

7: Thrilling Financial Solutions

Again, I have seven important Bible facts I would like you to notice:

1. Jesus is the foundation of all truth. Romans 9:1, "I say the truth in Christ."
2. This knowledge of Christ constitutes eternal life. John 17:3, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou has sent."
3. Since this is true, God does not have us pay Him a tenth of our income because He needs it. Psalms 24:1 says, "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein." Put with that Psalm 50:10, "For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills."

Realizing what these verses say, the question comes, Why does God ask us to return to Him a tenth of our income. We know that God isn't dependent upon us for His sustenance. He doesn't need our money except as He chooses to need it. But why would He choose this method? Of what value is this doctrine? God has given every Bible doctrine to acquaint us with His Son, for His Son is the basis of all truth. As we get acquainted with His Son we have life eternal. This, then, can be the only logical reason.

4. The tithing system was given to us so that God might do something wonderful for us. Notice the promise: Malachi 3:10 "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in my house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."

This is an unqualified promise God makes to anyone! God is anxious and willing to fulfill this promise to each of us. It is part of the plan of heaven to acquaint us with the Foundation of Truth, Jesus Christ. God owns the world. He says that if we will return to Him a tenth of our income, He will open for us the windows of heaven and pour us out a blessing, and in doing this we will become acquainted with His Son, in whom is life!

It may be that in the process of experimentation, the Lord will allow us to come to want, or near want. It is then that we take the promise of Malachi 3:8-10 and ask God to open the windows of heaven; we tell Him we believe He will open the windows, and we tell Him that we claim these open windows and return thanks that we have received the blessing that is in the process of coming. This, of course, is the A, B, C of prayer. Few of us have realized all that God is willing to do for us, but the challenge is waiting! God is aware of some of the strait places tithing might bring us to, but He knows, too, the blessing that He can only give us as we accept the challenge of obedience.

When we accept the challenge and claim the promise for this special time of difficulty, the windows open and we come to know God, not only as a Saviour, but also as a Provider as well. You see, we then come to know God by personal experience, and knowing Him that way, we have a knowledge that no one can take from us. This knowledge will prove priceless in our journey toward the Kingdom of heaven.

5. This experience elicits a sharing of the wonderful gifts of God with others. Malachi 3:16, 17, "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him."

Here is the picture. We have been in trouble; we have called on the Lord. The devourer tried to devour us; we presented to the Lord the promise He has made and He answered in a marvelous way. Then we talk to each other about it - we share the experience of the good things of the Lord.

A B C's of Bible Prayer

The tithing system is one of the ways - one of the processes by which the Lord makes up His jewels. It is by this method that He perfects a people that will be ready to go home with Him to glory-land.

6. Any trouble we might experience will allow God to come to our rescue and this will give us reason to glorify God. Notice Psalm 50:15, "And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me."

There are three key words in this verse: 'call, deliver and glorify'. This is the Christian experience. To call on God when we're in trouble; He will deliver us, then we tell the world we know He exists and we glorify Him.

7. We shall witness to His glory throughout eternity. Revelation 5:13, "And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

Throughout eternity as we travel from one planet to another; from one unfallen world to another, we shall be declaring the love and care and interest that the Creator of the Universe has had for us in providing for our every need. We will show our gratitude in our never-ending praise to God, and help the unfallen creation to know a dimension of the love of God that they have never experienced. This is the Christian experience.

I was born into a tithe-paying family. My father was a very conscientious tither.

He believed in not only the first tithe, which according to the Bible is sacred and used only for the support of the ministry, but he paid a second tithe. The second tithe is used for the maintenance of the church and its organization. It pays for the building of churches, the purchase of Sabbath School supplies and other necessary running expenses. No organization can operate without funds. My father believed this and set aside a second tithe for this. That is why the Bible says, "Bring ye all the tithes. . ." You see it's plural!

Many times I have seen my father take out the Bible and place his finger on the tenth and eleventh verses of Malachi three and tell God that he believed what was written there - and claim the promise. There were times when he reminded God that the verse says, "... and I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes...." Some of those years on the farm were difficult. But God always answered and was true to His word.

