

God's Provision for Our Lives

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[Scripture quotations taken from the NASB](#)

Many of us will find that there will be times in our lives when we face circumstances that cause us to be concerned about how we will provide for ourselves and those who depend on us. Maybe a job loss, an injury or illness, or maybe our own lack of credentials or skills may cause us to worry about how we will make it in the days that lie ahead. We may anxiously question whether we will be able to obtain the things that we need to sustain ourselves and our loved ones.

Jesus knew that we would face times like these, and in the Sermon on the Mount He spoke specifically to our concerns about such things. He prefaced His teaching by saying in Matthew 6:24 that we cannot serve two masters; we cannot serve both God and money. He then continued in the verses that follow with His teaching about worry, and about God's promise to provide for the needs of His people.

Jesus taught us not to worry about our tomorrows and about how we will provide for ourselves in the days ahead. He assured us that God will provide for our needs, pointing to the fact that He provides even for the birds of the air, which

“do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns” (Matthew 6:26). These creatures do not cultivate crops and store them for their future needs, but they gather daily what God provides for them.

Jesus also used the lilies of the field as another example, saying that they “do not toil nor do they spin” (Matthew 6:28), and yet God clothes them in splendor. Jesus taught that if God takes care to provide sustenance for even the birds of the air and the grass of the field, then He will surely provide for us as His people.

Jesus then taught us not to anxiously preoccupy ourselves with chasing after material things as unbelievers do, making the pursuit of the money necessary to obtain these things the priority of our lives. He assured us that God our Father knows our needs and promises to provide for us, if we will seek His kingdom and His righteousness as our priority in life.

This means that above all else, we are to walk in obedience to God’s word as revealed to us in the Bible, and we are to put the pursuit of worldly endeavors and our own desires behind our pursuit of the things of God. If we will seek as the preeminent goal of our lives to obey God in all that we know He requires of us, then we can rest in His promise that He will provide for our material needs (Matthew 6:33-34).

The circumstances and conditions of our lives will reveal God’s plan for our lives. Sometimes these circumstances are only temporary. Other times certain circumstances and conditions will be something that we will live with for the rest of our lives.

If an ability or talent or credential that the world deems valuable is out of reach for us, it is because our sovereign God, according to His plan and purpose for our life, has determined that it will be out of reach for us. We should then look to Him to provide for our needs and not to our own strengths and abilities.

The world esteems highly material wealth, prominence, power, prestige, and position. We as believers are told not to love the world or the things that are in world, and we are not to preoccupy ourselves with these things (1 John 2:15-17).

Instead, we are to seek the things of God as the priority of our lives. We are to make obedience to God’s word in every situation and circumstance our primary focus in life. When we have done this, let us accept God’s provision for our lives

as He sees fit to give it, and let us rest in His promise that He will indeed provide it.

The Apostle Paul taught us much about the Christian life when he said: “For we walk by faith, not by sight.” (2 Corinthians 5:7). We as believers have been called to walk and live our lives by faith in the trustworthiness of God and all that He has promised us through His word. Most of us will find that living our lives by the sight of material wealth stored up for ourselves, or by our own strength and abilities, is something that will be out of reach for us. Our sovereign and loving God directs our paths, and He will demonstrate His faithfulness as He sustains us and carries us through the hardships of our lives. Through these experiences, the promises in His word will be shown to be completely true and trustworthy.

God’s Provision for a Poor Widow and Her Son

In 1 Kings 17, Elijah had prophesied to the wicked King Ahab who promoted Baal worship in Israel, saying that there would be no rain or dew in the next few years except at his word. Baal was supposedly the god of fertility and lord of the rain clouds, and The Lord God would demonstrate the impotence of Baal to the people of Israel by withholding rain from the land through His word spoken by the prophet.

After his prophecy to Ahab, the word of the Lord came to Elijah telling him to leave and go hide by the Kerith Ravine. There he could drink from the ravine, and the Lord told him that He had commanded ravens to provide food for him also. Elijah did as he was told, and the ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning and in the evening. After a while though, the ravine dried up because there had been no rain in the land.

God’s provision for our lives by way of a particular source is many times only temporary. There will be provision for us in a certain place for a time, and then at some point, “the ravine dries up” so to speak, and we must move on to find provision elsewhere.

God had provided for Elijah by the ravine for a time, when it was still flowing, and the ravens still brought him food. When his provision by the ravine ran out, the Lord then made other provisions for Elijah. This time He commanded a widow to provide for him, and a very poor widow at that.

At this point the Lord told Elijah to go to Zarephath, as we see from 1 Kings 17:8-16. When Elijah came into the town, he saw a widow gathering sticks. He called to her and asked her for a drink of water and a piece of bread. She replied to the prophet saying that she did not have any bread, only a small amount of flour in a jar and a little oil left in a jug. She was gathering the sticks to make one last meal for herself and her son, after which she expected that they would both die of hunger.

