

# GOD PROVIDES™

A FILM EXPERIENCE FROM CROWN FINANCIAL MINISTRIES®



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## GOD PROVIDES™ SERMON OUTLINE

# WIDOW AND OIL

WELCOME! We are excited for you to start this visual journey and experience of God Provides™.

God Provides™ is a series of six short films which portrays a biblical account of God proving Himself to be a faithful Provider. The series has reached millions of lives around the world and is continuing to have a tremendous impact in churches and communities globally.

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1. Send out [this link](#) and ask your congregation to watch each short film in their free time. Ask for on-line feedback and testimonies to encourage each other.
2. Ask your virtual small groups to go through the films as a course using the study and discussion guides.
3. Use the short clips and sermon notes to customize a 4-6 week series on God Provides.
4. All of the above.

The films may also be shared in multiple environments, including in conjunction with local mission work or as a "Lunch and Learn" Movie Experience or other events you may host.

Please know that we are praying for you and we are here for you. If you would like to connect directly with us, please feel free to call 1-800-722-1976 or email [clientservices@crowns.org](mailto:clientservices@crowns.org) and we would be honored to help you.

May God bless you and your congregation!

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## “WHAT DO YOU HAVE?”

(referencing the film, *Widow and Oil*, adapted from 2 Kings 4:1-7)

Note to Pastors: We prayerfully offer this resource material to you, believing that God will use it to guide and bless individuals and families within your congregation and the church body as a whole. Obviously you know your congregation’s specific needs and interests, so feel free to adapt any of this material. This sermon addresses just a facet of the complete God Provides™ *Film Learning Experience*.

We encourage you to play the entire film, *Widow and Oil* found in [CrownOnline](#), however if you prefer a shorter film clip, we’ve included a linked clip in the appropriate place

### Ice Breaker and Introduction of Suggested Film Clip

Years ago, a desperate single mother faced the biggest challenge of her life. Her husband—a godly prophet—had recently died, leaving her to pay off a substantial debt. But she had no money.

In ancient Israel, there were no insurance policies. No government social programs to care for this widow and her two sons. And evidently no close relatives could or would help her.

Soon the creditor would arrive, and his plan for collecting his money was breaking the widow’s heart.

Despite deep emotional pain and potentially paralyzing fear, she didn’t just sit at home and cry. Or run frantically from neighbor to neighbor, trying to borrow enough money to pay off the debt. Or try to run away to escape the creditor.

No, she did the only thing she knew to do—what came natural to her because of her deep faith in the God she and her husband had served. She cried out for help to God’s prophet, Elisha.

God not only heard her cries to Elisha, he was preparing to use Elisha to meet her desperate need. She just didn’t know it yet.

The film segment you are about to see, an adaptation of the true story found in 2 Kings 4:1-7, begins at this point.

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## Play First Film Clip of *Widow and Oil*

### Key Message

All of us experience painful circumstances—as a result of our actions, the actions of other people, or things beyond anyone’s control. We face such difficult issues as the death of a spouse or child, serious illness, financial pressures, loss of employment, secret addictions, deteriorating relationships, depression.

People around us—[and some of us]—struggle to stay afloat. To keep homes. To reduce consumer debt. To help family members in crisis. To pay a car repair bill, hospital bill, or college tuition.

The list goes on and on. Everywhere, it seems, people are needy, and they respond to their situations differently.

- Some live in denial—as if doing little or nothing will make the situation better.
- Some grit their teeth and charge forward, confident that they can manage things on their own—just as they always have. Work harder. Get a second or third job. Trust in their own skills and abilities.
- Some give up, thinking that nothing they do will make any positive difference.
- Some try to improve things—but don’t seek wise counsel first.
- Some humbly ask family, friends, and their communities of faith for help.
- Some turn to Wall Street, believing that if they buy the right stocks or mutual funds, and sell at just the right time, money will pour in and things will be fine again.

### **1** God is our *ultimate Provider*, and we need to place our faith in Him above all else.

The widow recognized her obvious limitations, assessed her problems, and turned to the prophet of God—the one she knew would do far more than anyone else.

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God didn't create us to live independently of Him. He created us to live in intimate and dependent relationship with Him—to obey Him, seek Him, learn from Him, ask Him for wisdom and help.

God cares about our needs today, and tomorrow. But He is even more concerned about sharing an ongoing, deepening relationship with each of us.

The Creator, sovereign God of the universe desires to be in close relationship with you and me!

His ways are far beyond what we can think or imagine.

Will we respond to Him in faith and trust? Will we passionately begin or deepen our personal relationship with Him—turning to Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, studying the Bible—God's Word to us today, talking with God in prayer, seeking godly counsel? Asking God to teach us the lessons we need to learn about trusting and obeying Him?

When we do, He will provide for our deepest needs—in His timing, according to His perfect will. Just as He provided for the widow and her sons.

### **Additional Supporting Scriptures**

[These are provided for your convenience. Feel free to select from them or utilize others at your discretion.]

### **Key Verse:**

*Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*  
—Philippians 4:6-7

### **Additional Verses:**

*Sing to the LORD with thanksgiving;  
make music to our God on the harp.  
He covers the sky with clouds;  
he supplies the earth with rain  
and makes grass grow on the hills.  
He provides food for the cattle  
and for the young ravens when they call.  
His pleasure is not in the strength of the horse,  
nor his delight in the legs of a man;  
the LORD delights in those who fear him,  
who put their hope in his unfailing love. —Psalm 147:7-11*

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*Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life. —1 Timothy 6:17-19*

*Cast your cares on the LORD  
and he will sustain you;  
he will never let the righteous fall. —Psalm 55:22*

*Cast all your anxiety on him because he [Jesus] cares for you. —1 Peter 5:7*

*And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. This, then, is how you should pray:*

*“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread. . . .” —Matthew 6:5-11*

## **Related Story from the Bible**

*Then Jesus said to his disciples: “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. Life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds! Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?*

*“Consider how the lilies grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith! And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.” —Luke 12:22-31*

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## 2 **God always responds when we cry out to Him for help. He has a special place in His heart for needy, suffering people.**

The infinite, all-knowing, loving God who gave us His Word—the Bible—always hears the passionate cries of His people.

No matter what our needs may be, God cares deeply about us. Scripture reveals, again and again, that He has a special place in His heart:

- for those who are alone and hurting
- for widows and orphans
- for people who have been displaced
- for victims of injustice and abuse . . . .
- for people trapped in sinful thoughts and actions
- for people whose world seems to be spinning out of control

Just as God used Elisha to meet the widow’s current and future financial needs, He often partners with followers of Jesus—you and me—to provide practical help, guidance, encouragement, a listening ear to others. . . .

Who might He use to help you, or a loved one in need?

In what ways might He use *you* to help someone else?

Does God always provide what we need when we want it? Sometimes He says *No*. Sometimes He says *Yes*. Sometimes He says *Wait*. But He is always faithful to followers of Jesus who trust in Him and obey Him.

Does God sometimes allow things to get really bad for people? Yes. The Bible is full of stories of people who were pushed to their absolute physical and spiritual limits. But God always has a purpose for allowing such situations—a lesson to be learned, a heart issue to be resolved, an addiction to be addressed, a rekindling of a person’s desire to seek Him and experience Him, an opportunity to be a witness to someone who is watching to see what God and faith are all about.

Sometimes we learn much more during difficult times than we do during the easy times, right?

The widow was tested—and responded well. Certainly she never forgot about God’s faithfulness. Just watching her sons grow up served as a great reminder.

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## Additional Supporting Scriptures

[These are provided for your convenience. Feel free to select from them or utilize others at your discretion.]

*Call upon me in the day of trouble;  
I will deliver you, and you will honor me. —Psalm 50:15*

*Come and listen, all you who fear God;  
let me tell you what he has done for me. —Psalm 66:16*

*The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous  
and his ears are attentive to their cry. . . .  
The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears them;  
he delivers them from all their troubles.  
The LORD is close to the brokenhearted  
and saves those who are crushed in spirit.  
A righteous man may have many troubles,  
but the LORD delivers him from them all. —Psalm 34:15, 17-19*

*Listen to my cry for help,  
my King and my God,  
for to you I pray.  
In the morning, O LORD, you hear my voice;  
in the morning I lay my requests before you  
and wait in expectation. —Psalm 5:2-3*

*You hear, O LORD, the desire of the afflicted;  
you encourage them, and you listen to their cry,  
defending the fatherless and the oppressed,  
in order that man, who is of the earth, may terrify no more. —Psalm 10:17-18*

*Praise be to the LORD,  
for he has heard my cry for mercy.  
The LORD is my strength and my shield;  
my heart trusts in him, and I am helped.  
My heart leaps for joy  
and I will give thanks to him in song. —Psalm 28:6-7*

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### **3** God will use whatever resources we have, expecting us to do “our part” to help change the course of our difficult circumstances.

