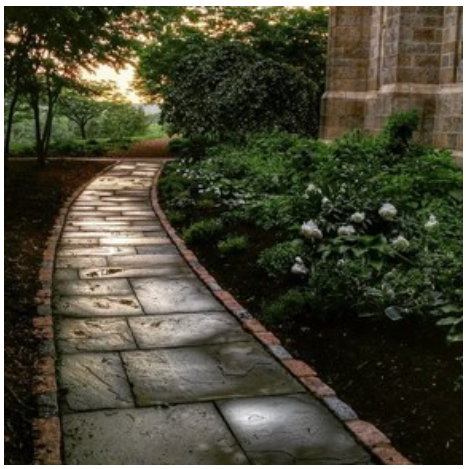
Learn by Doing

Choice How the Lord Leads



The pillar of cloud and fire pictures the Lord's leading in our lives. He is with us at every moment, and in every detail of our lives. We are free to choose whether to behave selfishly, or to love the Lord and others.



By repeatedly choosing to love the Lord and others, we are choosing to be led by the Lord on the path to heaven. Read passages on the Lord's leading, answer true-false questions and discuss their implications for our lives.

1. What does the Lord want for you—in fact for everyone He creates? (That all people should go to heaven after death. This is the purpose of His creation.)
2. Does everyone go to heaven? Why or why not? (We have free choice.) Could the Lord make everyone go to heaven if He wanted to? Why or why not?
3. The Writings for the New Church tell us a lot about this topic. Hand out *How the Lord Leads* (p. 2) and read the top part aloud.
4. Invite students to answer the questions on their own. When all have finished, discuss the answers together. Some questions may have more than one answer depending on what the students have in mind. Encourage students to provide reasons for their responses.
5. *How the Lord Leads Teacher Page* (p. 3) has the answers and relevant quotations to help you answer questions that may come up.
6. *Discussion Wrap-up:* The Lord leads us by means of His Word. He longs to bring each person into heaven, but gives us the freedom to choose to love and follow Him. He permits those who do not want to follow Him to choose hell instead.

Materials Needed for Each Student

copy of *How the Lord Leads* p. 2, pen or pencil

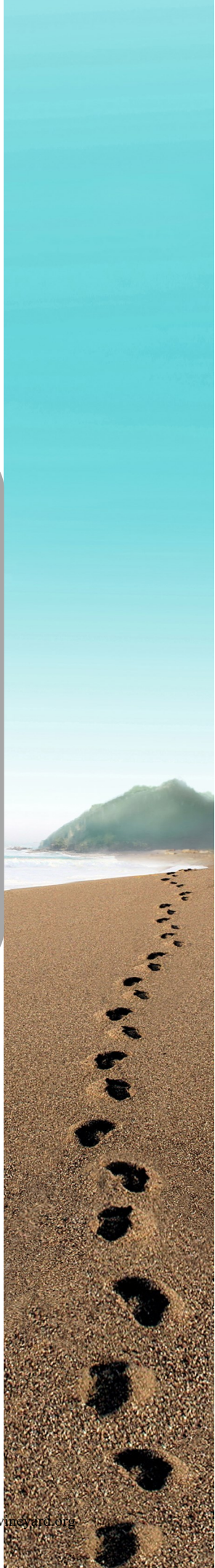
Prepare in Advance

Read through the lesson and print copies of the readings.

New Church Concept

The Lord's Leading

The Lord's foresight and providence are in the smallest things connected with a person, in things so small that it is impossible by any thought to understand as much as one out of a hundred million of them. For every smallest moment of a human being's life involves a series of consequences extending to eternity, each moment being as a new beginning to those which follow. See *Arcana Coelestia* 3854.3



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How the Lord Leads

Read the following passages from the Writings for the New Church:

The Lord's foresight and providence are in the smallest things connected with a person, in things so tiny that it is impossible to understand as much as one out of a hundred million of them. For every smallest moment of a person's life involves a series of consequences extending to eternity. Each moment is like a new beginning to those which follow (see *Arcana Coelestia* 3854.3).

It is well known in the church that the Lord desires the salvation of all, and the death of no one. Any predestination, except to heaven, is contrary to the Divine Love (*Divine Providence* 330.3).

The Lord foresees the state of everyone after death, including the places in hell of those who do not desire to be saved and the places in heaven of those who do desire to be saved. He provides places for the wicked by permitting and withdrawing, and places for the good by leading. Unless this were done continually from everyone's birth to death, neither heaven nor hell would continue to exist. For without this foresight and Providence neither heaven nor hell would be anything but confusion (see *Divine Providence* 333).

