things (Ps. 34:10; 84:11). God’s provision is described in terms of abundance (Ps. 36:8), delight or pleasures (Ps. 16:11; 36:8), feasting (Ps. 23:5; 36:8), and overflowing (Ps. 23:5). Our Father doesn’t just give us enough to get by but he aims to satisfy our desires (Ps. 65:4; John 6:35) and give us rich things to enjoy (1 Tim. 6:17). We’re told that in Christ, we have every spiritual blessing (Eph. 1:3–14) and that all of God’s promises are given to us (2 Cor. 1:20). God’s grace given to us is described as both rich (Eph. 1:7) and lavish (Eph. 1:8). He not only makes fruit-bearing trees in the garden that give sustenance, but he does so in a way that is beautiful, pleasing, and pleasurable (Gen. 2:9).

GOD’S GRACIOUS PROVISION

1. God’s provision is more than financial.

God’s provision includes financial provision to help with basic material needs (food, water, shelter, clothing, etc.) but it also includes our spiritual, emotional, and relational needs.

God provides truth in his Word, forgiveness through his Son, new life and transformation by the Spirit, freedom from sin’s penalty and power, cleansing from sin and shame, guidance and wisdom for life, strength when we are weak, grace for today’s trials, patience and love toward the unlovely, and eternal life with him. We have everything we need for life and godliness, and every blessing in Christ. (See Eph. 1:3–14; Ps. 37:4, 25; Matt. 7:9–11; Gen. 3:21; 2 Peter 1:3; Rom. 8:31–39; Jer. 29:11–12.)

God provides for our relational needs. He puts into a family. He reconciles us to himself and unites us with his people, the Church. He brings Christians into our life for encouragement. God provides for our mental and emotional needs. He provides rest when we are weary and peace through fear and anxiety. God will speak to us through His Word with encouragement, have a song play just when we need it, or prompt a person to share something we needed to hear. He gives us strength and grace to make it through today’s troubles. He offers us pleasures in his world and offers us satisfaction in himself.

2. God provides when we see it and when we don’t.

Just as most of the things I provide for my kids are small, unexciting, and often overlooked, God has provided for us in countless ways we often ignore. The bulk of God’s provision is ordinary. Our planet is a perfectly designed place that requires a thousand things to be ordered exactly right to sustain life—everything from our distance to the sun to gas levels in the atmosphere. Like children, because we tend to skip past many of these daily provisions from God, we can assume he’s not actively providing unless something extraordinary happens. There are moments when God clearly provides in a unique way, but this isn’t the only aspect of provision. God is providing for us whether we see it or not.

God's provision mostly comes through natural means. He providentially oversees life's circumstances as part of his provision, whether it's his holding the earth together or providing a job so you have money. And one of the ways God provides—often in clear ways—is through his people (whether it's a needed word of encouragement, an act of service, a kind gesture, or a sacrificial gift). Part of why God allows us to experience gaps is because he wants to use his people to fill it, which helps us God's provision and experience the love of the body of Christ. This is part of the motivation in the NT to be used by God to bless others through our generosity, hospitality, encouragement, and service. This is God's love toward us in provision, and it's how God's love flows through his people to one another.

“God is always doing 10,000 things in your life, and you may be aware of three of them.” John Piper

3. God's provision is perfect, though often not what we expect.

God's provision is often not what we would expect, but he knows what we need, how much of it we need, when we need it, and how we need it. God promises to provide for us, but he doesn't always do it like we anticipated. Part of trusting and receiving his provision is believing that what, when, and how he provides is better for us than what we asked or wanted.

Consider Israel in the wilderness. God provides for them not by a harvest or fruit-bearing trees but through manna. Israel doesn't like this because they get bored with it and they don't like that they have to take it up daily and live by faith. When it comes to provision in the form of deliverance from their enemies, they don't just want God to provide a way of escape, they don't want to face dangers at all. But God's timing is perfect. He knows that Israel needs to see God's hand—which is proved through trials such as the Red Sea crossing or his provision in the barren wilderness—to grow their faith, so he holds off some of the provision until they need it most and will see God alone provides it.