As the widow discovered, God came to her aid through the intervention of Elisha and the help of neighbors.

Did she still need to demonstrate faith in order to receive God’s blessings? Yes.

Think about all the work she and her sons expended to borrow all those empty clay jars. She didn’t even know what Elisha would do with them! He told her to collect them, and in faith she obeyed—evidently without question.

Knowing that she only had a little oil, she still stepped out in obedient faith, as so many followers of God have done through the ages. She trusted in the God whom Elisha and her family served.

Did her neighbors ask why she needed the jars? We don’t know. Perhaps she just answered, “Elisha the prophet of God told me to borrow them.”

And what happened? God didn’t just provide enough oil for one jar, or two jars. He filled up every single jar she had collected!

As 2 Kings 4 reveals, she paid off the creditor—and had enough left to keep paying her bills. (Perhaps it was the best oil in her neighborhood—maybe in the entire world—and people lined up to buy it!)

“Doing our part” to address our situations will require us to self-assess—to recognize our strengths and weaknesses, to evaluate the consequences of our choices, to avoid making decisions we may regret later. If our problems are financial, we may need to compile a complete list of assets and liabilities and evaluate spending habits we might otherwise try to overlook.

Maybe we will need to ask for help from neighbors, family members, our faith community, and/or other key people. This, in turn, will require action—making phone calls, setting up appointments, and so on. God may already have prepared people to help us improve our situations—but we need to be humble and allow Him to guide us to them.

Also, we will need to evaluate any items of value, any skills . . . that God may use on our behalf. The widow only had a little oil, and God certainly blessed it! What do you have for Him to use? A talent? A practical skill? “Seed money” for a little business? The ability to communicate well over the phone? Items in your garage that you can sell?

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[**Optional:** Maybe you have a gift of “helps”—and people around you could use your help.

Maybe you are a great organizer and can help people set up systems.

Maybe you are an encourager—and can guide people in setting up small businesses.

Maybe you have great writing talent . . . but have never used it.]

Once you start doing this while asking God for wisdom, get ready to be surprised at what you discover!

### **Additional Supporting Scriptures**

[These are provided for your convenience. Feel free to select from them or utilize others at your discretion.]

#### **Key Verses:**

*For lack of guidance a nation falls,  
but many advisers make victory sure. —Proverbs 11:14*

*Plans fail for lack of counsel,  
but with many advisers they succeed. —Proverbs 15:22*

*Do not forsake your friend and the friend of your father,  
and do not go to your brother's house when disaster strikes you--  
better a neighbor nearby than a brother far away. —Proverbs 27:10*

#### **Additional Verses:**

*As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a remote place, and it's already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food." Jesus replied, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat." "We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish," they answered. "Bring them here to me," he said. And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. —Matthew 14:15-20*

*A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. So many gathered that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. Some men came, bringing to him a paralytic, carried by four of them. Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus and, after digging through it, lowered*

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*the mat the paralyzed man was lying on. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven." —Mark 2:1-5*

*Then he [Jesus] said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and he goes to him at midnight and says, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread, because a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have nothing to set before him.' "Then the one inside answers, 'Don't bother me. The door is already locked, and my children are with me in bed. I can't get up and give you anything.' I tell you, though he will not get up and give him the bread because he is his friend, yet because of the man's boldness he will get up and give him as much as he needs. "So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. "Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"*

—Luke 11:5-13

*Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body.*

—1 Corinthians 12:14-20

## Related Story from the Bible

*The next day Moses took his seat to serve as judge for the people, and they stood around him from morning till evening. When his father-in-law saw all that Moses was doing for the people, he said, "What is this you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit as judge, while all these people stand around you from morning till evening?"*

*Moses answered him, "Because the people come to me to seek God's will. Whenever they have a dispute, it is brought to me, and I decide between the parties and inform them of God's decrees and laws."*

*Moses' father-in-law replied, "What you are doing is not good. You and these people*

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*who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone. Listen now to me and I will give you some advice, and may God be with you. You must be the people's representative before God and bring their disputes to him. Teach them the decrees and laws, and show them the way to live and the duties they are to perform. But select capable men from all the people—men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain—and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. Have them serve as judges for the people at all times, but have them bring every difficult case to you; the simple cases they can decide themselves. That will make your load lighter, because they will share it with you. If you do this and God so commands, you will be able to stand the strain, and all these people will go home satisfied.”*

*Moses listened to his father-in-law and did everything he said. He chose capable men from all Israel and made them leaders of the people, officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. They served as judges for the people at all times. The difficult cases they brought to Moses, but the simple ones they decided themselves. —Exodus 18:13-26*

## Pastoral Challenge

In which area do you (or someone you love) especially need God’s help right now? Are you crying out to Him for help?—and seeking His guidance concerning who you might contact and which resource—even if it is small—He may choose to use?

Perhaps you do not have a deep need right now, and God is guiding you to reach out to someone who does—a neighbor, a coworker, a friend, a relative. Will you respond . . . soon? Will you be at least as helpful as the widow’s neighbors were to her?

## Wrap Up and Close

[We recommend bringing in a short, modern-day illustration to close. For example:

- **George Washington Carver** (Born a slave, Carver overcame numerous obstacles to become the famous scientist and inventor. He credited the Lord for his many accomplishments.)
- **Joni Eareckson Tada** (An accident left her a quadriplegic. Despairing of life, she cried out to God. By His grace, and using what "little" she had, today she is an internationally known mouth artist, a talented vocalist, a radio host, an author of many books and an advocate for disabled persons around the world.)

Or, someone in the congregation might share a short, illustrative testimony—live or via video.]

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## GOD PROVIDES™ SERMON OUTLINE

# LIFTED UP

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May God bless you and your congregation!

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## “MY HOPE FOR THE FUTURE”

(referencing the film, *Lifted Up*, adapted from John 3:1-17)

Note to Pastors: We prayerfully offer this resource material to you, believing that God will use it to guide and bless individuals and families within your congregation and the church body as a whole. Obviously you know your congregation’s specific needs and interests, so feel free to adapt any of this material. This sermon addresses just a facet of the complete God Provides™ *Film Learning Experience*.

We encourage you to play the entire film, *Lifted Up* found in [CrownOnline](#), however if you prefer a shorter film clip, we've included links to two clips in the appropriate place.

### Ice Breaker and Introduction of Suggested Film Clip

Jesus, the Son of God, did many unexpected things while He was on earth.

- Touched lepers and then healed them.
- Spoke to a Samaritan woman by a well at a time when Jews despised Samaritans.
- Healed people on the Sabbath—the day set aside for God.
- Read from the scroll of Isaiah in a synagogue and then announced that He was the fulfillment of the prophecy He just read! [Luke 4:17-21]
- Drove moneychangers out of a prayer area in God’s temple in Jerusalem.
- Spent time with tax collectors, who cooperated with Roman authorities and cheated people.
- Kept talking with Pharisees—Jewish religious leaders who tried to reinterpret the Old Testament Scriptures so Jews could live righteous lives before God—even though many Pharisees hated Him and did everything they could to make things difficult for Him.

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And one night, Jesus spoke for quite a while with a Pharisee named Nicodemus.

The Bible doesn't reveal why Nicodemus came at night. Was he afraid to be seen with Jesus? It's certainly a possibility given his lofty religious position. One thing can be sure – Nicodemus honestly and openly sought answers from Jesus about His teachings and who He claimed to be.

The first of two short video clips we'll see today, an adaptation of the true story found in John 3:1-21, begins as Nicodemus meets with Jesus that night.



**Play Film Clip 1 of *Lifted Up***

## Key Message

Nicodemus seemed surprised and a bit confused when Jesus talked about being “born again.” Since their talk that night, more than two thousand years ago, countless people have discussed what the words born again mean.

There's another important aspect of Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus that is often overlooked—one that affects all of us.

**1 God honors the honest seeker. When people anywhere in the world honestly seek to learn more about Jesus and the Christian faith, Jesus will guide them to His life-transforming truth.**

As an influential Jewish Pharisee, Nicodemus most likely had memorized all of the Hebrew (Old Testament) Scriptures and was passionately committed to obeying God's commands. He spent plenty of time in synagogues, reading and discussing the Scriptures.

We don't know exactly why he “came to Jesus at night.” But we do know that he felt comfortable asking Jesus sincere questions, which Jesus answered immediately.

## Today Jesus still invites people:

- To talk with Him—through prayer.
- To check out His life and His truth claims—through reading the Bible.
- To ask followers of Jesus challenging questions—investigating the Christian faith.

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- To spend time with Jesus' followers—observing. (Remember, Jesus said that people “will know that you are my disciples if you love one another” [John 13:35].)

