



Looking for the Providence of God in All Things: See Jesus

MAIN IDEAS

- **In everything that happens to us, we should see the hand of God; we should see Jesus.**
- **If we have God, we have everything.**

MEMORY VERSES

"For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?"³⁵ "Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?"³⁶ For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.

—Romans 11:34-36

SCRIPTURE

- 1) Psalm 73:25-26
- 2) Romans 11:34-36
- 3) Philippians 3:8-9



LESSON SUMMARY

Behind everything that happens to us in life...is GOD. Nothing can happen to us that is not ordained by God. In all of the circumstances of life, our response should be to see God at work—trusting His wise and loving hand of providence.

Paul counted the loss of all things as rubbish for the surpassing worth of knowing Jesus. If Jesus is our treasure, too, no matter what happens to us, we have all we need.

Is Jesus your greatest treasure? With your son or daughter, pray that all things would be counted as rubbish compared to the surpassing worth of knowing Jesus.

AS YOU WALK BY THE WAY

Discuss Romans 11:34-36 with your son or daughter.

"For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?"³⁵ "Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?"³⁶ For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.—Romans 11:34-36

In what ways do we presume to be God's counselor? Why do we do that?

What could we possibly give to God? What do these phrases mean:

- "from him" are all things
- "through him" are all things
- "to him" are all things

Ask your child to explain what it means to "see Jesus" in all things. Have him or her tell you the story of the boy and the bike, or of Mabel in the nursing home.

ACTION STEP

During application time, each student was asked to decide on a personal response to what was learned. After recording this step below, discuss how your child can apply this response to his or her life this week.



SUGGESTION FOR JOURNALING

Write about your understanding of the providence of God. How has this study helped you? Where do you need to grow? Write about the kinds of responses you can have to situations when you “see Jesus” in them.

SEEING GOD AT WORK

J.I. Packer's 11th Birthday Present: The Tale of the Bicycle and the Typewriter

by Justin Taylor

How can a dent in the head be God's blessing to someone?

James Innel (J.I.) Packer is a teacher, an author, and one of the most respected and influential theologians in North America...and God used a dent in his head received in a childhood accident, to fulfill His purposes for Dr. Packer.

In September of 1933, at the age of seven, J.I. Packer had "a violent collision with a truck, a bread van." The result—damage to the frontal lobe of his brain with a chunk of his skull missing—was a three-week stay in the hospital, followed by six months of recovery away from school. From that time until he went off to Oxford University, he had to wear a protective plate over his injury and to refrain from participating in all sports. Already a loner, Packer withdrew into solitary activities like reading and writing.

Alister McGrath picks up the story:

Every schoolboy of the period longs for the day when he would own a bicycle of his own. Usually around the age of eleven, at the point when a schoolboy would enter senior school, parents would mark their son's "coming of age" by giving him a bicycle as a birthday present.

Packer dropped heavy hints that he expected to receive a cycle, like all his friends.

However, his parents knew that they could not yet allow their son to have a bicycle. If he were to have any kind of accident, the earlier injury could lead to something much more serious, and potentially fatal. But what could they give their son instead?

On the morning of his eleventh birthday, in 1937, Packer wandered down from his bedroom to see what present awaited him. The family had a tradition of placing birthday presents in the dining room of the house. He expected to find a bicycle. Instead, he found an old Oliver typewriter, which seemed to him to weigh half a ton. Although it was old, it was nevertheless in excellent condition.

It was not what Packer had asked for; nevertheless, it proved to be what he needed.

Surprise gave way to delight, as he realized what he could do with the unexpected gift. It was not more than a minute before he had put paper into the machine and started to type. It proved to be his best present and the most treasured possession of his boyhood.¹

To this day, Packer continues to type all of his manuscripts and correspondence on an old-fashioned typewriter. He has never used a computer.

I'm thankful for a God who does not always give us what we want, but always provides what we ultimately need.

Behind the events of J.I. Packer's life is Jesus. Where do you see Jesus in this story? How did God use J.I. Packer's accident to fulfill His purposes in Dr. Packer's life?

J.I. Packer defines God's providence as: "The unceasing activity of the Creator, whereby in overflowing bounty and goodwill, He upholds His creatures in ordered existence, guides and governs all events, circumstances, and free acts of angels and men, and directs everything to its appointed goal, for His own glory."

Explain his definition. Do you think J.I. Packer saw the hand of Jesus in his accident and as a blessing from God? Why? How did the accident and the gift of the typewriter bring glory to God? How can you bring glory to God today.

—Story reprinted from Justin Taylor's "J.I. Packer's 11th Birthday Present: The Tale of the Bicycle and the Typewriter." May 29, 2012, <http://thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/justintaylor/2012/05/29/j-i-packers-11th-birthday-present-the-tale-of-the-bicycle-and-the-typewriter> (Accessed July 24, 2012).

1. McGrath, Alister. *J.I. Packer: A Biography*. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1997), 6. (Emphasis placed by Justin Taylor.)