



How Does God Lead People?

Lesson Overview

1. Do Serendipity and Accidents Exist?

If God knows everything, can accidents exist?

2. Money for Taxes

The Lord leads through true ideas in His Word.

3. Watch a Video

Watch *God Didn't Create Us to be Robots* at bit.ly/GodRobots (1min 40sec).

4. Discuss

How does the Lord lead?

5. Activity

Trust walk and discussion

New Church Concepts

Divine Protection

Keep me as the apple of Your eye;

Hide me under the shadow of Your wings,
From the wicked who oppress me,
From my deadly enemies
who surround me.

Psalm 17:8,9

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

FaithBuilder 1 | Lesson 28 | Divine Providence

Do Serendipity & Accidents Exist?

Choose questions to prompt thinking about Divine providence.

1. What does “serendipity” mean? (Making a fortunate discovery by accident.)
2. Give an example of a happening that is “serendipitous.” e.g. You study before a test. The test questions are on *exactly* what you studied!
3. When two people bump into each other we say they had an accident. What is an accident? Since the Lord foresees everything that happens would He view an unexpected happening as an accident?
4. From an eternal perspective, do serendipity and accidents exist? What purpose might accidents serve in our lives? What realizations might they lead us to?

Money for Taxes

During His life on earth, the Lord demonstrated the extent to which He foresees human needs and provides for them. When asked if his Teacher paid temple taxes, Simon Peter said “Yes.” He then went to Jesus, and Jesus, *anticipating* Peter’s question, said,

“What do you think, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth take customs or taxes, from their sons or from strangers?” Peter said to Him, “From strangers.” Jesus said to him, “Then the sons are free. Nevertheless, lest we offend them, go to the sea, cast in a hook, and take the fish that comes up first. And when you have opened its mouth, you will find a coin; take that and give it to them for Me and you” (Matthew 17:25-27).

The Lord not only knew Peter’s question, He also knew that a fish had swallowed a coin whose value was worth exactly the amount needed to pay the temple taxes, and that Peter would catch *that* fish when he cast in a hook! Peter secured the tax money with the Lord’s help by means of a fish in the sea. If we believe that success in life comes from our *own* efforts, we will eventually be disappointed and experience the emptiness that this kind of thinking brings.

The Lord continually offers help. He lays out a path to happiness in His Word. By choosing Him as our Guide and freely following Him, we can hear His voice in various ways—through friends or a person we really respect, through our conscience, through an inspiring book or through reflecting on an event or pattern of events in our lives. But it is the principles we learn from the Word that build a mental framework against which we can accurately measure these other influences in our life.

Without the knowledges of truth and good from the Word the Lord cannot be present with a person and lead him, for when a person knows nothing of the Lord, of heaven, of charity and faith, his spiritual mind...is empty, and has nothing from the Lord in it. *Apocalypse Explained* 112.3

Having the truths from the Word in our minds does not mean that we have to memorize all of the stories or facts in the Word. It means we need a mental framework of knowledge from the Word that we consciously use in day-to-day decision-making. Occasionally we may experience an “Aha” moment—when a truth we have known for some time suddenly speaks to us in a clear and new way. The Lord leads us through the delights we experience at moments like this.

Watch a Video

Watch *God Didn't Create Us to be Robots* (1min 40sec) at bit.ly/GodRobots. (Enter bitly link in the web browser search bar at the top of your screen.) *Note: This video was created with adults in mind. Preview to see if your group would benefit from watching it.*

Discuss

Choose questions for discussion.

1. How does the Lord lead us?
2. Why is it important that people are not aware of Divine providence in action? What would happen if people sensed the Lord working in their lives?
3. Can we be aware of the Lord's leading when we think about past events that have happened to us, or in history?
4. Does the Lord want us to trust blindly that He is leading us? Or must we take an active part in order to be led by Him?
5. Is it possible for the Lord to lead people who reject Him as well as people who are trying to do what He commands?
6. Compare the Lord's leading of someone who willingly does what He asks with someone who deliberately acts against His will.

Trust Walk Activity

Do a trust activity indoors or outdoors and discuss.

Mine Field

Scatter objects around the area to create an obstacle field. Pair students. One of each pair will be blindfolded. Partners hold hands. The sighted partner leads the blind partner through the mine-field. When finished, trade the blindfold and repeat.

Blind Millipede

Create an obstacle course. If you are outdoors, set up a walk that involves navigating around objects. Blindfold all but one person. Players form a line, each holding the shoulders or elbows of the person in front of them. The sighted person walks at the front of the line, leading the group through the obstacles.

1. How did it feel to put your trust in your friends?
2. Describe how it felt to lead a friend to safety.
3. What does it mean to put your trust in the Lord?
4. In what can people be “blind” to spiritual dangers around them?

New Church Concept The Lord's Leading

Trust and confidence mean trust and confidence in the Lord that out of pure mercy He will teach people the way and lead them to heaven. *Apocalypse Explained* 810.4

There is a sphere elevating all people towards heaven, which proceeds continually from the Lord. It is like a strong current in the ocean, which with hidden force bears a ship along. All those who believe on the Lord and live according to His commandments enter that sphere or current and are raised upwards; but those who do not believe on Him, have no desire to enter that sphere, but turn aside and are caught up by the stream which flows into hell. *True Christian Religion* 652.3

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