We want provision for tomorrow's troubles, but God calls us to live a day at a time. He gives enough grace for today, strength for today, and manna for today. He might not give you enough manna for the next seven days, but he will give you enough manna one day at a time for those seven days.

“It may also be good for us to notice that God's provision often comes in peculiar ways. God made Elijah homeless in a gorge with a bunch of buzzards bringing him scraps from who knows where. That is weird. Why did God send him to a ditch with a stream rather than to the mighty Jordan River with its deep and abundant waters? And why the birds? And not just any birds, but unclean scavengers? That's the last way Elijah, a Jewish prophet, would have suspected provision to come.

But isn't that like our God? He often puts His people in peculiar situations so He can be glorified in His peculiar supply. Elijah never missed a meal in the valley. And through that peculiar provision God taught His servant that He would care for him, just like He promised He would. So, when you feel hemmed in and you see no way that what your need will be provided; remember that our God is a God who keeps His promises, even if He does it in peculiar ways.” Garrett Kell, [“Will God Provide For Your Needs?”](#)

4. God can provide when we can't see it coming.

God is not limited by our resources. God is not hindered by the challenges in our life. His resources are limitless. His power is endless. His wisdom is inexhaustible. And his plans are perfect.

This should encourage when we're discouraged because we haven't yet seen the answer to our prayer. God's timing is not our timing and his ways are not our ways. He can, in an instant, provide in a dramatic way we never saw coming.

This should give hope to us when we feel powerless against what we're up against or feel how empty and insufficient our resources are. God never feels outmatched by what we're facing and is never caught off guard. He is sovereign over it all and knows both the valleys he will let us walk into and how he will lead us out. He knows the giants in our path and already has their defeat planned.

God's not overwhelmed by how much we need or how little we have or how helpless we are. He is the all-sufficient Father who is strong where we are weak and possesses whatever good thing we need. And God is not bound by our inability to see a way out or discern how God will provide this time. God can make a way when there seems to be no way.

God is able to do the impossible. He's able to shock us with his provision. He's the God who speaks creation into existence from nothing, opens the womb of the barren (even when they laugh about it), parts the waters so his people can walk through, turns the dry desert into an oasis, brings water out of a rock, slays giants with little stones, protects his own from the lion's mouth or the furnace's heat, multiplies a few bread and fish to feed thousands, and turns death into resurrected life. Don't base what God is doing or can do by what you see but by what God is capable of. Live by faith. Trust him.

"He turns a desert into pools of water, a parched land into springs of water." (Ps. 107:35; see also Ps. 114:8; Is. 41:10, 18)

"Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert." (Is. 43:19)

"Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us." (Eph. 3:20)

RECEIVING AND RESPONDING TO GOD'S PROVISION

1. Wait and Trust

Sarah and Abraham waited for a son and the fulfillment of God's promise. Jacob waited fourteen years for Rachel. Joseph waited in prison, more than once, before seeing God provide for him and provide for Israel through him. Moses waited on God to humble Pharaoh and deliver his people. Israel had to wait on God at the Red Sea, in the wilderness, before entering Canaan, throughout their time in the land, and while in exile. David waiting years to finally be king. Jesus waits thirty years before starting his ministry. The disciples wait to see what happens after Jesus' death. Paul waits on God from prison cells and while on missionary journeys. The "hall of faith" in Hebrews 11 is full of people who waited on God. Revelation tells us about martyrs waiting to see God's justice enacted. The Church in this present age waits for Christ to return and make all things right.