There were eight boys in our family. Father had a real handful! I have understood in later years why father lost his temper sometimes, because what we boys didn't do, scarcely was done! But father instilled in us boys from the very earliest years the importance of tithe-paying. Whenever we received ten pennies, one of them went into the tithe envelope and we marked it opposite the word, 'Tithe.' We, as a family, came to expect God to work miracles for us - because we had fulfilled the conditions of the promise. We returned to God a faithful tithe. And God did not disappoint us either. We knew that He was watching over us, for He demonstrated it time and again.

One Sabbath morning we were ready to go to church. My father was the local elder of the church and it was his responsibility to take care of the services. One of the brethren called father and told him he would be unable to attend church that morning because he had a sick cow. After he hung the receiver on the phone, I remember that he turned to us and said, "I wouldn't be surprised if that cow dies. That man is robbing God of tithes and offerings." I never forgot that! It made a very deep impression on my young mind.

A B C's of Bible Prayer

When church was over we called that man to see how the cow was. I was very interested to know whether my father's prediction was true. When they reached him on the phone and inquired about the cow, the man said, "I'm sorry to tell you it died!" Father was right. He turned to us and said, "Just as I expected..." Let me tell you, I have never forgotten that incident.

A few weeks later, father had a sick cow. Now I wondered what was going to happen. It was sick with the same sickness the neighbor's cow had died from. This was going to be interesting! I can remember it as if it were yesterday. Father took the big family Bible and opened it to Malachi 3:8-12 and he read it aloud. He read how that God invited us to prove Him. He read how that God would open the windows of heaven and pour out a blessing and how that God would rebuke the devourer. He paused when he read verse eleven and read it again, "And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground.... And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the Lord of hosts." Father closed the book and we knelt to pray. Father very simply and humbly claimed this promise. He reminded God that we could not afford to lose the cow and we stood to our feet. Father had read the promise, he had believed the promise and claimed it.

Father believed that faith without works is dead. So he took a bottle with a very long neck on it and filled it with a concoction. I don't know what was in it - but he gave that cow the works! He poured that concoction down the throat of that cow and it stirred up the cow's stomach and whatever else needed stirring - and that cow got up and got well! I have never forgotten that incident. It made an indelible impression on me; to think that God cares about cows! Oh, I'll tell you, we knew that God lived and cared.

The world at large today, even among those that call themselves Christians, believe that God is dead. They have the impression that even if He does live, He can't do much for us - He is unable to intervene. My friend, if God is up in heaven and does nothing about our plight, He might as well be dead. But He DOES something about our plight, thank God!

When I was a little older another experience showed me that God lives. My brother Clinton was in his teens and was planning to become a minister. But he had a problem. His voice wouldn't change. Now it's normal for boys nine and ten to speak in the high treble voice, but when a boy gets to be thirteen and fourteen, the man-voice usually takes over and the voice changes. But Clinton's voice just wouldn't change, and it worried him as well as mother. One night Clinton decided he had worried and stewed long enough about his voice. Before he went to bed that night, he got down on his knees and prayed to God. He said, "Lord, You know I can't preach with a voice like this, and if You want me to be a preacher, as I think You do, heal my voice."

The next morning he came downstairs and came into the kitchen where mother was busy making breakfast. She had her back to him as he entered the room. He said, "Good morning, mother."

"Good morning, Miles," she said and then turned and saw it was Clinton. "Oh," she said, "I thought it was Miles. Your voice why it has changed!"

Clinton went out into the barn, and father seeing someone come in said, "Good morning."

Clinton said, "Good morning, father."

Father said, "How are you this morning, Miles?"

"It's me, father, Clinton"

"Clinton!" father said. By the voice I thought it was Miles. Why your voice has changed!"

"Yes, father, the Lord heard my prayer and healed it."

A B C's of Bible Prayer

There were some prayers of thanks that morning, let me tell you. It changed that day and has been perfect ever since. Clinton went on to be a mighty power in God's hands.

I say, we came to expect these miracles, simply because we believed God and believed what He said He would do. This is God! There is nothing magic about Him or His promises. He makes a promise and then expects us to believe it so that He can fulfil it.

When I was six years of age, my mother was dying of a valve leak in her heart. Medical science hadn't come through with some of the miracles of surgery and plastic parts that are now available. Every diagnosis showed only that mother was not going to be able to live. We clustered around her bed and were impressed with the seriousness of her condition. We knelt together and prayed to the One who had come to our rescue so many times before. We each prayed. I was the youngest and was last. When it came my turn I said, "Lord, I have four dollars in my bank. If You will heal my mommy, I'll give You all the money I have."

