

We all need money, and its lack disturbs us. Money is not everything, but it touches every area of life. Jesus spoke more about finances in the gospels than about faith or healing. God knows our needs and, as our loving Father, is interested in providing for us.

Bible Passage for today: 1 Kings 17:1-10. From the story of Elijah, who was provided for in famine, we can learn 7 truths about God's provision. Let's begin with the first:

TRUTH #1 - WHERE GOD LEADS HE PROVIDES

When God called for a famine over the land, Israel had gone astray behind Ahab and Jezebel, serving Baal, whom they regarded as a god who gives rain and prosperity. So this was Yahweh going against their god to war, and everyone was going to face a famine as a result of that, but God provides for his own.

We repeatedly read that “the word of God” led Elijah to God’s provision—first near Cherith brook, then Zarephath. God’s guidance always leads to His provision.

We ought to seek God’s guidance even more than provision. In the New Testament, God compares believers to sheep—animals that easily get lost, settle for muddy water, can’t find good pasture, or defend themselves. Sheep survive only by following the shepherd, and in the shepherd’s guidance, they always find provision.

Work diligently and be responsible with money, but avoid anxiety or worry. Often, the worry hurts more than the financial problem.

TRUTH #2 - WHERE GOD GUIDES US, HE ALSO HIDES US

Brook Cherith provided for and hid Elijah from Jezebel. God’s provision includes protection. Even if abundance is absent, thank God for safety and praise Him for protection.

Next, let’s look at another key principle.

TRUTH #3 – WHEN GOD PROVIDES IT IS NOT ALWAYS IN SURPLUS BUT ALWAYS IN SUFFICIENCY

When God provided for Elijah, He gave him just enough for each day—not a surplus. Cherith was a small brook, and ravens brought only a small amount of food, enough for each day. It was sufficiency, not excess.

With regards to this truth, Paul writes to the Philippian church saying, “Phil 4:12-13

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. 13 I can do everything through him who gives me strength.” Clearly, he was in a season when God provides just enough.

When Israel wandered in the wilderness for 40 years, they didn’t have houses, fields, or wells as promised. Instead, God gave them daily manna, just enough for each day—a season of sufficiency, not surplus.

If you are in a season of sufficiency today, go through it with thanksgiving. Don’t compare your provision to others’ abundance. Your time for more will come; until then, be grateful for what God provides today.

TRUTH #4 - GOD’S WAY OF PROVISION IS BOTH NATURAL AND SUPERNATURAL

Another truth we see in Elijah’s story of provision is that there was a combination of natural and supernatural provision of God. The brook was natural, but the ravens were supernatural because ravens don’t give - they snatch.

You won’t get your ravens unless you find your brook. The supernatural follows natural steps in faith. Do the natural; God adds the miraculous.

TRUTH #5 - GOD’S PROVISION COMES FROM UNLIKELY PLACES

A fascinating detail is that ravens are considered unclean birds—scavengers not typically used for provision. This shows God often uses the unlikely; even unbelievers can be used by God to bless you. Your boss or workplace need not display overt signs of faith for God to use them to bless you.

Key truth: Don’t hesitate to receive from a “raven” -

- God used a prostitute to hide the spies and keep them safe.
- God used an Egyptian princess to save Moses and to adopt him.
- Joseph, Esther, Mordecai, Daniel, and Nehemiah – they all worked for heathen Kings.

Child of God, remember that Jesus prayed to His father for his disciples, saying – I do not ask you to take them out of this world, but you would protect them (John 17). You are light and salt of the earth.

Let’s shift now to truth #6:

TRUTH #6 - WHEN GOD’S PROVISION COMES TO AN END, IT IS TIME FOR A SHIFT IN DIRECTION

As good as it was for Elijah, the brook dried up, and perhaps the ravens stopped bringing him food. The word of God came to him again.

The brook can dry up even if you obey God. This isn't a sign of sin. Drought caused the brook to run dry. When it happens, seek God's direction and pivot to the next season. Don't pray for the brook to return. Pray and pivot. In other words, when God's provision ends, it signals a need for redirection.

- Blockbuster was a movie video rental company with more than 80000 employees, but they didn't go digital; they even refused to sell to Netflix. Today, there are no more, but Netflix, which was willing to pivot, is flourishing.
- Nokia didn't pivot when smart phones and the Android system came into the market. They lost their market position and have not recovered.
- Samsung was a company that sold fish and noodles, but at the right moment, it pivoted into electronics, including smart phones. Today, they are at the top of the electronics industry.

TRUTH #7 - WHEN GOD PROVIDES FOR YOU, HE ALSO WANTS TO PROVIDE THROUGH YOU

At the brook, Elijah had enough for himself. At the widow's house, he blessed others. Follow God's guidance, and may you provide for others as well.

Stories of John G Lake – Divine Provisions (An excerpt from his own writings)

When God led us to go to South Africa as missionaries, we went straight out and purchased the tickets for the entire party to travel from Indianapolis, Indiana, to Johannesburg, South Africa. There were twelve of us, my family of eight and four others.

