

## Theology Simply Explained — WSC11 “God's Personal Providence”

**Pastor walks his children through** Westminster Shorter Catechism question 11—especially explaining that **God's personal activity in His providence defines the nature of providence and determines how we should respond to it.**

Q11. What are God's works of providence? ***God's works of providence are his most holy, wise and powerful preserving and governing all his creatures, and all their actions.***

**(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via [hopewellarp.org](http://hopewellarp.org))**

---

All right, catechism question. This week is what are god's works of providence and the answer is God's works of providence are. His most, holy wise, and powerful. Preserving and governing. All his creatures. And older actions.

So, even from the First two words. We see how this. Compares to the work singular of creation. Which was something he did and a set time. And we saw that in the answer for that question. The work of creation and in the space of six days. But god's works of providence are ongoing.

They are continual. He created all things by the word of his power, but as Hebrews 1 says and identifies the son in particular, our lord jesus, the word. As the one. Who is? Acting in providence by his spirit. And so, Uh, god acts by through his son. By his spirit.

He upholds all things by the word of his power. And so, this is god's works of providence. It reminds us that providence is personal. It doesn't take work that he did, once setting things in motion. After which the motion, which he had initially, infused was enough to carry things forward.

But god is continually working personally working in his providence. And that is why it is. Um, his works of providence. And that is why his works of providence are according to his character. Remember when we were thinking about what is god? He is infinite eternal and unchangeable in his being.

And that corresponds to works of providence to continual. Dependence of things which we're going to get to even more in a moment. Wisdom. Power. Holiness. Justice goodness, and truth. But you see the wisdom power holiness of god in that catechism answer, recognizing what the bible teaches us about the character of god.

Corresponds to his most, holy wise and powerful. Preserving and governing, etc. Because it is this god, who personally acts. In his providence. Now we see that god's works of providence. God doesn't need providence. He has vibrant all by himself. He is. Uh, not dependent on anything else for his life.

Or for his existence. Everything else? Continually depends upon him for life and existence. It is not vibrant. Or by itself. Know the creature needs its life to be continuously. Provided Because we are dependent upon him so you can even hear in the way, the words are formed. The reality.

Of all things depending upon god. So that, whereas, we often focus on the governing part, when we think about his providence, Because that which are minds, do not understand, and which are flash. Resists. Uh, with regard to god's providence is especially in the governing aspect of his providence. It is an important part of his providence.

That all things depend upon him just to continue existing. He preserves. And governs. All his creatures and all of his actions. And so god doesn't need any providence for himself. Providence is a act or a continual work. For continually repeated work god's works of providence providence is pure generosity.

There's no providence necessary for god. He exists in perfection in himself from all eternity. So, just as he is the uncreated creator, or the unmoved mover or the uncaused cause, He is the unprovided for Provided the unpreserved. Preserver. So, even the Use of the word providence, to describe his personal carrying out of his decree.

Some of you may have had this problem when you were first memorizing, the catechism. That you might have can. Of sometimes. Confused or conflated the answer for what are the decrees of god? Which we all know is should have been. What is the degree of god? Since it's one, complete whole that is.

Decreed, Outside of time in the mind of god, and just Of course, beyond our minds. But what are the trees of the degrees of god, are has eternal purpose. According to the council of his will whereby for his own glory. He has foudained whatsoever comes to pass. But the idea itself is then that which he has decreed or Ordained.

Is then carried out. By his personal. Continual in time. Preserving. And governing all his creatures and all their actions. And so, i often confused. Or conflated combined in my mind. My tongue would trip over those two uh, answers. So god's works of providence are his I'm praise god. That does remind us of, The personal nature.

Of his works of providence. That he is. Hands-on. In all his providence, but he Upholds us. And all his creatures. Um, that when we interact with his providence, we're interacting with him. Which is as we get into the, the attributes of his providence. Um, Which are summarized at least in this answer under the three words, holy wise, and powerful Which is why we must not.

Permit, even the Questioning. Of his providence. Now, we may ask questions about his broadens that says He is infinite and we are finite and we lack understanding But there's a big difference between asking questions about his providence. And, Questioning his providence. If we question his providence, Then, we are saying.

Um, I don't know if this is, holy. Because i can't see how it is. Holy or i don't know if this is wise. Because i don't see. How this is wise or i don't know. How he is ruling and ever ruling. In almighty power. Because i can't see. How he is?

