

GOD PROVIDES™

A FILM LEARNING EXPERIENCE
FROM CROWN FINANCIAL MINISTRIES®



GOD PROVIDES™ SERMON OUTLINE

WIDOW AND OIL

These sermon outlines are provided as part of your Large Group Viewing License*. In addition to showing the films in conjunction with a sermon, consider the other ways you can share the *God Provides*™ message with others.

LARGE GROUP VIEWING IDEAS

- Show one or all of these films in the *God Provides*™ Film Learning Experience to your entire congregation.
- Rent a movie theater and sponsor a local movie night in your community.
- Share the films in conjunction with local mission work.
- Host a “Lunch and Learn Movie Experience” with your coworkers or employees.

LARGE GROUP LICENSE - PACKAGE FEATURES

Don't forget to use all of the materials available with your Large Group Viewing License. Go to Crown.org/GodProvides, click on “Group Licensing,” enter your unique License Code, and download the following materials:

- **Six Downloadable Trailers** for each short film.
- **Sermon Outlines** provide pastors with a message based on each short film.
- **Promotional Materials** such as posters, bulletin inserts, tickets and more are provided in digital format to promote the learning experience.
- **License Certificate** enables unlimited viewings for groups larger than 100.

For additional help or questions, please call 1-800-249-6320 or visit us online at Crown.org/GodProvides.

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BEFORE AND AFTER THIS SERMON

- 1** Before using this sermon, contact your local Crown Consultative Servant who can assist you in developing a financial ministry plan to provide ongoing guidance for your church members after the sermons are delivered in your church. Go to Crown.org and click “In My Area” to find a local servant.

- 2** While using this sermon, become familiar with the *God Provides™* Web site. It offers solid biblical insight that can help your church members. In particular, encourage your congregation to do any of the following:
 - a. Purchase a copy of the *God Provides™ Companion Guide*, and continue a personal study of each short film.
 - b. Listen or Podcast Crown’s radio programs for daily wisdom and encouragement.
 - c. Sign up for free e-communication to get monthly articles and advice on a variety of financial topics. Go to Crown.org/SignUp to register.

- 3** After using this sermon, take your church members to the next level in their journey by encouraging them to do some of the following:
 - a. **Start Some *God Provides™* Small Groups** – encourage your church members to go deeper in studying the principles in these films. Small groups can view the films as part of an effective learning experience using the available *God Provides™ Companion Guide*.
 - b. **Encourage Next Step Resources** – encourage your church members to apply the biblical principles they’ve learned in practical ways. **Next Step Resources** from Crown can help them. See the last page of this document for details.

*A large group is defined as showing a short film to more than 100 people at one time. For 100 people or fewer, a large group viewing license is not required. A *God Provides™* Companion Guide is recommended for each participant. Additional Companion Guides are sold separately.



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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*.]

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.

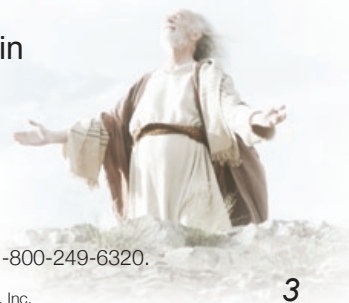
Despite deep emotional pain and potentially paralyzing fear, she didn’t just sit at home and cry. Or run frantically from neighbor to neighbor, trying to borrow enough money to pay off the debt. Or try to run away to escape the creditor.

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* (approx. 3 mins. 23 secs. long)

- * Start: (3 mins. 50 secs. into the film) when the widow cries out "Elisha, Elisha."
- * End: When there are no more jars to fill. (approx. 7 mins. 13 secs. into the film).

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.

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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.

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.*

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*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*

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?”

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“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

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

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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.

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;*

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*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*

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.



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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?

[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*

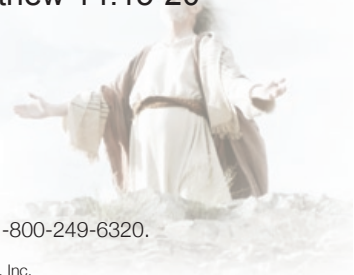
Additional Verses:

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

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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 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.]

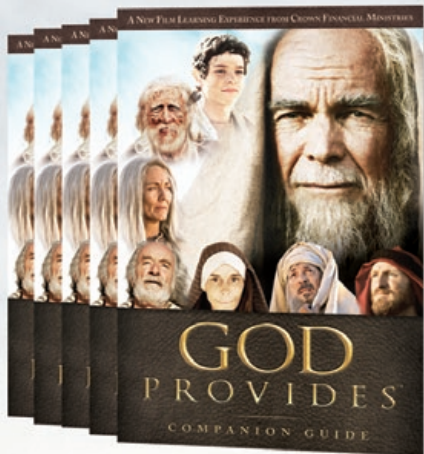
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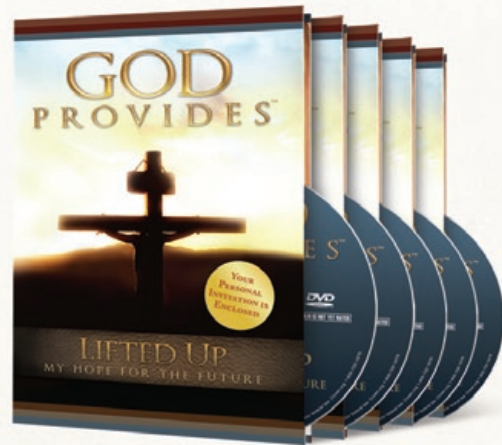


God Provides[™] Companion Guide

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Lifted Up - A Personal Invitation

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