

## "The Laws Of Provision"

During the summer of 1999, the training position which I held at Sequoyah Nuclear Plant was eliminated. I then began a nine month journey of faith in which the Lord left me both startled and amazed at the wonder of His care. Throughout those months, the Lord provided nearly \$30,000 while I had no job. The highlight however, occurred in August. My health insurance premium came due, and the bill of \$1,008 had to be paid in fifteen days. We did not have the money, and all I knew to do was pray and ask the Lord to give it to us. On the fourteenth day, I retrieved a large stack of mail from our mailbox. Inside that stack were two cards; one from a couple outside of Atlanta, and the other from a couple in Middle Tennessee. Both couples had written eerily similar notes, "We were praying for you, and the Lord spoke to our hearts to send this to you." Inside of both cards were checks written for \$500. As excited as I was, I found myself like Gideon talking to an angel and still not convinced of a miracle. Then I opened the last piece of mail in that large stack. It was a refund check for an overpayment on our escrow account for exactly \$8! The Lord had met our need down to the last penny.

The overflowing abundance with which our nation has been blessed has made it easy for us to forget the Source of our supply. However, in the past few years, we have endured an economic crisis unlike any that has been seen since The Great Depression. Everyday we read of another business going under, jobs that are being eliminated, and homes that are being foreclosed. In such desperate times as these, I pray the Lord will awaken our generation to a sense of dependence upon Him again. As David came to his latter years of life, he wrote in Psalm 37:25, "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." Looking back across the landscape of his life, David could see the Lord's faithfulness to always provide for His own. No matter how difficult the crisis we may face, life can never create a vacuum or void that God is unable to fill. Missionary J. Hudson Taylor said, "God's work done in God's way will never lack God's supply." Whether it be Israel in the wilderness, Elijah during a famine, or a widow woman without resources, lives that remain obedient and dependent will never be found lacking amazing discoveries from God's hand. Like dropping a pebble into the shaft of a deep well, no man will ever live long enough to see or hear just how deep the well of God's provision actually goes.

God's provision **will always be thoughtfully arranged**. David began Psalm 23 with the words, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want." However, as he pondered God's tender care, he understood by verse 5, "Thou preparest a table before me..." The word "preparest" is the idea of a lawyer arranging his case in an orderly fashion. In other words, it comes with great deliberation and deep thought. As the Lord ponders our need, He never misses even the smallest of details because it is His reputation that is at stake. The greatest dilemmas we will ever face have already been solved by God long before we ever learn there is a problem. Years before Moses would encounter the bitter waters of Marah, God had already planted a tree that would sweeten the waters. Long before Elijah would feel the effects of a drought, God had already commanded ravens where to meet him with food. Before we were born or would ever commit a sin, God had already sent a Lamb that would bear our guilt and shame. Puritan preacher Thomas Watson wrote, "Providence is God's ordering all issues and events of things, after the counsel of His will, to His own glory." No matter how many twists and turns life may take, we are never destined to arrive at a place where God has not already been.

God's provision **will always have a timely arrival**. In Hebrews 4:16, the writer notes we can "...come boldly unto the throne of grace...and find grace to help in time of need." The phrase literally means "help that is well-timed," or as G. Campbell Morgan put it, "help in the nick of time." There are times when our humanity perceives the lateness of the hour as the failure of God. However, God must smile at our impatience with the knowledge He is able to do more in a moment than man can do in a millennium. That is why the power of God to provide cannot be measured by time, but only by trust. As Abraham obediently climbed Mount Moriah with Isaac, unbeknown to him, a ram was climbing the other side of the mountain to be the replacement sacrifice. When Elijah saw the last visit from a raven, unbeknown to him, a widow woman was already gathering sticks to start a meal. J. Oswald Sanders said, "He is a God who knows no crisis...Before an emergency arises, God in His providence has a perfectly timed provision to meet it." The delay of God's hand does not imply the denial of God's heart. God's provision may not

always arrive when I want it, but it will always arrive when it is supposed to be there.

God's provision **will always be thoroughly adequate**. As Paul sat in a Roman prison unsure if he would face exoneration or execution, he writes in Philippians 4:19, "But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." He had learned that while God may not have given him all he wanted, God had always given him what he needed. I like what J.I. Packer said, "You will never need more than God can supply." However, in a day of designer jeans and luxury cars, our faith is frequently disappointed if God does not provide luxuriously for us. It may surprise us to learn that God often gives us the most when He provides us with the least. Peter would only find a single coin in the mouth of the fish, but it was enough pay both his and Jesus' taxes. A little lad only had five loaves and two fishes, but Jesus found it enough to feed thousands of people. A lame beggar wanted money, but all Peter and John could offer him was healing through Jesus' name. Therein lies the secret of God's provision. When we take from God's extended hand, we also receive His embracing heart. And anytime God gives Himself to us we find that what we receive is always more than enough!

The psalmist wrote in Psalm 84:11, "No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly." God will never hold out, hold back, or hold on to anything that is necessary for our lives. God's provision is as reliably ours as the morning sun and the evening moonlight. You may ask, "But, what about those cloudy days?" Just because you cannot visibly see the sun and moon does not mean they are not still shining. When God tells you, "The check is in the mail," my friend, you can take it to the bank!

Your Most Proud Pastor,  
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