All the future is present to the Lord and all the present is to Him eternal. In everything it does, Divine Providence has regard to the infinite and the eternal (see *Divine Providence* 333.3).

All things, even the least of all things, down to the least of leasts, are directed by the Lord's providence, even as to a person's very steps (see *Arcana Coelestia* 6493).

Read the statements below and decide whether they are true or false. Circle, then discuss your answers.

1. The Lord knows every detail about what my life will be like. **True** **False**
2. The Lord saves people whether or not they want to be saved. **True** **False**
3. Everything I do will have consequences to eternity. **True** **False**
4. If I make a bad choice, I am no longer going to go to heaven. **True** **False**
5. The Lord cares about each choice I make. **True** **False**
6. The Lord wants everyone to go to heaven, but He does not force people to go there. **True** **False**
7. After I die people I meet will find out about sins I've done that nobody on earth knows about. **True** **False**
8. The Lord is constantly bending my choices toward heaven. **True** **False**
9. I am predestined to follow the Lord's plan because He already knows my choices. **True** **False**
10. The Lord knows what I love, but He does not know whether I will go to heaven or to hell. **True** **False**
11. As long as most of what I do is good, I will probably go to heaven. **True** **False**
12. If the Lord knows the choices I will make, then there is no point in having free choice. **True** **False**

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How the Lord Leads Teacher Page

1. The Lord knows every detail about what my life will be like. **True** **False**

   All things down to the least of leasts are directed by the Lord's providence, even as to [a person's] very steps (*Arcana Coelestia* 6493).

2. The Lord saves people whether or not they want to be saved. **True** **False**

   The Lord never does anything contrary to order, because He Himself is Order. The Divine Truth that goes forth from the Lord is what makes order. To save people as a result of immediate mercy is contrary to Divine order, and what is contrary to Divine order is contrary to the Divine (*Heaven and Hell* 523).

3. Everything I do will have consequences to eternity. **True** **False**

   Every smallest moment of a human being's life involves a series of consequences extending to eternity, each moment being as a new beginning to those which follow (see *Arcana Coelestia* 3854.3).

4. If I make a bad choice, I am no longer going to go to heaven. **True** **False**

   We are born with a tendency toward evils. The only thing that breaks the tendency toward evil is the new birth from the Lord that is called regeneration (see *True Christianity* 521.2,3). We are to examine ourselves, recognize and admit our sins, pray to the Lord, and begin a new life (see *True Christianity* 530).

5. The Lord cares about each choice I make. **True** **False**

   All things, even the least of all things, down to the least of leasts, are directed by the Lord's providence, even as to [a person's] very steps (*Arcana Coelestia* 6493).

6. The Lord wants everyone to go to heaven, but He does not force people to go there. **True** **False**

   The Lord desires the salvation of all (*Divine Providence* 330). The Lord foresees and sees all things and every individual thing...though some things arise from His permission, some from His concession, some from His consent, and some from His good pleasure, and some from His will (*Arcana Coelestia* 1755).

7. After I die people I meet will find out about sins I've done that nobody on earth knows about. **True** **False**

   In the second state after death spirits become visibly what they had been in themselves while in the world…. What they have said and done secretly they now say and try to do openly, having no longer any fear of loss of reputation, such as they had in the world. Thus are hidden things laid open and secret things uncovered (*Heaven and Hell* 507).

8. The Lord is constantly bending my choices toward heaven. **True** **False**

   In every present moment the Lord foresees evil, and provides good. This He does from the moment the person is conceived even into eternity (*Arcana Coelestia* 9296).

9. I am predestined to follow the Lord's plan because He already knows my choices. **True** **False**

   It is a goal of Divine providence that a person act in freedom in accordance with his reason. The Lord guards the freedom in a person as a person does the pupil of his eye (*Divine Providence* 97).

10. The Lord knows what I love, but He does not know whether I will go to heaven or to hell. **True** **False**

    The Lord foresees and sees all things and every individual thing (*Arcana Coelestia* 1755).

11. As long as most of what I do is good, I will probably go to heaven. **True** **False**

    It is not so difficult as some believe to live the life that leads to heaven…. When anything presents itself to a person that he knows to be dishonest and unjust, it is simply necessary for him to think that it ought not to be done because it is opposed to the Divine precepts (*Heaven and Hell* 533).

12. If the Lord knows the choices I will make, then there is no point in having free choice. **True** **False**

    It is a goal of Divine providence that a person act in freedom in accordance with his reason. The Lord guards the freedom in a person as a person does the pupil of his eye (*Divine Providence* 97).

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