**God’s Way of Provision for His People**

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**Isaiah 55:8,9**

*8 “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,”declares the Lord. 9 “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.*

President Ronald Reagan said, “Within the covers of the Bible are all the answers for all of the problems men face.” The Bible is a handbook for Believers to live by and in it we find that God chooses to do things contrary to the way men would do them. His laws and principles are different than mankind’s. This is true in the area of how God makes provision for His people.

How many families do you know who own large businesses who, as their children get older, set them up in that business? They teach their children how to run the business and when the children are old enough they will take that business over. The parents want their children to be successful. Our Heavenly Father wants us to be successful here on Earth too! When we think of God, think of the very best example of a human father you know of and then realize God is an infinitely better father than him!

**Matthew 7:7-11 KJV**

7 Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: 8 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. 9 Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? 10 Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? 11 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

Jesus was talking here and he is showing how a good father will not give bad things to a son he loves. Then He shows us just how much MORE God will give to us if we ASK!

I used to think that we had to ask, and ask, and ask! I thought we had to keep seeking like a blind man without any feelings in his hands. Then I thought we had to knock and knock and knock! But NO! Jesus NEVER said that! Somewhere along the line, perhaps because someone didn’t see the manifestation of an answer to their prayer exactly when they prayed, they thought you had to keep begging God over and over and over for Him to answer your prayers! That is just not true and Jesus said it wasn’t right here! He said if we ask, it will be given to us! Jesus said if we seek, we will find it. He said if we knock, the door SHALL be opened for us! Then He goes on to tell us just how much more our Heavenly Father DESIRES to give us good things!

The word, “SHALL”, is the strongest word in the English language! There simply isn’t a stronger word. If a King gave an order and said “You shall do so and so!”, if you didn’t obey that order, he could have your head chopped off. Ask and you SHALL receive! Seek and you SHALL find! Knock and the door SHALL be opened!

So how does God make provision for His children? Does God want us to all be poor and destitute? Obviously God could fill our bank accounts with millions of dollars but He hasn’t done that but the Bible does show us Biblical principles that, if followed, will guarantee our financial success.

Let me preface this with something that happened to me once. You may have heard of what is called the “Prosperity Doctrine” or the “Blab it and Grab it” doctrine or the “Name it and Claim it” doctrine. This is a teaching that got started in the mid-20th century and some people took it too far by saying basically that if you gave away one hundred dollars today you would get ten thousand dollars, in your hand or bank account tomorrow, a one hundred fold return. Well, anyone with any common sense knows this does not happen. I suppose it could but it is NOT the norm. I’ve heard the story of two or three young people who went to a seminary and they heard a “faith” preacher talking about how God told him to give a very expensive twin engine airplane to another ministry. He was obedient and gave the airplane away. The next week or two, someone called him and gave him an even better, more expensive airplane.

These young seminary students were driving old junky cars and immediately went out and gave their cars away! The end result was, they ended up walking everywhere the rest of the school year! You see God did not tell them to give their cars away! They were presumptuous and did not listen to God and walk in faith.

My cousin is a pastor whom I respect very deeply. He asked me once if I believe the "blab it and grab it" doctrine. I said "No". But I believe in the middle of the road on this. I certainly don't believe it blesses and honors God when his people can't pay their bills and are destitute! But that is NOT God's fault. Believers need to learn God's spiritual laws about provision and walk in them and then there are times too that I believe God allows us to go through lean financial times so we learn to trust in Him and not the almighty dollar!

The way God makes provision for His children is through us giving our tithes and offerings and dealing honestly in all that we do. This is completely contrary to what the world would do. The world would say, keep your money, hoard it, save it, cheat the little man, fudge the numbers here and there.

There is only one place in the Bible that God says we should test Him. It is in Malachi Chapter 3 and it is in the area of giving our tithes and our offerings. Let’s take a look at what He says.

**Malachi 3:8-12**

*8 “Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, ‘In what way have we robbed You?’ In tithes and offerings. 9 You are cursed with a curse, For you have robbed Me, Even this whole nation. 10 Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, That there may be food in My house, And try Me now in this,” Says the Lord of hosts, “If I will not open for you the windows of heaven And pour out for you such blessing That there will not be room enough to receive it. 11 “And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, So that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground, Nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field,” Says the Lord of hosts; 12 “And all nations will call you blessed, For you will be a delightful land,” Says the Lord of hosts.*

Many of you believers are walking under a financial curse and don’t even know it. The reason is because you are not paying your tithe and giving offerings. A tithe is ten percent of the “first fruits” of anything you make. If you get paid in bananas and you get paid two hundred bananas every week, the first thing you should do when you get paid is to set aside twenty bananas to give back to the Lord as your tithe! Yes, the tithe should come off of the gross, not the net of your pay. If you wait to pay your tithe after you have paid all of your bills, you probably won’t feel like you have enough money left to pay it. Always let your tithe be the very first thing you pay and you will never even notice that money is gone! And your tithe needs to go to your local church or your storehouse. This is where you are being fed the Word of God. If you are not in a church, you are missing God. I used to no put as much importance on being involved in a local assembly but I was wrong. Every believer should absolutely go to church and be involved in a church.

God said to try Him or to “investigate” the matter of tithing! Tithing is a big step of faith for most believers and it pleases God when you honor Him with the first fruits of your labor. All He asks is that you give the first ten percent and then a few other offerings along the way. “You can’t out give God!” This is such a true statement! As you start tithing, EXPECT God to do what He says. Expect Him to pour out so many blessings that you can’t receive them all! Expect your fruit will grow ripe in the field and not be destroyed. Expect your vine to bear fruit! As you do this the world will call you “blessed”!