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Employment with Benefits

Times were tough for our family of 5 in the 1980's. We not only didn't have an abundance of money, but we were in a cash flow crunch as well. I remember having to put two weekly paychecks together to make our house payment of approximately \$425.00. The \$300.00 my husband brought home every Friday was his gross salary. No income taxes and no social security were deducted. During the week (from one Friday to the next Friday) we could spend no money other than use our gas credit card if we needed to fill up the cars. Health insurance? What was health insurance? We didn't even know we needed health insurance!

It seemed that there was always something that the kids just wanted to get when we went out shopping. I remember dreading the inevitable "lane of death". That would be the section of the grocery store that surrounds you and pulls the very life out of mothers as they wait in line to check out. The zone where the imaginations of children run wild with the expected tastes of candy, the latest cheap toy that falls apart when you look at it, and the pencils and pens with "Cinderella, Bugs Bunny, or The Incredible Hulk" on top, all brightly colored and embellished with feathers and "gems". I would always tell them that we "couldn't afford it". To sum it up, I had a fear of lack, and I was afraid to dole out one penny that we didn't need to spend.

We were new to the Word of God, but I was devouring scripture and everyday listening to my favorite teachers on the radio. I had my four

beloved instructors that I tuned into religiously. It was my lifeline, my bridge to another way of life, and an answer to our financial needs. “But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:18-20) and “The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the LORD shall not want any good thing” (Psalm 34:9-11) were just two of the scriptures that I clung to and memorized so that I could begin to believe something different than what existed all around me. Somehow I expected something “magical” to happen. After all, I was told that if you kept speaking the word and believing it then it would happen.

Years dragged on with not a lot of change in sight. Thank God that my husband was the one who decided to faithfully tithe. We held onto the fact of “Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that you mete withal it shall be measured to you again” (Luke 6:37-39). We may not have had carpet in our house for awhile, but all the kids in the neighborhood enjoyed skating on our cement floors, and we never missed a meal or a mortgage payment. God was faithful, but the true sense of God’s richness and prosperity I had not yet experienced.

The Lord in His wisdom began to show me that my fear of lack was like a net that caught the blessings that were continually coming from heaven, to be diverted from me. He also began to show me that it was the Provider, and not the provision that was important, and as the years went by, there was a change in my life from knowing “about God” to really beginning to know Him as a person and my best friend. My focus became one of connection with Him instead of the

manifestation of His provision. I started to diligently seek to be one with the Lord and to live in the moment with Him.

Over time things began to change. Our marriage began to be enriched, our children began to get established in their lives and their own relationships with God, and the monetary provision just kind of crept in on the coattails. It was through experiencing God Himself that our lives became rich in all areas. After all, where God is, there will also be the true riches of life which are embodied in Christ (Ephesians 3:8).

And so I found myself driving back home from Houston after helping a dear friend with her daughter's wedding. I didn't just think it would be nice to help; I was *compelled* to make the trip to assist her. I knew that's where God was, and what He was doing. We (God and I) were one in this-- a team so to speak. Noticing that I was low on gas, I pulled into the service station and prepared to fill the tank. As I swiped the credit card at the pump not thinking about the money that it took to make the purchase, I remembered the times that we could barely make ends meet monetarily. At that moment I was so overwhelmed with the goodness of God, and His faithfulness, for He had indeed blessed us beyond measure.

"Oh Lord," I said, "thank you so much for providing the money for the gas so that I could make this trip to help with the wedding!"

Immediately I heard this response,

"I always pay my employees' expenses!"

With that one-liner from God, I started to understand about His provision. It's not so much what we want, or what we think we need, but God's provision is wrapped up in Him; and where He is, there is always plenty. I learned that as I seek to be where He is, and to cooperate in what He's doing, then there would be more than enough to take care of all His plans as well as meeting our needs.