## Jesus invites people to discover who He really is.

*May I get personal for a moment?*

- Are you tired of hearing about Jesus—and desire to at least explore a deeper, personal relationship with Him—but you have unanswered questions about Jesus, the Bible, or something else?
- Do you know about prayer—and realize that Jesus is really waiting to hear from you?
- Are you troubled by a spiritual issue, or by what “religious” people have said or done to you, and would like to talk with a sincere follower of Jesus about this?
  - Is it hard for you to realize that God loves you and invites you to come to Him as you are—with your pain, confusion, anger . . . ?

As Jesus demonstrated with Nicodemus, He loves that kind of searching and dialogue. Think about all the Pharisees who didn't take time to learn the truth Jesus came to share and continued to pursue wrong spiritual paths.

Jesus longs to be in close relationship with you. If you are genuinely seeking Him, you will find Him.

### ***That's a promise from God!***

There's no place Jesus would rather be—nothing He'd rather be doing—than guiding you into a deeper relationship with Himself.

As people such as C. S. Lewis, Charles Colson, and so many others have discovered, God offers true life. True hope. True peace. True Truth . . . in a world in which many people don't even believe Truth exists.

You don't have to come to Jesus at night; you can come to Him anytime. And followers of Jesus will stand with you in finding answers to your questions—and the deep longings of your heart.

### **Additional Supporting Scriptures**

[These are provided for your convenience. Feel free to select from them or utilize others at your discretion.]

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**Key Verses:**

*Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him. — Psalm 34:8*

*Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. —Matthew 7:7*

*Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me. —Revelation 3:20*

**Additional Verses:**

*Hear my voice when I call, O LORD; be merciful to me and answer me. My heart says of you, "Seek his face! Your face, LORD, I will seek." —Psalm 27:7-8*

*My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you, turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding, and if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God. —Proverbs 2:1-5*

*I love those who love me, and those who seek me find me. —Proverbs 8:17*

*Come near to God and he will come near to you. —James 4:8*

*Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty. But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe. All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away."—John 6:35-37*

*Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. —John 20:30-31*

*I sought the LORD, and he answered me. —Psalm 34:4*

*The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands. And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else. From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for*

*continued on next page*

*him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us.*  
—Acts 17:24-27

*Without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.*  
—Hebrews 11:56

## Related Stories from the Bible

*At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" He called a little child and had him stand among them. And he said: "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."—Matthew 18:1-4*

*The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans. )  
Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.  
Sir, the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his flocks and herds?"  
Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life". —John 4:9-14*



**Play Film Clip 2 of *Lifted Up***

## Key Message

These few words from Jesus shattered Nicodemus' perspectives on religion . . . and God Himself!

Nicodemus, and so many Jewish leaders, created religious systems based on human effort to reach God. But Jesus—God's beloved Son, the promised Messiah—came down and reached us.

Rather than allowing all of humanity to suffer under the burden of their sinfulness, which

*continued on next page*



entered the human race through Adam (Genesis) God supernaturally entered our world. He didn't come to condemn us for our sins but to save us from our sins.

## **2 God sent his Son Jesus to save humankind from sin, not to condemn people. Jesus' death on the cross powerfully demonstrated how much He loves each of us.**

For thirty-three years, Jesus lived a sinless life. He then chose to sacrifice Himself on a cross and take all of humanity's sins on Himself.

What a powerful demonstration of love! Through His death, Jesus in effect established a bridge between the holy God and people drowning in their sinfulness. Then God raised Jesus from the dead—triumphing totally over the effects of sin, including physical death.

As Nicodemus and countless people since have discovered, Jesus' death was highly personal.

- Jesus loves you.
- Jesus loves me!
- And Jesus invites each of us to have a personal relationship with God through Him.

### ***All we need to do is:***

- Place our personal faith in Jesus.
- Confess to Him that we have committed sins and that we believe He died on the cross and rose again for our sins.
- Invite Him to enter our lives and give us new spiritual life—to give us a “new birth” so we are “born again.”

- ***We do not earn salvation by good works.***
- ***We do not have to hope that somehow God will care about us when so much else is happening in the universe.***
- ***We do not have to carry the heavy guilt of sin.***

We can know, for sure, that once we each place our personal faith and trust in Jesus, God completely forgives our sinfulness. And that the Spirit of Jesus will fill us and empower us to live the way God wants us to live—the way that more closely matches who He created us to be. So our lives receive new purpose and meaning. So we can fulfill the

*continued on next page*

plan God has for each of us.

And, after we die, we will spend eternity with God.

I wonder how much sleep Nicodemus got that night after his conversation with Jesus—and after Jesus died on the cross and Nicodemus helped to prepare Jesus' body for burial—and after Jesus rose from the dead?

Perhaps that one conversation that night not only guided Nicodemus to faith in Jesus but to spending eternity with Him in heaven.

### Additional Supporting Scriptures

[These are provided for your convenience. Feel free to select from them or utilize others at your discretion.]

#### Key Verses:

*Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me". —John 14:6*

*All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. —Romans 3:23*

*The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. —Romans 6:23*

*If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. As the Scripture says, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame." For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile--the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." —Romans 10:9-13*

*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives. —1 John 1:9-10*

#### Additional Verses:

*And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. —Acts 2:21*

*For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. —Ephesians 2:8-9*

*continued on next page*

*Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved. —Acts 4:12*

*This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us.  
—1 John 3:16*

*For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit. —1 Peter 3:18*

## Related Stories from the Bible

*"Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask." Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." Martha answered, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" "Yes, Lord," she told him, "I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world." —John 11:21-27*

*The next day the rulers, elders and teachers of the law met in Jerusalem. Annas the high priest was there, and so were Caiaphas, John, Alexander and the other men of the high priest's family. They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them: "By what power or what name did you do this?"*

*Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: "Rulers and elders of the people! If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a cripple and are asked how he was healed, then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. He is "the stone you builders rejected, which has become the capstone." —Acts 4:5-11*

*Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jews. With Pilate's permission, he came and took the body away. He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds. Taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. —John 19:38-40*

**3 To be born again is when a person invites Jesus Christ to be their Lord and Savior. They receive new spiritual life in Jesus and will spend eternity with Him in Heaven.**

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God's transforming power is at work throughout the world. Right now. In the hearts of every person who has chosen to receive Jesus as Lord and Savior.

*Once we choose to follow Jesus, God's Spirit within us works in awesome ways:*

- To guide us in obeying God, who has our best interests in mind.
- To free us from the slavery of wrongdoing (sin).
- To open our minds and hearts to the truths of the Bible—God's supernatural, inspired Word to us today.
- To change our hearts so we become more like Jesus.
- To confirm that each of us will spend eternity in heaven with God.
- To give us His joy and peace.

The Bible says, literally, that we are “a new creation” as soon as we choose to follow Jesus. Certainly our bodies look the same—same hair color, same skin. We still have our basic personalities. We still make mistakes. But the Spirit of God now lives within each of us—guiding, teaching, encouraging, providing . . . .

And until we die and are with God in heaven, He will continue to transform us—from the inside out. Just as He evidently transformed Nicodemus.

### **Additional Supporting Scriptures**

[These are provided for your convenience. Feel free to select from them or utilize others at your discretion.]

### **Key Verses:**

*I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life. —John 5:24*

*Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going. —John 14:1-4*

*He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have*

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*life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life. —1 John 5:12-13*

### **Additional Verses:**

*Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. —2 Corinthians 4:16-18*

*Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. —2 Corinthians 5:1*

*Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you. —1 Peter 1:3-4*

## **Pastoral Challenge**

Are you experiencing the true life God, through Jesus, offers you?

Are you discovering more about Jesus and the Christian faith? What may God be saying to you right now about your relationship with Him—and His willingness to meet you wherever you are in your spiritual journey?

As Nicodemus discovered, relationship with Jesus is not based on religion—us reaching up to God—but on the historical fact that God, through Jesus, reached down to us.

## **Wrap Up and Close**

[We recommend bringing in a short, modern-day illustration to close. For example:

- **C.S. Lewis** (A devout atheist, Lewis was confronted with the claims of Christ, was converted, and became one of the most influential apologists for God.)
- **Chuck Colson** (Of Watergate fame, Colson gave his life to Christ while in prison and has faithfully "lifted up" Christ to millions.)

Or, someone in the congregation might share a short, illustrative testimony—live or via video.]



# GOD PROVIDES™

A FILM EXPERIENCE FROM CROWN FINANCIAL MINISTRIES®



## *GOD PROVIDES™* SERMON OUTLINE

# JEREMIAH'S CALL

WELCOME! We are excited for you to start this visual journey and experience of God Provides™.

God Provides™ is a series of six short films which portrays a biblical account of God proving Himself to be a faithful Provider. The series has reached millions of lives around the world and is continuing to have a tremendous impact in churches and communities globally.