God healed my mother right then and there. Immediately! You say, 'How do you know He healed her?' I'll tell you how I know. On her next birthday she'll be 99 years old! That's how I know. Mother and father told me later that I didn't need to make that promise to the Lord - He didn't really need all my money. But father said that since I had promised God and He had healed mother, I had better pay it! And I did - and was glad to! And I have still been able to make out financially!

You can see why I came to see that God's blessing and tithing go hand in hand! There was no question in our minds, as a family; nor has there been any question in my mind as an individual. Years later, while preparing for the ministry I was receiving ten dollars a week. I had been tithing, but only a single tithe. I hadn't adopted the plan of double tithing. But in my study I read from my favorite author that the Hebrew people returned to God fully a fourth of their income. This normally would have reduced them to poverty. But on the contrary, it made it possible for the God of heaven to bestow upon them a very special blessing - an extra special blessing. I reasoned that if God would do that for them, He might just do it for me. I decided to test God and see what He would do for me, and I put aside one-fourth of my ten dollars. That still left me with seven dollars and fifty-cents. That was still quite a bit of money!

I was taking a correspondence course and that cost a few dollars, but that still left me with over a dollar a week on which to eat. I did very well on that schedule and the Lord blessed me. I was still single, of course, but I was doing very well. About that time we Coons had a Coon reunion! Five of my brothers were preachers, and with their wives and children, there were forty-three of us Coons! I was the youngest Coon. In the course of our get-together we preacher brothers talked about those things that we had in common. We had a good time visiting together. I told them, among other things, that I had come across something wonderful. I told them of my plan to lay aside a quarter of my income for the Lord as the Hebrews of old had done. They evidently hadn't heard of it because they looked rather shocked when I told them about it. They weren't too impressed, but I told them that the Lord has invited us to prove Him, and that was what I was doing for maybe a three-month period.

They reminded me that as a young preacher I wasn't getting too large a salary and that I ought to be careful how I used it. "Yes," I said, "I am. But if the Lord will bless a man for giving one tenth, He ought to bless time and a half as much for the giving of a quarter of my income." I told them that I wanted to be an example to the members of my church and inspire them to greater faith and obedience.

I told them that I would conduct this experiment and at the end of the experiment would write and tell them about it. If I would be in the need of money, they would hear from me and I would give them the opportunity of helping their younger brother. If the Lord blessed as He said He would, I would want to share that with them, too. One of my brothers said, "If you're really going to be blessed, you'll be married by the time your experiment is over."

A B C's of Bible Prayer

Now I hadn't planned to be married near that soon, but by the time the three months were over, I was married! I didn't make out well at the end of those three months - I made out exceptionally well! Just think of all the gifts we received at the time of our wedding! Usually when a man gets married, he expects to give the minister at least ten dollars. We had my wife's father, who is an ordained minister, perform the ceremony and he gave us forty dollars. We saved fifty dollars right there! Talk about financial problems being solved! The Lord helped us in a marvelous way.

Soon after, we were called to go as missionaries to the West Indies. We didn't have any money to buy a car and over there the sun really shines. It's hot! And I had walk around to make my visits in that very hot sun. One day, the Union Conference treasurer, a man by the name of M. D. Howard, came to preach in my tabernacle. He preached a sermon on the life of George Mueller and told of the wonderful answers to prayer that this man received. George Mueller made a practise of opening his Bible to a promise and placing his finger on it and claiming that promise on the basis of the fact that God said He would perform it. It was a powerful sermon and made a deep impression on me.

When my wife and I returned home we talked about the sermon and the experiences that George Mueller had had. We said, "If God could do that for George Mueller, is it too much for the Lord to give us a car?" We could think of a thousand reasons why it was reasonable for us to have a car. We knelt by the side of our bed and prayed and claimed the promise of Malachi 3:8-12. Within two weeks we received a letter from our friends in the States and an unsolicited \$100. bill. We decided this was the Lords way of answering our prayer and used the money to put a down-payment on a car. Now, we should have asked God for wisdom in buying a car, but we failed to, and as a result we bought a car with the roll-up-and-down curtains, instead of windows. If we would have had wisdom, we would have bought one with glass.