No, that's questioning to ask questions is to say I know that it is. Because i know that it's is. Even though, i don't know how. And so there's a big difference isn't there between saying i don't know if it's holy because i don't know how it's holy and saying I know it's holy.

Oh, lord. How is it? Holy And being content, if he doesn't, let me know how Although praise god, his word is full of such instruction. That we may almost always know. How it's holy, how it's wise, how it's powerful? And even when we can't immediately see We know. But it takes that submission to him and that submission to his word in the first place to come into.

Such a happy and contented and peaceful. Receiving of god's providence, continually. But praise god. It is his

So, god's works of providence are his Most. In other words, it could not be holier. Could not be more wise. Could not be more powerful. His providence is most holy even because it is his We could have just said god's works a providence. Are his preserving and governing all his creatures, and all their actions.

And then we could just know. That we are importing. All of those attributes of his Which we have a. Small summary list in. I think about six questions ago. God's works of providence are his preserving and governing all his creatures. Therefore, They are his. Wise. Powerful. Holy. Just good and faithful.

And you recognize that don't you is wisdom, power holiness, justice goodness and truth. Preserving. And governing all his creatures and other actions. But it is a blast and helpful, reminder, when thinking about providence. To remember in the first place that they are has most holy Preserving. And governing all his creatures and all their actions.

His holiness is his. Perfection of Commitment, the intensity. The immense intensity. Of his devotion to himself and his glory, his commitment to and consistency in. His character that which When he comes and creates creatures. Sets himself entirely apart from them. For he alone is god. And therefore, he maintains his holiness and distinction from the creatures.

Even the creatures that are most set apart to him that our most like him are still. So, unlike him, that the scripture says at it this way, he charges his angels. With unholiness with impurity. And that is just in their creaturely distinction from him as a creator. And so, we know that has providence is not going to Uh, Diverge, from his Character, it's not going to vary from his character and the least or smallest amount.

And therefore it is always good. So we can be like Joseph and look at any providence, not just a retrospectively but prospectively and Introspectively in the middle of it. We can see That it is good. God, intends it for good because god is good. Then we can be like the apostles who look at what the lord does, even in the crucifixion of the christ and say they have done what you ordained.

To happen. Whatever you planned beforehand. And bless God for the goodness of what he has done. And of course, there is no greater goodness. But he has ever done been giving his son on the cross. It is very Uh, mean and bass and brutish. For any creature. To complain about the goodness of any providence.

When god gave his own son, to be crucified. As the greatest providence. If that. Was god, who is good? Doing good. Then certainly, everything else. Is as well. And even if we didn't know how, which we can see how At the cross, we can see how In many other ways and hopefully not base and worldly and fleshly ways.

Even if we could not see how we would just know, That it is good. Not because of the how. But because of the who, This is his most, holy In fact, not only does he do, what is good? It's not like he is barely squeezing. A little goodness out of a lemon rind.

So you can make lemonade Notice his most holy. It could not be more good than it is. Because if there was something that was more good to do, God would have done it. And therefore, if he did anything differently, It would not be so good as it is now.

Is the world as it should be no. But god is, as he should be. And his grace is, As his grace should be. And the good that he is doing, is even Bringing us. Not now only into full union with christ, which happens. The moment that the spirit gives you faith to believe and to the lord Jesus, But in full communion, The enjoyment of our union, with him, the sharing of Our union with him.

And in order to have full communion full fellowship with the lord Jesus, of course, we need to be made fully like him. We need to be made. Holy And so they're being made perfectly. Holy in him, we be May finally be fully perfectly happy. And him as well. And so it is his most holy And most wise, and this is Uh, this is very closely tied as to the previous attribute, isn't it?

If there was a better way. Of doing this perfect goodness. He would have done it that way. The fact that this is how God chooses to do it, Is to us, a 100% guarantee that this is the wisest way of it being done. We don't have to play Wesley and you know talk about god looking and seeing all possible, futures.

Does he know hypothetically with all? Course he does. But to have, And infinitesimal mind like hours asking such questions and What a bunch of nonsense. We know that he is the one whose devised it. And so it could not possibly have been better devised again. It's all about the, who his Most holy most wise.