Each video lesson is accompanied by a God Provides™ Companion Guide which is part of an effective learning experience for this curriculum. It may be used in a small group environment and/or in the home with a family guide. Encourage your church members to go deeper in studying the principles in these films. You can view the Companion Guide sections within each film's module.

Here are four ways you can use this resource with your congregation:

1. Send out [this link](#) and ask your congregation to watch each short film in their free time. Ask for on-line feedback and testimonies to encourage each other.
2. Ask your virtual small groups to go through the films as a course using the study and discussion guides.
3. Use the short clips and sermon notes to customize a 4-6 week series on God Provides.
4. All of the above.

The films may also be shared in multiple environments, including in conjunction with local mission work or as a "Lunch and Learn" Movie Experience or other events you may host.

Please know that we are praying for you and we are here for you. If you would like to connect directly with us, please feel free to call 1-800-722-1976 or email [clientservices@crowns.org](mailto:clientservices@crowns.org) and we would be honored to help you.

May God bless you and your congregation!

# GOD PROVIDES™

A FILM EXPERIENCE FROM CROWN FINANCIAL MINISTRIES®



## “GOD’S DESIGN FOR HOPE”

(referencing the film, *Jeremiah’s Call*, adapted from Jeremiah 29:1-14)

Note to Pastors: We prayerfully offer this resource material to you, believing that God will use it to guide and bless individuals and families within your congregation and the church body as a whole. Obviously you know your congregation’s specific needs and interests, so feel free to adapt any of this material. This sermon addresses just a facet of the complete God Provides™ *Film Learning Experience*.

We encourage you to play the entire film, *Jeremiah’s Call* found in [CrownOnline](#), however if you prefer a shorter film clip, we’ve included a linked clip in the appropriate place

### Ice Breaker and Introduction of Suggested Film Clip

More than 2,500 years ago, on the seventh day of the fifth month, during the nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, the inhabitants of Jerusalem had a very bad, terrible day.

The Babylonian army broke down all the walls around Jerusalem and carried into exile the Jewish people who were still alive.

And God allowed this to happen in order to punish His people for their unfaithfulness to Him. He loved them too much to abandon them to their sinful ways, and used their hardships in exile to discipline and teach them to obey Him.

God knew that only then would His people find true hope and experience purposeful living.

To give the exiles hope, God gave His prophet, Jeremiah, a special word for them—and it had to be delivered in person to the Jewish elders, priests, and prophets in Babylon.

Unfortunately, Jewish exiles pretending to be prophets had been spreading lies among the people—what the Bible describes as “false visions, divinations, idolatries and the delusions of their own minds” (Jeremiah 14:14).

It was a difficult time for God’s people.

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It was time for God’s true prophetic word to be revealed!

In the film segment you are about to see, which is recorded in Jeremiah 29:1-14, a true prophet of God is starting to read Jeremiah’s message that has just arrived in Babylon.

As you watch the film, listen carefully to what God required the exiles to do. Think about the level of faith such obedience required and why treating their Babylonian captors this way would have been really unusual.



**Play Film Clip of *Jeremiah's Call***

## Key Message

The people from Jerusalem arrived in Babylon with nothing. They were refugees. They had to start over completely.

But God didn’t abandon them. In His timing He sent them specific instructions through Jeremiah about how to start over again and become the obedient people they needed to be in order to be His witnesses to the world.

As you saw, the false prophets did not believe the Word of God, but the purposes of God cannot be thwarted. The leaders of the exiles recognized God’s truth.

Instead of resisting their captors, the exiles from Jerusalem were to settle down. Build houses. Plant gardens. Get married and have babies. And even seek the peace and prosperity of Babylon—a pagan city.

Imagine praying for people who had killed your friends and family members—and carried you away as captives to a distant land. Not easy for the exiles to do, right? Yet God still commanded them to do it.

After they had spent seventy years of exile, God promised to come and bring them back to Jerusalem! Think of the joy the exiles felt in their hearts. They no doubt remembered the glories of Jerusalem and desired to return to their home country.

God not only had special plans for them in Babylon—He would prosper them. Keep them safe. Give them hope—a future to look forward to. Even though they were captives.

What was the key to all of these blessings from God?

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God's people needed to return to Him. To be faithful to Him. To not pursue false gods and listen to false prophets.

God's people needed to call to Him and pray to Him—not to other gods.

And God promised that they would find Him—when they sought Him with all their heart.

Today, our loving and faithful God cares just as much about us today as He did about the exiles! His prophetic words for those exiles still apply to us today no matter how difficult our lives may be.

## **1** God offers His people hope through Jesus Christ – even in the middle of their trials.

No matter how difficult your situation may be—illness, financial issues, an addiction, a loved one who suffers, job uncertainty, fear of what the future holds . . . God is faithful. He knows what you are experiencing and longs for you to draw close to Him and receive the hope only He can provide.

### **Key Verses:**

*No one whose hope is in you  
will ever be put to shame.”  
Show me your ways, O LORD,  
teach me your paths;  
guide me in your truth and teach me,  
for you are God my Savior,  
and my hope is in you all day long. —Psalm 25:3-5*

*For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through  
endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. —  
Romans 15:4*

*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you  
may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. —Romans 15:13*

### **Additional Verses:**

*A horse is a vain hope for deliverance;  
despite all its great strength it cannot save.  
But the eyes of the LORD are on those who fear him,  
on those whose hope is in his unfailing love,*

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*to deliver them from death  
and keep them alive in famine.  
We wait in hope for the LORD;  
he is our help and our shield. —Psalm 33:17-20*

*Even youths grow tired and weary,  
and young men stumble and fall;  
but those who hope in the LORD  
will renew their strength.  
They will soar on wings like eagles;  
they will run and not grow weary,  
they will walk and not be faint. —Isaiah 40:30-31*

*The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him,  
to the one who seeks him;  
it is good to wait quietly  
for the salvation of the LORD. —Lamentations 3:25-26*

*I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. —Ephesians 1:18-21*

*Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. —1 Peter 1:3-5*

## **2** God loves His people dearly. The *specific instructions* He gave the exiles through His prophecy also *apply to us* today.

Before God's prophetic message arrived, the exiles no doubt wondered if their lives would ever return to "normal." Uprooted from their nation, forced to live in a new country with a different language and culture, they certainly could not rely on themselves. The possessions they had accumulated were captured. Their very identity as God's people was in doubt. They seemed to have no control over their future and no hope for the present.

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Then God stepped directly into their lives.

Today, God is still with His people—everyone who has chosen to follow Jesus. He is aware of our hurts, our struggles, our confusion, our sense that sometimes our lives are spinning out of control.

But, as the exiles experienced, God often does not “rescue” us from all our problems—at least not right away.

If our difficulties have been caused by our wrongdoing—our sinfulness—God may allow us to reap the consequences of our attitudes and actions—to be disciplined and learn the hard lessons He wants us to learn.

No matter how discouraged we may feel, He desires us to know that He is still with us. Guiding us. Drawing us into a deeper relationship with Himself. Teaching us about His Word—the Bible. Directing us down the path of obedience that will bring us a truly abundant life.

Why? God loves us!

Let’s consider the specific instructions God gave the exiles and how each of them relates to us.

## **A. We are to be *content* with our circumstances, placing our faith in God to provide everything we need.**

Today many people are not content. Trying to find contentment, they go into debt to buy possessions they hope will make them happy. They bounce from religion to religion and from relationship to relationship. They desire more and more money, more status, more security, more . . . of so many things.

It is all too easy to compare our situations to those of other people—our friends, our neighbors, our coworkers.

If only we will choose to experience the truth of Hebrews 13:5: “Be content with what you have, because God has said, ‘Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.’”

### **Additional Supporting Scriptures**

[These are provided for your convenience. Feel free to select from them or utilize others at your discretion.]

*Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and*

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*we can take nothing out of it. —1 Timothy 6:6-7*

*I rejoice greatly in the Lord that at last you have renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you have been concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength. —Philippians 4:10-13*

*Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."  
—Hebrews 13:5*

*O Lord, open my lips,  
and my mouth will declare your praise.  
You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it;  
you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.  
The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;  
a broken and contrite heart,  
O God, you will not despise. —Psalm 51:15-17*

## **B. We are to work, earn an income, and be happy with the fruits of our labors.**

Even though they lived in a foreign country, God still wanted the exiles to apply their skills and abilities as best they could in order to earn money and provide for their families. Pretty basic instruction, right? But in their situation, it would have been all too easy for them to do as little work as they could for the Babylonians. To “get by.” To become lazy and dependent on other people for their income. But God knew that they would need to develop resourcefulness, a sense of responsibility, to hone the personal gifts he had given them . . . in order to train their families and prepare them for their future in Jerusalem.

Today, God desires no less from us. Who knows what plans He has for you, how He desires to prepare you for what is ahead?

