God’s view of goodness is quite different from that of many human beings. The preparation of souls for eternity involves trial and pain. The problem of reconciling human suffering with the existence of a God who loves is insoluble only as long as we attach a trivial human meaning to “love.” Humans do not exist for their own sake or pleasure, nor does God exist to please humans; humans exist to please God. Furthermore, humans are not created only to love God (though we must) but that God might love us.

Now we will consider the conditions involved in receiving divine goodness. We cannot ask God to accept all the blemishes of our lives as if they did not exist. The blemishes must be removed. To ask that God love us as we are would be to ask that God should cease to be God. Because God *already* loves us, He labors to make us more lovable. That process involves pain. To our own cost of our reformation (the pain we suffer) we must add God’s cost (Christ’s death for our sins). For our own good, we are asked to “put on Christ” (who suffered for us) and become like God.

Many believe that if God truly loves us, He would allow us to be happy at all times by any means. Is happiness is the right of all human beings? May we pursue happiness by any means (including theft, murder, treason, and fraud)? Obviously, we may pursue happiness only by lawful means, without violating natural or national laws. We have a right to do whatever we have a right to do; whatever is lawful for one person ought to be lawful for all people. Consider the danger of pursuing happiness by any and all means. Satan would increase his temptation, and most human beings would self-destruct.

**The idealized view of good and evil**

There is a universal feeling that the wicked *ought* to suffer. The righteous are assured that the wicked will ultimately be punished (Isa. 3:11; Gen. 38:7; Prov. 12:21). The suffering righteous believe

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**The Providence of God  
*Introduction and Overview***

**Definitions of Providence**

The word “providence” can be traced to Latin and Greek words that mean “foresight” or “making provision for the future.” Human beings cannot foresee the future, but they may prepare for future events based on experience with past events. For example, parents provide for their children’s well-being and future happiness by nourishing them, sending them to school, counseling them, disciplining them, protecting them, etc. Because parents know by observation and experience that children without proper care, education, and guidance have limited prospects for success in life, they make adequate provision for their children’s future through planning and foresight. God takes care of His people in a similar way. He knows what we need and makes both present and future provisions for our physical and spiritual care. This seminar will help us understand how God is able to provide such care for His people.

In theology, *divine providence* is God's activity in the world, and the term is often used as a title of God (Wikipedia). “Providence concerns God’s support, care and supervision of all creation, from the moment of the first creation to all the future into eternity” (Tenny, 1975). Among Christian believers, divine providence includes all that God does to rule and sustain the universe. In particular, divine providence is concerned with the redemption of sinful man.

Human providence has limitations as well as good and bad dimensions. A positive example of human providence is recorded in Acts 24:2. Tertullus praised Felix by saying, "Your foresight has brought about reforms in this nation." Negatively, Paul admonishes us to "make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires" (Rom. 13:14).

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