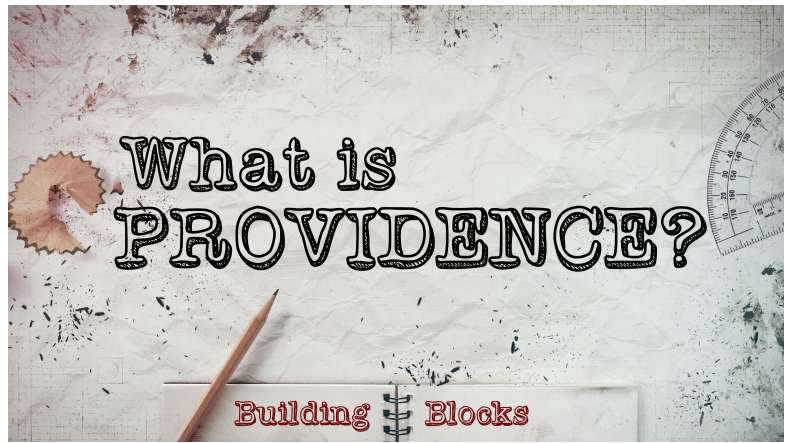


3 • We Need to Pray & Practice

We've learned throughout this study that the big word **providence** means "to see _____." Our Father in heaven sees and knows everything, and he perfectly, steadfastly cares about and _____ for all of us (Matt 5:45). He's also always had a



good _____ for us and the rest of his creation (Eph 3:11). God's way is always the best way. We may not think about his **providence** very often, but we depend on it every single day of our lives. So ... **what's next?** If we're thankful for what he provides and want to participate in his purpose, where does that begin? What should we **do**?

Number 1: we should _____. That's what Jesus taught us in his great Sermon on the Mount (Matt 6:9-13). And as we pray, what can we believe?

"But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who _____ in secret will reward you." (6:6)

That's how and why Jesus taught us that we don't have to be anxious about our lives, "what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on" (6:25).

Because the same Father who **provides** for the birds of the air (6:26) and lilies of the field (6:28) also cares and provides for you. Respect his **purpose** for you...

"...seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness..." (6:33)

...and **PRAY**.

Number 2: we should _____. Listen to what Paul wrote in **Philippians 4:8-9**:

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be _____ you.

Or, as the apostle John wrote...

This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in _____, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the _____, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. (1 John 1:5-7)

Long ago, our Father in heaven "**saw before**" what we would need, and he has been **providing** for us ever since. Even before he created the heavens and the earth, our Creator had a good **purpose** for all of us. It's up to us to believe him, to trust him, to be thankful, and respect him. Praying and practicing is a great place to start. **Let's talk about it...**

For Class & Family Discussion:

- Why does God care whether or not we pray? Why can't we just depend on him to **provide** for us? What's so special about prayer?
- In **Matthew 6:5-8**, Jesus warned us about a variety of things when it comes to prayer. Take a look. What can we learn?
- Jesus provided a model prayer for us in **Matthew 6:9-13**. "Pray then like this." As you read what he said next, what stands out to you?
- Why, as we think about the God who created us, do we need to think of him as "your Father who sees in secret" (**6:6**)?
- Why does our Father in heaven care whether or not we are anxious (**6:25**)?
- What do you think Jesus meant in **Matthew 6:32** when he said, "For the Gentiles seek after all these things"?
- In your own words, what is it going to mean to actually practice **Matthew 6:33**?
- In **Philippians 4:8**, the apostle Paul told us what we need to "think about." What difference will that make? Why does what we "think about" really, really matter?
- "Practice these things" (**Phil 4:9**). We know what it means to "practice" a sport, or a musical instrument, or a new hobby. But how can we "practice" what Paul is talking about in **Philippians 4:8-9**? What's that going to look like in everyday life?
- We've talked a lot about God "seeing before" in this little series. Is there anything we need to "see before"?