### **Additional Supporting Scriptures**

**[These are provided for your convenience. Feel free to select from them or utilize others at your discretion.]**

*May the favor of the Lord our God rest upon us;*

*continued on next page*

*establish the work of our hands for us—  
yes, establish the work of our hands. —Psalm 90:17*

*Blessed are all who fear the LORD,  
who walk in his ways.  
You will eat the fruit of your labor;  
blessings and prosperity will be yours. —Psalm 128:1-2*

*All hard work brings a profit,  
but mere talk leads only to poverty. —Proverbs 14:23*

*Finish your outdoor work  
and get your fields ready;  
after that, build your house. —Proverbs 24-27*

*A wife of noble character who can find?  
She is worth far more than rubies.  
Her husband has full confidence in her  
and lacks nothing of value.  
She brings him good, not harm,  
all the days of her life.  
She selects wool and flax  
and works with eager hands.  
She is like the merchant ships,  
bringing her food from afar.  
She gets up while it is still dark;  
she provides food for her family  
and portions for her servant girls.  
She considers a field and buys it;  
out of her earnings she plants a vineyard.  
She sets about her work vigorously;  
her arms are strong for her tasks.*

*She sees that her trading is profitable,  
and her lamp does not go out at night.  
In her hand she holds the distaff  
and grasps the spindle with her fingers.  
She opens her arms to the poor  
and extends her hands to the needy.  
When it snows, she has no fear for her household;  
for all of them are clothed in scarlet.  
She makes coverings for her bed;*

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*she is clothed in fine linen and purple. . . .  
Give her the reward she has earned,  
and let her works bring her praise at the city gate. —Proverbs 31:10-31*

*Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men,  
since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the  
Lord Christ you are serving. Anyone who does wrong will be  
repaid for his wrong, and there is no favoritism. —Colossians 3:23-25*

**C. We are to build strong and lasting relationships, which are best formed and nurtured as we commit them to God and seek His help in living out the principles in the Bible in those relationships.**

**Additional Supporting Scriptures**

[These are provided for your convenience. Feel free to select from them or utilize others at your discretion.]

*The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." —Genesis 2:18*

*A man of many companions may come to ruin,  
but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother. —Proverbs 18:24*

*Do not forsake your friend and the friend of your father,  
and do not go to your brother's house when disaster strikes you—  
better a neighbor nearby than a brother far away. —Proverbs 27:10*

*Two are better than one,  
because they have a good return for their work. —Ecclesiastes 4:9*

*Though one may be overpowered,  
two can defend themselves.  
A cord of three strands is not quickly broken. —Ecclesiastes 4:12*

*A wife of noble character is her husband's crown. —Proverbs 12:4*

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## Related Stories from the Bible

*Then Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go back, each of you, to your mother's home. May the LORD show kindness to you, as you have shown to your dead and to me. May the LORD grant that each of you will find rest in the home of another husband." Then she kissed them and they wept aloud and said to her, "We will go back with you to your people."*

*But Naomi said, "Return home, my daughters. Why would you come with me? Am I going to have any more sons, who could become your husbands? Return home, my daughters; I am too old to have another husband. Even if I thought there was still hope for me—even if I had a husband tonight and then gave birth to sons—would you wait until they grew up? Would you remain unmarried for them? No, my daughters. It is more bitter for me than for you, because the LORD's hand has gone out against me!"*

*At this they wept again. Then Orpah kissed her mother-in-law good-bye, but Ruth clung to her.*

*"Look," said Naomi, "your sister-in-law is going back to her people and her gods. Go back with her."*

*But Ruth replied, "Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the LORD deal with me, be it ever so severely, if anything but death separates you and me."*

—Ruth 1:8-17

*After David had finished talking with Saul, Jonathan became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as himself. From that day Saul kept David with him and did not let him return to his father's house. And Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself. Jonathan took off the robe he was wearing and gave it to David, along with his tunic, and even his sword, his bow and his belt.*

—1 Samuel 18:1-4

### **D. It is important for us to pray for those around us and for those in authority over us.**

The exiles prayed for their Babylonian captors, and as the Babylonians prospered so did God's people. Why? Obviously God answers the prayers of His obedient people. But there's even more here to think about.

What happens when we pray for someone we don't like, or someone in authority over us, and ask God to bless that person? God also begins to work in us. To give us more love for that person. To give us the heart-felt desire to work harder for an insensitive boss. To be more patient with a rude neighbor. To be willing to share our time with someone who seems to take us for granted.

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Something else also happens. The light of Jesus penetrates the darkness of people's minds and hearts—and He uses our love to do this. As we pray for such people, our own actions and attitudes become more like those of Jesus, who told us to pray for our enemies. We become more Christlike!

The Bible reveals many instances when godly people prayed for others and asked other people to pray for them.

### Additional Supporting Scriptures

[These are provided for your convenience. Feel free to select from them or utilize others at your discretion.]

*Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. —Romans 13:1-2*

*You have heard that it was said, "Love your neighbor and hate your enemy." But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. —Matthew 5:43-44*

*I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. —Titus 2:1-4*

### Related Story from the Bible

*When King Jeroboam heard what the man of God cried out against the altar at Bethel, he stretched out his hand from the altar and said, "Seize him!" But the hand he stretched out toward the man shriveled up, so that he could not pull it back. Also, the altar was split apart and its ashes poured out according to the sign given by the man of God by the word of the LORD.*

*Then the king said to the man of God, "Intercede with the LORD your God and pray for me that my hand may be restored." So the man of God interceded with the LORD, and the king's hand was restored and became as it was before. —1 Kings 13:4-6*

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## Pastoral Challenge

Do you *really* believe that God cares about your situation, or that of a loved one, no matter how difficult it may be? How might you benefit from remembering God's promise to give the Jewish exiles in pagan Babylon hope and a future?

What is involved in "seeking God with all of your heart?" (See Jeremiah 29:11.) Related verses: Proverbs 3:5; 4:23-27; Joshua 22:5; Matthew 22:34-37; Colossians 3:23.

## Wrap Up and Close

[We recommend bringing in a short, modern-day illustration to close. For example:

- Corrie and Betsie ten Boom (*The Hiding Place*): Seeing God's hand even in their captivity and forgiving their captors through the Lord's grace.

Or, someone in the congregation might share a short, illustrative testimony—live or via video.]

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## *GOD PROVIDES™* SERMON OUTLINE

# ABRAHAM AND ISAAC

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Please know that we are praying for you and we are here for you. If you would like to connect directly with us, please feel free to call 1-800-722-1976 or email [clientservices@crowns.org](mailto:clientservices@crowns.org) and we would be honored to help you.

May God bless you and your congregation!

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## “MINE OR HIS”

(referencing the film, *Abraham and Isaac*, adapted from Genesis 22:1-18 and Hebrews 11:17-19)

Note to Pastors: We prayerfully offer this resource material to you, believing that God will use it to guide and bless individuals and families within your congregation and the church body as a whole. Obviously you know your congregation’s specific needs and interests, so feel free to adapt any of this material. This sermon addresses just a facet of the complete God Provides™ *Film Learning Experience*.

We encourage you to play the entire film, *Abraham and Issac* found in [CrownOnline](#), however if you prefer a shorter film clip, we've included links to two clips in the appropriate place.

### Ice Breaker and Introduction of Suggested Film Clip

Imagine how surprised a 75-year-old nomadic herdsman named Abram was when the Creator God of the universe suddenly spoke seven amazing promises to him, including this one: “*I will make you into a great nation*” (Genesis 12:2).

Did God speak in a whisper? Did His voice sound like thunder? The Bible doesn’t tell us. But we do know that God had a miraculous plan in mind for Abram and his wife, Sarai, an elderly couple who were childless.

As years passed, Abram started worrying about not having a child of his own. “Don’t be afraid,” God responded.

“O Sovereign Lord,” Abram replied, “what can you give me since I remain childless?” And then he added, “You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir” (Exodus 15:1-3).

In some ways, Abram was politely saying, “O Lord, who has supreme power and authority, when will You fulfill what You already promised my wife and me? We are older, still have no child of our own, and it looks as if a servant will inherit all my possessions.”

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God immediately answered. This time he stated that not only would Abram’s wife bear a son, she and Abram would have so many offspring that to count them would be like counting all the stars in the sky!

God then made a special agreement, called a covenant, with Abram. Each of them agreed to keep certain promises. Abram promised to be obedient to God, and his descendants also would have to remain obedient.

As more time passed, Abram and his wife began worrying again.

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, and Sarai was about ninety, God appeared to him again and promised:

- To make them the father and mother of many nations.
- To make them fruitful and be their God
- To give them a huge area of land in which to live—the region called Canaan (that later became the land of ancient Israel).
- To give them a son they were to name Isaac, with whom God would establish an everlasting covenant.

God also changed Abram’s name to Abraham, which means “exalted father.” And he changed Sarai’s name to Sarah. (Exodus 17)

In return, God again required Abram—and his descendants—to obey fully the terms of their agreement.