Elijah replied to her, telling her not to be afraid, but to go home and first prepare a cake of bread and bring it to him from the flour and oil that she had left, and then to prepare something for herself and her son. Elijah then spoke to her with these words: “For thus says the Lord God of Israel, ‘The bowl of flour shall not be exhausted, nor shall the jar of oil be empty, until the day that the Lord sends rain on the face of the earth.’” (1 Kings 17:14).

Hearing the word of the Lord given by the prophet, the poor widow obeyed that word, even though it seemed completely contrary to human reasoning. After all, the cake that she gave to Elijah could have been used to sustain her and her son for one more day.

Nevertheless, the widow obeyed the word of the Lord, and she did receive a miraculous provision to sustain both her and her son, just as Elijah said she would. Instead of having just one more portion of flour and oil to sustain her and her son for one more day, she received God’s provision so that the bowl of flour was not used up and the jar of oil did not run dry until the Lord once again gave His rain, and the provision of food was no longer scarce in the land.

The widow obeyed the word of God, and as a result of her obedience God provided for her needs, just as He promised that He would. In the same way, Jesus told us to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and then all of the things that we need to sustain our lives will be given to us as well (Matthew 6:33).

In both of these passages of Scripture the lesson is the same: we are to obey God’s word first and foremost, and when we do so, He will command that provision be made for our lives. In some cases, this provision may come in ways that we could not possibly manage by ourselves.

God is Faithful

Once again let us recall the account of Jesus walking on the water during the night to catch up with His disciples who had left hours earlier in a boat. After he was sure that it Jesus coming toward them and not a ghost, Peter got out of the boat and began walking toward Jesus on the water, but when he saw the turbulence of the wind and the waves around him, he became afraid and began to sink. He cried out to Jesus to save him, and Jesus stretched forth His hand to save Peter before he went under the waves and perished. Jesus then said to him: “You of little faith, why did you doubt?” (Matthew 14:31).

Every account of events in the lives of God’s people that is recorded in the Bible is recorded for our benefit and instruction. This experience of Peter’s is both symbolic and characteristic of experiences that we as believers will have during the course of our own lives.

With the winds of our own turbulent circumstances buffeting us, we too will become afraid, even though we have our Savior and His word in sight of us. In such times we may feel ourselves sinking in fear of the difficulties that confront us. Just when we think that we will drown in the midst of our troubles, we cry out to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, “Lord, save me!”, and He reaches out His hand to rescue us and sustain us, proving the trustworthiness of the promises given to us in the Scriptures. The day will also come when the hand of the Lord will deliver us into His eternal kingdom, where we will be forever free of anything that threatens or causes grief.

Jesus Christ, the living Word of God, is the One who is called “Faithful and True” (John 1:1, 14, Revelation 19:11-13). Every promise that God has given to us through His word is completely trustworthy, faithful, and true, and may be relied upon fully.

God Will Carry Us to the End of Our Journey

One of the phases of life when we may become the most anxious about how we will obtain the things that we need to sustain ourselves is when we are getting older, and we realize that we no longer have the strength and stamina we once did. God’s promises apply no less at times when we need them more, and in fact the

all-sufficient grace of Christ is given to us in even greater measure when we need it more (2 Corinthians 12:9-10).

As we age, our weaknesses, afflictions, and difficulties will increase in many ways. It is in times like these when God's grace and power doing for us what we cannot do for ourselves will be clearly manifested as something that He did for us, and not something that we attained through our own strength.

The Scripture reveals that the Lord takes delight not in those who are strong and capable, but in those who put their hope in His unfailing love (Psalm 147:10-11), relying on every promise that He has given to us through His word. Every promise of God given to His people is to be trusted and relied upon; none of them will fail. He will never leave us nor forsake us (Hebrews 13:5-6).

God promised specifically to sustain His people in their old age when He spoke through the prophet Isaiah saying:

“Listen to Me, O house of Jacob,
And all the remnant of the house of Israel,
You who have been borne by Me from birth
And have been carried from the womb;
Even to your old age I will be the same,
And even to your graying years I will bear you!
I have done it, and I will carry you;
And I will bear you and I will deliver you. (Isaiah 46:3-4)

Though we may think that we sustained ourselves in our own strength when we were younger and more physically capable, we have in fact been upheld by the power of God since the time we were conceived and carried by Him since we were born, and He has promised to sustain us and carry us to the end of our journey. When we feel ourselves sinking in fear of the troubles that surround us, let us not doubt, but let us know that our Lord will reach out His hand to sustain us and rescue us, just as He did for Peter. As God's people we have been given many promises through His word, and among these are His promises of His help and His provision for our lives.