There in the tropics when it starts raining, it really rains! Often, before we could get those curtains on, the rain had stopped and we were soaked! But even with this inferior car, some of our minister brethren asked, "How can you afford a luxury like this?" We simply told them that we were claiming the promise and the Lord was answering us. You know, even missionaries sometimes have a problem knowing that God really will answer prayer. Some of them thought that we were guilty of presumption. Unfortunately some of them had never experienced real answers to prayer. But they looked at us and thought that we were acting very unwisely.

At the end of each month we had to make our car payments. Now in order to do this we couldn't eat quite as well as we used to. We couldn't eat the canned foods. We had to eat that which grew naturally. The Lord impressed people to bring us such things as oranges and bananas and many other fruits and vegetables. We had a very low food bill because of that. Our money went into the car! It kept that running.

After a time we were blessed with a baby girl. Now we were faced with an increase in our expenses for which we hadn't made any provision. I remember one day coming home and saying to my wife, "Unless the Lord works a miracle, we're going to lose our car. It seems as though we can't afford both the baby and the car. But, then, we have had it for several months and we have enjoyed it. Like Job we must say, "The Lord has given and the Lord has taken away."

We decided that we would not be stubborn and if this is what the Lord wanted to do, we would be happy with it. But somehow we just didn't think that the Lord would want to deprive us of something that was such an aid to us in our work for Him. But if He wanted us to keep the car, He would have to work a real miracle. It would take more than the kindness of the church members bringing fruits and vegetables to us - this would have to be a real miracle.

A B C's of Bible Prayer

The next day I drove the car in to the gas station for some gas. I felt somewhat like the widow mentioned in the Bible who used her last bit of oil to make some cakes for herself and her son and then await death. I was going to get a little gas with the last bit of money I had. This particular gas station owner was also a car dealer. He said to me while filling the car with gas, "Why, pastor, you ought not to have a car like this." I thought to myself, If he only knew it, I'm pretty close not to having it!

"Here's the kind of car you ought to have," he said pointing to a lovely car with roll-up-and-down windows!

Well, my heart just beat an extra beat, and oh, how I wished I could have that car, but I knew it was impossible. But for once I kept my mouth shut and just let him do the talking. He went on to tell me how much he would allow me in trade for my car. It was a fabulous offer. Then I prayed silently. I said, "Lord, You have always taken care of us. You have promised to open the windows...." And then I remembered that it was the coming of our daughter that had caused us to get behind in our budget. It wouldn't take too long to clear that up and then we would be alright again. So I said, "If I trade, would you give me three months before I made the first payment?"

"Sure," he said. "I'll do that for you."

"Sold," I said, without a moment's hesitation. He took the car with the roll-up-and-down curtains and let me have the car with the roll-up-and-down windows. I drove that car home and bounded into the house and said, "Honey, come out and see our car." She wondered what I meant for she had seen the car many times, but she did come outside. Well, when she saw the new car, she just about went into orbit. She was thrilled. I invited her to come for a ride. Oh, how we enjoyed that car. We went to visit a photographer who had just recently joined the church. He had had a thrilling experience and was happy in the church and we wanted to go and have him rejoice with us in the purchase of our new car. This particular car was the 'Whippet' and it was built real high. When he came out he looked at it and said, "I see that Isaiah fifty-eight has been fulfilled!" I looked a bit astonished but then he said, "You know where it says, 'Ye shall ride upon the high places of the earth!'"

Yes, we did ride upon the high places of the earth and the Lord was good to us. Over and over, the Lord has led us through one crisis after another and each time WE have been brought closer to the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no question in my mind that God knows how to solve financial problems. I want to be quick to say that this does not mean that we go out and buy the most expensive furniture and obligate ourselves financially with debts incurred because of an over-active want gland. But the Lord will bless us if we will make our wants correspond with our needs and then buy wisely. It may be that we will not be able to keep up with the 'Jones'; it may be that we will have to be content with something less than our neighbors as far as this worlds goods are concerned, but God says that He will supply our needs. God promises that those who see and watch us will call us 'blessed' in that they will be impressed that the Lord is with us, supplying our needs. This being so, we will not look shabby or tacky, but on the contrary, we will have the appearance of God's blessing.