The next year, Sarah gave birth to Isaac. Once again the living God had demonstrated His faithfulness. No doubt Abraham and Sarah, and their household and friends, celebrated joyously and praised God. A great future lay ahead of them.

As we’ll see now in a short film clip, adapted from Genesis 22:1-18 and Hebrews 11:17-19, a few years later Abraham faced the most challenging test of his life. God commanded him to make an unusual, costly, and—based on human standards—seemingly nonsensical and cruel sacrifice.

Why? To see if Abraham would trust God completely. To see if Abraham was willing to sacrifice everything he had—including his greatest treasures—in order to be obedient to God.

It would be a test the father and his son would never forget!

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***As you watch the film, think about:***

- How God had miraculously given Isaac to Abraham Sarah.
- Whether or not Abraham remained passionately obedient to God.
- How God's past faithfulness concerning Isaac might have influenced Abraham's decision.



**Play Film Clip 1 of *Abraham and Isaac***

**Key Message**

Perhaps you are wondering, Why did God tell Abraham to sacrifice his beloved child—the one through whom all nations would be blessed? Many people have asked such questions.

Did you know that even before Abraham's time, thousands of years ago pagan people sacrificed children to obtain special favors from their gods? Abraham was probably familiar with this horrible practice.

God certainly was. He clearly stated in the Hebrew (Old Testament) Bible that such sacrifices were wrong. Any ancient Israelites—descendants of Abraham—who committed this detestable act were to be severely punished.

So why did God command Abraham to sacrifice Isaac?

It was a test—to determine whether or not Abraham would trust and obey his sovereign Lord fully and, in faith, make everything he had—including his beloved son—available for God's use.

**1 *Obedience to God demonstrates our love for Him and is the key to receiving His blessings.***

Abraham was not perfect, but he passionately trusted and obeyed God.

God loved Abraham, shared a dynamic relationship with him, and greatly blessed him, his family—and eventually the world.

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The theme of obeying God—and how important such obedience is to our relationship with Him—flows powerfully throughout the entire Bible. For example:

- Just after creation, God told Adam to obey Him by not eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And Adam and Eve disobeyed!
- As the Old Testament records, God evaluated the ancient kings of Israel by how completely they obeyed His commands.

Today, each of us—like Abraham—is challenged to obey God—and that includes having faith that He will keep his promises and carry out His perfect will for our lives.

God tells every follower of Jesus to be passionately committed to obeying Him. As 1 John 2:6 tells us, “Whoever claims to live in him [Jesus] must walk as Jesus walked.” We are to strive to be like Jesus—who always obeyed the Scriptures. His obedience to His Father took Him to the cross for the sins of humankind.

As it was during Abraham’s day, our obedience demonstrates our love for God. So it’s important for us to learn what He tells us to do—and what to avoid.

How much do you love God—as demonstrated by your commitment to obey Him in all areas of your life?

### Additional Supporting Scriptures

[These are provided for your convenience. Feel free to select from them or utilize others at your discretion.]

### Key Verses:

*For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession. The LORD did not set his affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples. But it was because the LORD loved you and kept the oath he swore to your forefathers that he brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the land of slavery, from the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Know therefore that the LORD your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commands. But those who hate him he will repay to their face by destruction; he will not be slow to repay to their face those who hate him. Therefore, take care to follow the commands, decrees and laws I give you today. If you pay attention to these laws and are careful to follow them, then the LORD your*

*continued on next page*

*God will keep his covenant of love with you, as he swore to your forefathers. He will love you and bless you. —Deuteronomy 7:6-13*

### **Additional Verses:**

*Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." —Matthew 28:16-20*

*Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ. Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous. —Romans 5:16-19*

### **Related Stories from the Bible**

*In the third year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, Hezekiah son of Ahaz king of Judah began to reign. He was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem twenty-nine years. His mother's name was Abijah daughter of Zechariah. He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, just as his father David had done. He removed the high places, smashed the sacred stones and cut down the Asherah poles. He broke into pieces the bronze snake Moses had made, for up to that time the Israelites had been burning incense to it. . . .*

*Hezekiah trusted in the LORD, the God of Israel. There was no one like him among all the kings of Judah, either before him or after him. He held fast to the LORD and did not cease to follow him; he kept the commands the LORD had given Moses. And the LORD was with him; he was successful in whatever he undertook. He rebelled against the king of Assyria and did not serve him. From watchtower to fortified city, he defeated the Philistines, as far as Gaza and its territory. —2 Kings 18:1-8*

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## Play Film Clip 2 of *Abraham and Isaac*

### 2 To obey God passionately often involves *sacrifice*, making everything we have—including people and things we love—*available for God's use*.

That final scene in the film clip was really powerful, wasn't it?

It's hard to imagine how difficult it was for Abraham as he pondered God's costly command. This test was important. Abraham needed to determine in his heart and mind whether or not he would be completely committed—completely sold out—to obeying (loving) God.

Yes, we know how everything worked out, that God stopped Abraham from sacrificing Isaac.

But why was Abraham willing to sacrifice Isaac?

Something Abraham said to the servant before he and Isaac left to make the sacrifice gives us a clue. He said that both he and Isaac would return after the sacrifice!

Abraham had great faith in his God:

- The God who had guided him to a new land
- The God who had miraculously given Isaac to him and Sarah
- The God who had promised to bless him and generations of his family . . . through Isaac

Abraham knew that God would not break His promises and let Isaac remain dead after the sacrifice. Do you—and I—have that much faith in God?

That day God demonstrated to Abraham and Isaac—and readers of Scripture ever since—that He was not like any pagan gods that would have permitted Isaac to die a horrible death.

God did not allow His loving character to be compromised by such an evil action.

The God who commanded Abraham to sacrifice one of his most treasured possessions—Isaac—is the God of compassion, love, mercy . . .

Will we listen to God's voice—through prayer, the Bible, the wisdom of other people? And willingly obey Him no matter what sacrifices He tells us to make?

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God is faithful and always keeps His promises. When our obedience requires us to make sacrifices, and we make them, we will experience His peace and contentment.

Most importantly, we will grow closer to the infinite yet personal God who loves us more than we can know and desires our love (obedience) in return.

### **Additional Supporting Scriptures**

[These are provided for your convenience. Feel free to select from them or utilize others at your discretion.]

*Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. — Matthew 5:11-12*

*Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it. What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done. —Matthew 16:24-27*

*I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,*

*that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich. —2 Corinthians 8:8-9*

### **When we sacrificially offer our *lives* to God's service, it is an act of *worship* to Him.**

Abraham had a long history of walking with God. Never once did he experience anything other than God's complete faithfulness. Each time he obeyed, and each time God provided, Abraham learned that God is fully trustworthy.

We are all on a spiritual journey with God. Although we sometimes become discouraged with our individual progress, it's helpful to remember that the development of faith is a life-long process.

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The apostle Paul realized this principle that Abraham had learned so well: God is worthy to receive not only our possessions and what we hold most dear—He’s worthy to receive our very lives.

*“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship” (Romans 12:1).*

## Pastoral Challenge

In which areas might God be testing your willingness to obey Him fully and trust Him with your life and all that you have?

What is the relationship between obeying God and receiving His blessings? In what way(s) might you obey God more completely from now on, as an “act of worship”?

## Wrap Up and Close

[We recommend bringing in a short, modern-day illustration to close. For example:

- Moravian Missionaries who sold themselves into slavery, leaving comfort, family, and freedom, to bring the gospel to slaves in the Caribbean.  
[https://www.pacificbaptist.com/missions/moravian\\_missions\\_bio.pdf](https://www.pacificbaptist.com/missions/moravian_missions_bio.pdf)

Or, someone in the congregation might share a short, illustrative testimony—live or via video.]

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## GOD PROVIDES™ SERMON OUTLINE

# RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

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## “MY HEART DECISIONS AFFECT ETERNITY”

(referencing the film, *Rich Man and Lazarus*, adapted from Luke 16:19-31)

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We encourage you to play the entire film, *Rich Man and Lazarus* found in [CrownOnline](#), however if you prefer a shorter film clip, we've included a linked clip in the appropriate place.

### Ice Breaker and Introduction of Suggested Film Clip

While teaching His disciples, Jesus said, “No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money” (Luke 16:12-13).

Some Pharisees—Jewish religious leaders—heard Him say this. They loved money and sneered at Jesus, who told them, “You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of men, but God knows your hearts. What is highly valued among men is detestable in God’s sight.”

Jesus then told the story, which the Pharisees no doubt overheard, about a rich man who dressed in expensive purple cloth and fine linen, and a sick beggar named Lazarus who begged near the rich man’s gate. This story is found in Luke 16:19-31.