And praise god. Most powerful. Because there are second causes involved. There are Joseph's brothers involved. And what happens in the last third or so? Of the book of genesis. There are. Pilot, and the jews. Involved. In the crucifying of the lord Jesus christ. And yet, none of them can be involved in such a way.

As to hinder in the slightest amount. What god has the planned? What god has planned in his holiness and his perfectness. What God has planned in his perfect wisdom. It is also. According to his almighty power. So that when we see those who really are evil, Really intending evil, and really doing evil.

Even though god is not the doer of the evil. Yet he's super intense. And both wells operate at the same time. Yes, such that his will is not hindered. Or diverted or slow down in the smallest way. But, actually, he who is good in his goodness, acts through those who are evil and acting evil, And because he is good, we know that he will punish the evil He is not tolerating it.

He is not responsible for it. And he certainly is not. Permitting, it. In a way of Allowing it to. Be unanswered. For, he has already made known his good law. And he has already implied and spoken his threats against it, and he will be faithful fully to punish. Every last sin.

They're never has been and never will be. By any other life. I said, love you. Girlfriend.

A single sin. That goes without being fully. Punished. Which is one of the reasons why hell? Is where the flame has never quenched. And the worm never dies. Because the lord is righteous. And yet, in his almighty power. Ordains, and we can say permits. If we're talking about, His acting good, even through that, which the creature does that is evil?

Which itself is a display of how great is the goodness and wisdom and power of god. That he can do the one even through the other.

That he can do the one even through the other. And yet. When we say has permissive will. Uh, we must be very careful because As we say that in english, it sounds like he's being permissive of sin and he is not He abhors, it Even as he endures. With great patience, great long suffering.

Vessels of wrath. That are prepared for destruction. So that he might show the riches of his glory. On vessels that are prepared. For mercy. So his most, holy wise, and powerful. Preserving. Everything is continually indebted to god for its existence. In fact, even Uh, In the next age in eternity.

Which isn't really an age as it were. Even at the end of this age, Uh, those who will suffer forever. Uh, destruction. That comes From the presence of god and from his glory, He will still be preserving them. As they. As they suffer. A creature cannot continue to exist.

Apart from him. Governing we Um, We covered. As we were thinking about holy and wise and powerful all his creatures. First of all, that's Oh, all creatures. There's not a single creature. That is whose existence or who's actions? Are not subject to what we have been talking about. And The reason of course is because all creatures are his creatures.

There is only one god. And so yeah, there aren't made by stickers or made in stickers. On any of the creatures because they're all made by The same maker. And then since they're all his creatures, They're all continually preserved by him. And all continually governed by him. And it's not just the creature himself.

But because he does make creatures with wills. We must also remember that it, that he Govern preserves and governs, even their actions Those who hate him. Are sustained. By him whom they hate. Which makes their hatred all the worse. Although, the wicked would Attempt to do what we have seen.

Even in romans nine, You will say to me, then why does he still find fault for who can resist as will? And what is that? But the creature who is being sustained by him, Trying to blame him for their wickedness. Because there he is sustaining them. And therefore that, which actually makes them more culpable.

Sophia.

And more guilty. Before him. They are they attempt to use? To accuse him. And excuse themselves. Oh, the wickedness of our hearts that we would do. So And so let us be like, eli. Who though he was a bad parent? And a bad priest. When he heard of the dreadful providence and what could be more dreadful?

Then not the loss of his sons, which was dreadful enough. But the departure of the arc from israel. Still had a good right doctrine of providence to say. It is yahweh. Let him do as he wills. Why? Because his will is most holy Most wise. Most powerful. And all creatures are his creatures.

And therefore, we know That he not only has a right. But that it is. Whatever he does is good. In preserving and governing all his creatures. And all their actions. So let our hearts not say, Why did god do this? In a questioning way. Because even questioning it is.

To presume some deficiency. In the holiness of god. Or in the wisdom of god. Or the power of god. And i hope we can all hear how wicked that is. To presume a deficiency. In our god. It has shown us in christ, the perfection. Of all of those things.

So that we might be certain With a certainty that rests upon the death and resurrection of jesus for sinners. That god is always doing perfectly. So the question is, what are god's works of providence, and the answer is God's works a providence r his most, holy wise, and powerful.

Preserving and governing. All his creatures. And all their actions.