One of the thrilling experiences that comes to mind took place during the second world war. It was almost impossible to rent a home. We had just come to Madison College and the problem existed there to the extent that the conference brethren suggested that we buy a home. This was going to be a difficult solution to our problem for two reasons. Number one, we had no money; and number two, it was just as difficult to buy, as it was to rent. One morning my wife and I opened our Bible to Malachi 3.

We said, "Lord, You can help us to find a place to rent or buy whether there are places or not." We called the Real Estate man again with whom we had driven many, many miles looking for a place. It had been a frustrating experience thus far, because look where we might, there just weren't any places to rent - or buy.

A B C's of Bible Prayer

This particular morning we got in his car and went down Oakdale Drive and came upon a beautiful home with a 'For Rent' sign in front of it. We could hardly believe our eyes. How had this house evaded our searching eyes all these days. But there it was. We went up to the door and knocked. A very sweet lady came in response to our knock and we told her why we had come. She was very gracious and it just took a few minutes and we had rented a very beautiful home at a modest figure. We lived there for two years.

We then decided that we ought to try and live on the Madison College campus. It would be two miles nearer and it would enhance our work program so much. Again we went to the Lord and asked Him to help us. Places were still very scarce, but the Lord opened the way. A man was just getting ready to move away from the area and his house was for sale. I went and looked it over and was pleased with what I saw. The price was right, too. But there was just one problem. I had no money. "Look," I said, "I'll pay you a very good monthly rent and maybe we can allow some of this to go on a down-payment." The man agreed and we moved into this house. We stayed there until we were through pastoring that church.

The Lord had blessed in our work at Madison to the extent that we were able to start a new church. I was to leave Madison and pastor the new church. This meant we would have to move. This time we went to the Lord and said, "Lord, You have heard me tell the people how You come to our rescue, You have heard me tell the people how we claim the promises - if it is Your will, give us a real nice home. We're willing to live in a shack, but people might say, 'Is this the man that tells about the promises? Look where he lives'. I wouldn't mind, Lord, if it could be a nice brick home on a double lot on a corner - if that's alright with You."

I knelt in prayer, praying that prayer with my tithe envelope containing one quarter of our income for that month in one hand, and my other hand on the promise of Malachi 3:8-12. I lifted my hands to God and said, "Lord, You've said that You would that men lift up their holy hands as they ask, so there is God; here is Jesus - and here am I. Through the name of Jesus I come, and I believe that You are going to give us just the place You see we should have."

I jumped in my car and went up on Florence Avenue, and there on the corner was a brick house and two lots - and a nice 'For Sale' sign out in front. I called the broker and I said, "How much is the place?" He told me how much and that the down payment would be \$1,800. I knew I didn't have that much ready cash.

"Well, now," I said, "would you let us buy it on a rent-payment basis?" I could almost hear him puff over the telephone.

"Mr. Coon," he said, "that's a reasonable price." "Yes, it is," I said.

"And it's a reasonable down payment," he said.

"Yes, you're right," I agreed. "But you see I just don't happen to have the down payment, and I think the people will agree to these terms."

"But this is a reasonable offer," he insisted.

"You're right, it is reasonable," I said, "and I think they'll be willing for me to pay for it like rent."

"But...but...we just don't do business this way...."

"That may be so," I said, "but I do..." Then I said, "Would you do me the favor of presenting it to them and asking them about it?"

"Well, I guess I could do that," he said.

A B C's of Bible Prayer

That afternoon he called back and said that the owners had agreed to do it. "But where do I get my commission?" he asked. I told him I would pay him \$25. a month until it was paid for. We lived in that lovely home until we went into Revival work for the Southern Union Conference. Then we asked the Lord to help us to sell it to the one who needed it most and would appreciate it most. I found this pleases the Lord, too. It's good for us to ask the Lord to help us to help someone else, too, instead of only asking the blessings of God for ourselves. There was a very needy family that came and bought the home and it was years before they paid us for our part of the mortgage. We were once again impressed with the leadership of the Lord. Again we knew that God intervenes in the affairs of men.

What is your financial problem? If you are willing to be led of the Lord, you too, can have thrilling financial solutions to any problem that you have, regardless of how great or how small it might be. Won't you prove the Lord and let Him lead you to the heights of experimental Christianity? May the Lord bless you as you venture out by faith.