The film clip we’ll see now is adapted from this story and begins near the rich man’s house. While you watch, reflect on why God gives us the resources we have, such as money and possessions. Think about what our responsibility is, to God and other people, to use what he has given us in ways that reflect an eternal perspective.

After the film clip, I’ll fill you in on “the rest of the story”—what happened to the rich man and Lazarus.

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## Play Film Clip of *Rich Man and Lazarus*

### Key Message

#### Introduction

Each of us will die sometime—maybe soon, maybe many years from now. And what we just saw about the rich man and Lazarus should encourage us and serve as a warning.

The Bible says there is a heaven (Paradise)—and a separate and eternal hell, a terrible place of torment.

We become followers of Jesus by faith, not by the good works we do (Ephesians 2:8-9). Once we receive Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, though, we have certain responsibilities. God tells everyone who follows Him to reach out in Jesus' name to poor and needy people.

Let's go back to Jesus' story and learn what happened to Lazarus and the rich man.

The Bible tells us that Lazarus found himself in heaven next to Abraham—the ancient Hebrew patriarch who founded the Israelites—God's chosen people.

Imagine what heaven was like for Lazarus! Quite a change from lying in a stretcher with sores covering his body! He was in heaven for eternity, where there is no death and pain! (See Revelation 21:4.)

The rich man, however, went to hell where he suffered and pleaded for mercy – but it was too late. While on earth, the rich man pursued earthly wealth and its benefits. But he did not care about God and what the Scriptures said about helping people like Lazarus.

### **1** God gives us *earthly resources*—including time, money, and possessions—in order to meet our needs and the *needs of other people*.

God is our Provider. Everything we have ultimately comes from Him. If we are faithful to Him—demonstrating our love for Him through obedience—He promises to provide for our needs. And He challenges us to use our resources to benefit people in need.

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Jesus condemned the rich man for his use of wealth, not for having wealth. Instead of helping hurting people like Lazarus (who received bad things in life), the rich man (who received good things in life) spent his life serving his selfish desires.

Contrary to what our culture wants us to believe, the financial goal of Christians should never be focused on having easy, comfortable lives. In a way, as followers of Christ, we are called to be like “God’s hands and feet” among needy people, wisely sharing our resources—in our neighborhoods, in nursing homes and retirement centers, in homeless shelters, with families struggling to survive financially, with people who cannot afford proper medical care. . . .

## Related Scriptures

*If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence whenever our hearts condemn us. For God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.*

—1 John 3:17-20

*Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, “Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.* —James 2:15-17

*We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up.* —Romans 15:1-2

*“The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.”*

*“What should we do then?” the crowd asked.*

*John answered, “The man with two tunics should share with him who has none, and the one who has food should do the same.”* —Luke 3:9-11

*There will always be poor people in the land. Therefore I command you to be openhanded toward your brothers and toward the poor and needy in your land.* —Deuteronomy 15:11

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*"Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom  
or the strong man boast of his strength  
or the rich man boast of his riches,  
but let him who boasts boast about this:  
that he understands and knows me,  
that I am the LORD, who exercises kindness,  
justice and righteousness on earth,  
for in these I delight." —Jeremiah 9:23-24*

*Remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce  
wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is  
today. —Deuteronomy 8:18*

*He who is kind to the poor lends to the LORD,  
and he will reward him for what he has done. —Proverbs 19:17*

## **2** **It's important to pray and ask God to make us aware and sensitive to needy, hurting people.**

Although it is both challenging and rewarding to lovingly help needy, hurting people, did you know that Jesus said (Matthew 25:34-40) that when we do this, we are actually doing it to Him!

Jesus touched people's lives with His love and truth. He healed them. Gave them food. Taught them the Scriptures. Held little children. Touched lepers.

How different our lives, and the lives of other people around us, might be if we ask God every day to enable us to demonstrate love to people in need. To encourage them. To share with them. To listen to them. To help them to overcome difficulties. To live out the love and truth of Jesus wherever we are.

God promises to give us the wisdom and power we need to do this—one person . . . one family . . . one neighborhood . . . at a time.

### **Related Stories from the Bible**

*Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring*  
*continued on next page*

on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'

"Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise." —Luke 10:30-37

### **3 As Christians, we are to use our resources—including our time, money, and possessions—in eternal ways that guide people to Jesus Christ.**

It is not wrong to be rich or poor. Poor people have coexisted with rich people since humankind's earliest days. However, in the Bible—God's Word for us today—God says that earthly wealth is temporary. Rather than living as if this life is all there is, we are to please God—to live in obedience to His truth in the Bible. That includes demonstrating His love so freely and with such joy that people around us are drawn to know the God we serve. When people see our love expressed in sincere, practical ways to help meet their needs, they can't help but notice—and may be drawn to God, who is love.

Whatever your background, whatever your God-given gifts may be, wherever you are—you influence people by the way you live. Think about the people whose lives you touch: friends, family members, coworkers, neighbors, and many others. What impact are you having? Do you reflect the love of Jesus?

When you leave this earth, you will leave a legacy of relationships—people who remember what you claimed to believe, who were influenced by you just as you influenced them.

What kind of legacy do you want to leave?

## **Related Scriptures**

*Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. —Matthew 6:19-21*

*Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age. —Matthew 28:19-20*

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## Related Story from the Bible

*"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.*

*"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'*

*"Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'*

*"The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'*

*"Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.'*

*"They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?'*

*"He will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.'" —Matthew 25:31-45*

## Pastoral Challenge

If people studied your calendar and use of money during the past year, what would they discover about

- Your priorities?
- Your view of possessions?
- Your commitment to reach out to people in need?
- Your desire to share the truth and love of Jesus with people who do not yet know Him personally?
- What needs to change?

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## Wrap Up and Close

[We recommend bringing in a short, modern-day illustration to close. For example:

- Story of Steve Schmidt (founder and director of Love Packages  
– <http://www.lovepackages.org/founder/htm>

Or, someone in the congregation might share a short, illustrative testimony—live or via video.]

# GOD PROVIDES™

A FILM EXPERIENCE FROM CROWN FINANCIAL MINISTRIES®



## GOD PROVIDES™ SERMON OUTLINE

# ABRAM'S REWARD

WELCOME! We are excited for you to start this visual journey and experience of God Provides™.

God Provides™ is a series of six short films which portrays a biblical account of God proving Himself to be a faithful Provider. The series has reached millions of lives around the world and is continuing to have a tremendous impact in churches and communities globally.

Each video lesson is accompanied by a God Provides™ Companion Guide which is part of an effective learning experience for this curriculum. It may be used in a small group environment and/or in the home with a family guide. Encourage your church members to go deeper in studying the principles in these films. You can view the Companion Guide sections within each film's module.

Here are four ways you can use this resource with your congregation:

1. Send out [this link](#) and ask your congregation to watch each short film in their free time. Ask for on-line feedback and testimonies to encourage each other.
2. Ask your virtual small groups to go through the films as a course using the study and discussion guides.
3. Use the short clips and sermon notes to customize a 4-6 week series on God Provides.
4. All of the above.

The films may also be shared in multiple environments, including in conjunction with local mission work or as a "Lunch and Learn" Movie Experience or other events you may host.

Please know that we are praying for you and we are here for you. If you would like to connect directly with us, please feel free to call 1-800-722-1976 or email [clientservices@crowns.org](mailto:clientservices@crowns.org) and we would be honored to help you.

May God bless you and your congregation!



# GOD PROVIDES™

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## “MAKING MAJOR LIFE CHOICES”

(referencing the film, *Abram's Reward*, adapted from Genesis 12–15:6)

Note to Pastors: We prayerfully offer this resource material to you, believing that God will use it to guide and bless individuals and families within your congregation and the church body as a whole. Obviously you know your congregation's specific needs and interests, so feel free to adapt any of this material. This sermon addresses just a facet of the complete God Provides™ *Film Learning Experience*.

We encourage you to play the entire film, *Abram's Reward* found in [CrownOnline](#), however if you prefer a shorter film clip, we've included a linked clip in the appropriate place.

### Ice Breaker and Introduction of Suggested Film Clip

Imagine how Abram, a 75-year-old nomadic herdsman living in the region of Haran—an important city in what is now southeastern Turkey—felt when God said to him, “Leave your country, your people and your father's house and go to the land I will show you.”

- How would you respond if God said something like this to you today?
- What emotions would you feel? Hope? Joy? Confusion? Surprise? Doubt? Excitement?
- What thoughts would flood your mind? *How can I leave my friends? Or my family? Or sell what I can't take with me quickly? Or explain to people that I don't even know what my destination will be? Or would you think, What a great adventure; I can't wait to get started?*

“So Abram left, as the LORD had told him.” He took his wife, Sarai; his nephew, Lot; all their possessions; and traveled many miles to the land of Canaan.

Abram continued to put God first and act selflessly toward Lot, whom he apparently loved like a son.