We had our tickets to Africa, but there would be many other expenses along the way. I had only \$1.50 in hand. As our train pulled out of the station at Indianapolis, a young man who had worked as my secretary ran alongside the train and threw a two-dollar bill through the window. That gave us a total of \$3.50.

A young lady, who had been one of our workers, was traveling with us as far as Detroit, Michigan. I needed \$10 to buy a ticket to northern Michigan. As we rode along, I said to my wife, "Jen, when we reach Detroit, I will need \$10 for Winnie's railway ticket". We bowed our heads and prayed.

We always followed this practice concerning our needs. We never told anyone our needs, but we always told the Lord.

When we arrived in Detroit, my brother and married sister were there to meet us, and with them was my younger brother, Jim.

As I stepped off the train, Jim took me by the arm and walked across the station with me. Then he said, "Jack, I hope you won't be mad, but I would like to give you this," and he pulled a ten-dollar bill out of his wallet and slipped it into my vest pocket.

I thanked him, turned about, and went to purchase Winnie's ticket.

I still had \$3.50. We purchased some canned beans and other edibles, which we used on the train on the route to St. Johns, New Brunswick.

When we finally arrived at the ship for Liverpool, I had \$1.25 left. On board, I gave 50 cents to the table steward and 50 cents to the bedroom steward. When we reached England, I still had 25 cents.

IN LIVERPOOL

We remained in Liverpool for 5 days at the company's expense, waiting for the second ship.

One day, Mrs. Lake said to me, "What about our Laundry?" I replied, "Send it down. I have no money, but perhaps the Lord will meet us before we need to get it." Being very busy, I forgot about it entirely.

On the last night of our stay in Liverpool, just after I had retired about midnight, my wife said, "How about the laundry?" I replied, "I'm sorry, but I forgot it."

"Just like a man! Now I'll tell you about it. I knew you didn't have any money, neither did I. So I prayed about it. After praying, I felt I should go down to the laundry to inquire about the bill amount. It was \$1.65. As I was returning to the hotel, I passed a gentleman on the street. He said,

'Pardon me, but I feel I should give you this.' He handed me a number of coins. I returned to the laundry, counted it out to the laundry man, and found it was just the amount of the bill."

We rejoiced in this little evidence of God's presence with us.

IMMIGRATION MONEY

The next morning, we left by train for London and that evening boarded our ship for South Africa.

At that time, I had an English shilling. When our ship stopped at Madeira, one of the Canary Islands, I purchased a shilling's worth of fruit for the children, and the last penny was gone.

Based on my knowledge of South Africa's immigration laws, I knew that before we would be permitted to land, I would need to show the immigration inspector that I had at least \$125. We prayed earnestly over this matter. About the time we reached the Equator, a rest came into my soul concerning it, and I could pray no more.

About eight or ten days later, we arrived in Cape Town harbor, and our ship anchored. The immigration inspector came on board, and the passengers lined up at the purser's office to present their money and receive their tickets to land.

My wife said, “What are you going to do?”

“I am going to line up with the rest. We have obeyed God this far. It is now up to the Lord.”

As I stood in line, awaiting my chance to explain our dilemma, a fellow passenger suddenly tapped me on the shoulder and indicated that I step out of the line and walk over to the ship’s rail to speak with him. He asked me some questions, and then drew a traveler’s checkbook from his pocket. I have two money orders totaling 42 pounds sterling, or \$200.

He said, “I feel led to give this to help your work.”

A HOME IN JOHANNESBURG

Johannesburg is 1000 miles inland from Cape Town. Throughout the voyage, we earnestly prayed about the subject of a home. As faith missionaries, we had neither a Board nor friends to provide funds. We were dependent upon God. Many times during the trip to Johannesburg, we bowed our heads and reminded God that, upon our arrival, we would need a home. As we stepped ashore, we observed a little woman bustling up, whom I instantly recognized to be an American. She stepped up to Tom and said, “You are an American missionary party?”

He replied, “Yes.” “How many are there in your party?” “Four”. “No,” she said, “you are not the family. Is there any other?” He said, “Yes. Mr. Lake.”

Turning to me, she said, “How many are in your family?” I answered, “My wife, myself, and seven children only.” “Oh,” she said, “you are the family.”

“What is it, madam?”

“While in prayer last night, God told me to meet this boat, and there would be upon it an American missionary with a family of nine, consisting of two adults and seven children, and that I was to give them a home.”

At 3 o’clock that same afternoon, we were in a furnished cottage in Johannesburg. God had provided a home for us. Our beloved benefactor was an American missionary, Mrs. C. L. Good enough. She remained our beloved friend and fellow worker in the Lord.

And that is how we got to Africa.

Beloved, God is interested in your financial welfare. He is a Provider: He is a loving Father who loves you and cares for you. As you put your trust in him and follow his guidance, you will see provision come to you and be supernaturally supplied for. Believe in him. Seek his guidance in prayer. Be provided for and be a blessing to many. You are blessed!!