"I believe that I shall look upon the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living! ¹⁴Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD!" (Ps. 27:13-14)

"I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in his word I hope; ⁶my soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen for the morning, more than watchmen for the morning." (Ps. 130:5-6)

"but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint." (Is. 40:31)

“The LORD is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him. ²⁶ It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD.” (Lam. 3:25–26)

“Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. ⁸ You also, be patient.” (James 5:7; see also 5:10–11)

See also Ps. 37:34; 46:10; Prov. 3:5-6; Micah 7:7; Hab. 2:1-3; Heb. 6:12; 11.

“God wants us to learn how to follow him and put down our demanding selves — to calm that screaming child in us. One way he helps us do this is to say, ‘Wait.’ That miserable, uncomfortable, sometimes painful state of silence is one of God’s most powerful tools to set us free. If we are willing, that is.” Jade Mazarin, “[God is Working in Your Waiting](#)”

“Waiting on the Lord is the opposite of running ahead of the Lord, and it’s the opposite of bailing out on the Lord. It’s staying at your appointed place while he says *stay*, or it’s going at his appointed pace while he says *go*. It’s not impetuous, and it’s not despairing...

The opposite of impatience is not a glib, superficial denial of frustration. The opposite of impatience is a deepening, ripening, peaceful willingness either to wait for God where you are in the place of obedience, or to persevere at the pace he allows on the road of obedience — to wait in his place, or to go at his pace.” John Piper, “[Battling the Unbelief of Impatience](#)”

2. Recognize and Give Thanks

3. Receive and Rest

4. Ask and Look

“For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. ⁹ Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰ Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? ¹¹ If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!” (Matt. 7:7–11)

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 4:6–7)

“Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.” (Col. 4:2)

5. Remember and Rehearse

6. Fight Lies and Believe Truth

“If you are tempted not to wait peacefully for God, to let him give you your next move — if you are tempted to give up on him or go ahead without him — please realize that this is a moment for great spiritual warfare. Take the sword of the Spirit, the word of God ([Ephesians 6:17](#)), and wield some wonderful promise against the enemy of impatience.” John Piper

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How does trusting God as our loving Father who will provide help us fight the fears, worries, and anxieties when we face trials, when we have needs, or encounter scarcity or a sense of what we lack (again, whether it's financial, spiritual, emotional, or any other kind of lack)?
2. What makes waiting on God and trusting in his provision and timing so hard? How do you wait and trust when you're still living "in the gap" as you await God's provision?
3. Can you think of examples in the Bible where people didn't wait on God or trust his provision, which led to idolatry or pursuing things their way? How did that go in these instances?
4. What are ways or times God has used other believers as a means of providing for you (whether a material need, encouragement, support, or some other provision)?
5. How can we reflect God's generosity or allow God to use us as a means of provision—whether in encouragement, friendship, service, prayer, or a material blessing—in the lives of others?
6. What are some of the promises or truths related to God's provision you find the most encouragement in? Why?
7. Read Romans 8:32. How does remembering that the Father has already given the Son assure us he will then supply any other need we might have?

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

- [“Four Truths About God’s Provision”](#) by Matt Brown at [desiringgod.org](#)
- [“Will God Provide For Your Needs?”](#) by Garrett Kell at [ftc.co](#)
- [“‘The Lord Will Provide:’ Why is God Called Jehovah Jireh in the Bible?”](#) by Barnabas Piper at [biblestudytools.com](#)
- [“God Will Provide for You—Here’s How You Can Be Sure?”](#) by Mark Altrogge at [theblazingcenter.com](#)
- [“God Who Provides”](#) by David Appelt at [ftc.co](#)
- [“Trusting God Between Breakfast and Eternity”](#) by James Forsyth at [thegospelcoalition.org](#)
- [“Generosity”](#) video from [bibleproject](#)
- [“God is Working in Your Waiting”](#) by Jade Mazarin at [desiringgod.org](#)
- [“Battling the Unbelief of Impatience”](#) by John Piper at [desiringgod.org](#)
- [“Trusting God”](#) by Kirk Wellum at [thegospelcoalition.org](#)