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After stopping various times, and living in Egypt for a while to escape a severe famine, Abram and his household returned to the desert.

When they reached a place named Bethel, a problem arose. Abram and Lot had so many flocks and herds of animals that there was not enough water and pasture.

Something had to be done—and quickly.

That is where the film clip we'll see today begins.

As you watch it, notice Abram's faithfulness to God and his loving and generous attitude and actions toward Lot. And think about why Lot made the choice he did—and the kinds of people he began to associate with.



**Play Film Clip of *Abram's Reward***

## Key Message

During our individual life journeys, we will see and think about many things we'd like to possess, such as: a nice piece of "well-watered" property, money, car, status in our community . . . . And these aren't necessarily wrong in and of themselves. But it's easy to rationalize and become so involved in pursuing possessions like these that we hurt our relationship with God and other people. No doubt Lot's way of choosing which land to possess hurt Abram—who knew what was really at stake.

Ultimately, misdirected passion for such possessions can replace our passion for Christ and lead us into a self-centered lifestyle of debt, financial bondage, . . . and sin rather than toward the God who loves us and desires to provide all that we need.

Our challenge is to treat other people, and manage what God has entrusted to us, according to his timeless principles that are found in the Bible. We can learn valuable lessons from Abram's wise choices and Lot's foolish choices.

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## 1 God honors our *selflessness* toward other people.

Despite the terrible economic consequences that could have happened to him, Abram sacrificially allowed Lot to choose the best land. Abram *loved people and God rather than things*. Immediately after Lot left, God gave Abram—and his offspring—all the land he could see (Genesis 13:14-17).

### Additional Supporting Scriptures

[These are provided for your convenience. Feel free to select from them or utilize others at your discretion.]

### Key Verses:

*A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed.*  
—Proverbs 11:25

*Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.*—Philippians 2:3-4

### Additional Verses:

*Where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice. But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness.*—James 3:16-18

*If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.*  
—Romans 12:18

*Even in darkness light dawns for the upright, for the gracious and compassionate and righteous man.* —Psalm 112:4

*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.  
Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.  
Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.  
Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.* —Matthew 5:6-9

*Good will come to him who is generous and lends freely, who conducts his affairs with justice. Surely he will never be shaken; a righteous man will be remembered forever.* —Psalm 112:5-6

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## 2 God honors our *generosity* and *faithfulness* to Him.

When we are faithful to God and seek righteousness—desiring to experience the richness of living according to His principles and wisdom and acknowledging that everything we have comes from Him—God will bless us.

God blessed Abram greatly. Why? Abram chose to obediently serve God and live a godly lifestyle. For example, he not only left his home country as God requested, he moved away from evil Sodom and honored God by building an altar at his new location (Exodus 13:18). And not long after Abram and Lot split up, Abram also generously gave the priest of God, Melchizedek, a tenth of the spoils of battle after a great victory over kings who captured Sodom and its inhabitants—including Lot.

- Consider some of the blessings God gave Abram:

God enabled Abram's small army to rescue Lot and his family, as well as the Sodomites, from the much larger armies of the invading kings.

God declared, "I am your shield, your very great reward" (Genesis 15:1). Imagine having such an intimate relationship with the Creator God!

God promised a miracle: Abram's elderly wife, who was too old to have a child, would give birth to a son named Isaac (Genesis 15:1-6), from whom God's chosen people the Israelites—and eventually, Jesus the Messiah—would descend.

God established a special agreement—a *covenant*—with Abram (Genesis 17) and promised to give Abram many descendants and the entire land of Canaan (later named *Israel*) if Abram and his descendants remained obedient to God and kept the covenant.

God changed Abram's name to *Abraham*, which means "father of many"—a reference to the nations and kings who would come from Abram's lineage. God would bless the entire world through Abram!

### Additional Supporting Scriptures

[These are provided for your convenience. Feel free to select from them or utilize others at your discretion.]

### Key Verses:

*The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever. The ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether righteous. They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb. By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward. —Psalm 19:9-11*

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*For the LORD gives wisdom, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding. He holds victory in store for the upright, he is a shield to those whose walk is blameless, for he guards the course of the just and protects the way of his faithful ones. Then you will understand what is right and just and fair—every good path. For wisdom will enter your heart, and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul. —Proverbs 2:6-10*

### **Additional Verses:**

*Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers. —Psalm 1:1-3*

*Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him. —Psalm 34:8*

*For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD bestows favor and honor; no good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless. O LORD Almighty, blessed is the man who trusts in you. —Psalm 84:11-12*

*Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness and who seek the LORD: Look to the rock from which you were cut and to the quarry from which you were hewn; look to Abraham, your father, and to Sarah, who gave you birth. When I called him he was but one, and I blessed him and made him many. —Isaiah 51:1-2*

*The wicked man earns deceptive wages, but he who sows righteousness reaps a sure reward. The truly righteous man attains life, but he who pursues evil goes to his death. The LORD detests men of perverse heart but he delights in those whose ways are blameless. Be sure of this: The wicked will not go unpunished, but those who are righteous will go free. —Proverbs 11:18-21*

### **Related Story from the Bible**

*“He [Jesus] told them this parable: ‘The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. He thought to himself, ‘What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.’ Then he said, ‘This is what I’ll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I’ll say to myself, ‘You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.’ But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?’ This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God.’” —Luke 12:16-21*

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### 3 We should avoid the *trappings of this world* and set our hearts on God and what He calls us to do.

Lot made poor choices. He greedily valued worldly possessions and status more than the richness of living in faithful, obedient relationship with God and other people. He and his family even moved into sinful Sodom, where he became quite influential. And he suffered bad consequences.

- Lot, his family, and all his possessions were captured by those four kings whose combined armies captured Sodom and carried away its riches and its people. Abram and his allies overtook those kings, routed them, and recovered everything—including Lot and his family. But imagine how Lot felt as he contemplated becoming a slave—or dying!
- Because the wicked people of Sodom were causing other people to suffer and cry out to God for help, he sent angels to Sodom to see how bad things really were (Exodus 18:20-21; 19:1). Because of the angels' intervention, Lot and his family escaped Sodom in a hurry, quite likely with only the clothing on their backs. Then God destroyed the city—and another evil city nearby named Gomorrah.

#### Additional Supporting Scriptures

[These are provided for your convenience. Feel free to select from them or utilize others at your discretion.]

#### Key Verses:

*How much better to get wisdom than gold, to choose understanding rather than silver! The highway of the upright avoids evil; he who guards his way guards his life. — Proverbs 16:16-17*

*People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. —1 Timothy 6:9-10*

#### Additional Verses:

*Whoever trusts in his riches will fall, but the righteous will thrive like a green leaf. — Proverbs 11:28*

*Wisdom will save you from the ways of wicked men, from men whose words are perverse, who leave the straight paths to walk in dark ways, who delight in doing wrong and rejoice in the perverseness of evil, whose paths are crooked and who are*

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*devious in their ways. —Proverbs 2:12-15*

*Cast but a glance at riches, and they are gone, for they will surely sprout wings and fly off to the sky like an eagle. —Proverbs 23:5*

*Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world--the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever. —1 John 2:15-17*

*But you, man of God, . . . pursue righteousness godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses. —1 Timothy 6:11-12*

*Be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil. —Ephesians 5:15-16, NASB*

*Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness! No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money. —Matthew 6:19-24*

## **4 We must choose whom we will serve.**

Abram chose to serve the Lord. Lot chose the things of this sinful world.

### **Related Story from the Bible**

Think about these words from Joshua, the man who led Israel after Moses' death, much later after Abram's time:

*Then you [Israel] crossed the Jordan and came to Jericho. The citizens of Jericho fought against you, as did also the Amorites, Perizzites, Canaanites, Hittites, Girgashites, Hivites and Jebusites, but I gave them into your hands. I sent the hornet ahead of you, which drove*

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*them out before you--also the two Amorite kings. You did not do it with your own sword and bow. So I gave you a land on which you did not toil and cities you did not build; and you live in them and eat from vineyards and olive groves that you did not plant. Now fear the LORD and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your forefathers worshiped beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD. —Joshua 24:11-15*

## Pastoral Challenge

Which of Abram’s characteristics would you like to demonstrate more often? Selflessness? Humility? Generosity? Faithfulness to God and family? Caring for other people?

If you would change your relationship with your family and with God to reflect more of Abram’s values, which changes would you make?

## Wrap Up and Close

[We recommend bringing in a short, modern-day illustration to close. For example:

- The Pilgrims, who left the prosperous (yet greed-driven) economy of Holland to pursue following God in the New World.
- Eric Liddell, missionary to China (of *Chariots of Fire* fame), who chose to stand up for his convictions rather than compromise in the face of worldly success.

Or, someone in the congregation might share a short, illustrative testimony—live or via video.]