



ALL I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS IS TO EXPERIENCE GOD'S PROVISION

Philippians 4:15-20

As you know, you Philippians were the only ones who gave me financial help when I first brought you the Good News and then traveled on from Macedonia. No other church did this. 16 Even when I was in Thessalonica you sent help more than once. 17 I don't say this because I want a gift from you. Rather, I want you to receive a reward for your kindness. 18 At the moment I have all I need - and more! I am generously supplied with the gifts you sent me with Epaphroditus. They are a sweet-smelling sacrifice that is acceptable and pleasing to God. 19 And this same God who takes care of me will supply all your needs from His glorious riches, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus. Now all glory to God our Father forever and ever! Amen.

- **What struggles at times keep me from experiencing God's best in my life?**
- **Financial struggles keep many people from experiencing God's great plans in their lives.**
 - **Over 750,000 people file for bankruptcy annually in the U.S.**
 - **Counselors estimate financial problems contribute to 90% of all divorces.**
 - "Half of Americans fret about their debt burden." (*The Times Picayune* newspaper)
 - "20% of all American adults worry about their debts most of the time, and their worry is causing them stress and affecting their health." (*Associated Press Ipsos Public Affairs Poll*)
- **The Lord wants to bless His people physically, emotionally, relationally spiritually and financially.**
- Paul - *"This same God who takes care of me will supply all your needs from His glorious riches, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus."* (Philippians 4:19)
- **What steps do we need to take to experience God's provision in our lives this Christmas and throughout 2021?**

Experiencing God's Provision Requires:

GIVING A GOOD EFFORT THROUGH OUR WORK

- *“Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. There he became acquainted with a Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, who had recently arrived from Italy with his wife, Priscilla. . . . Paul lived and worked with them, for they were tentmakers just as he was.”* (Acts 18:1-3)
- *“Don’t you remember . . . how hard we worked among you? . . . We toiled to earn a living so that we would not be a burden to any of you as we preached God’s Good News to you.”* (1 Thessalonians 2:9)
- **A lot of people are better “talkers” than they are “workers.”**
- *“All hard work brings a profit, but mere talk leads only to poverty.”* (Proverbs 14:23)
- *“Whoever does not work should not eat.”* (2 Thessalonians 3:10)
- **We should work hard because *We Want To Be Blessed By The Lord.***
 - *“A hard worker has plenty of food, but a person who chases fantasies has no sense.”* (Proverbs 12:11)
 - *“Do you know a hard-working man? He shall be successful and stand before kings!”* (Proverbs 22:29 TLB)
- **We should work hard because *We Want To Be A Blessing To Others.***
 - **Our workplace effort and success will be a good or a bad witness to others.**
 - **We can be a good witness for the Lord in the workplace by: 1) being punctual, 2) dressing appropriately, 3) being a team player, 4) responding appropriately to criticism, 5) taking advantage of training opportunities, 6) helping to resolve problem issues, 7) giving our best effort, 8) finishing projects, 9) refraining from personal activities (calls, texts, facebook, etc.), and 10) living out our Christian values.**
 - *“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for them. . . It is the Lord Christ you are serving.”* (Colossians 3:23-24)
- ***What are some steps I need to take to become a better employee, supervisor or business owner?***

Experiencing God’s Provision Requires:

HANDLING MONEY WISELY

- Paul - *“You Philippians were the only ones who gave me financial help when I first brought you the Good News and then traveled on from Macedonia. No other church did this. Even when I was in Thessalonica you sent help more than once.”* (Philippians 4:15-16)
- **The Christians in Philippi had obviously done well financially in difficult times, which had enabled them to generously support Paul in his ministry endeavors.**
- ***What are some steps we can take to manage our money well in difficult times?***
- **Wise ways of handling money include *Giving A Tithe Of Our Income To The Lord’s Work (10%).***
 - *“Bring all the tithes into the storehouse so there will be enough food in My Temple. If you do,’ says the Lord of Heaven’s Armies, ‘I will open the windows of heaven for you. I will pour out a blessing so great you won’t have enough room to take it in! Try it! Put Me to the test!’”* (Malachi 3:10)

- **The Lord always blesses when we put Him and His agenda first in our lives (Matthew 6:33).**
- *“The purpose of tithing is to teach you always to put GOD first in your lives.”* (Deuteronomy 14:23 LB)
- **Wise ways of handling money include *Budgeting To Cover Our Living Expenses (80%)***
 - *“Good planning and hard work lead to prosperity, but hasty shortcuts lead to poverty.”* (Proverbs 21:5)
 - **A good budget will also include a planned pay-down of our current debts (i.e. Debt Snowball Plan).**
 - *“The rich rule over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender.”* (Proverbs 22:7)
- **Wise ways of handling money include *Saving To Have Emergency And Investment Funds (10%)***
 - *“Ants know how to store up food in the summer so they’re ready for the winter.”* (Proverbs 6:8 GNB)
 - **We need to save for future emergencies and purchases and to have investment monies.**
 - *“The wise man saves for the future, but the foolish man spends whatever he gets.”* (Proverbs 21:20 LB)
- **Wise ways of handling money include *Avoiding “Get-Rich-Quick” Opportunities.***
 - *“Wealth from get-rich-quick schemes quickly disappears.”* (Proverbs 13:11)
 - *“People who want to get rich quick fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires.”* (1 Timothy 6:9)
- Jesus - *“If you are faithful in little things, you will be faithful in large ones. But if you are dishonest in little things, you won’t be honest with greater responsibilities. And if you are untrustworthy about worldly wealth, who will trust you with the true riches of heaven?”* (Luke 16:10-11)
- ***What are some steps that I need to take to become a better steward of the finances that God has entrusted to me?***

Experiencing God’s Provision Requires:

TRUSTING GOD FOR HIS PROVISION

- Paul - *“This same God who takes care of me will supply all your needs from His glorious riches, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus.”* (Philippians 4:19)
- **Paul’s promise teaches us about *The Source Of Our Provision* - “This same God”**
 - **The God who is in charge of providing for our needs is the all-powerful God of creation.**
 - **Other sources of supply may run “dry,” but that’s not going to happen with the God of our universe.**
- **Paul’s promise teaches us about *The Surety Of Our Provision* - “will supply”**
 - **God’s provision is promised to those who are living for Him, giving generously and trusting in Him.**
- **Paul’s promise teaches us about *The Scope Of Our Provision* - “all your needs”**

- **The Lord is committed to providing for the needs of His people when we are faith-filled and faithful “givers.”**
- **Our “needs” include our emotional, financial, relational and spiritual needs.**
- *“The LORD directs the steps of the godly. He delights in every detail of their lives. Though they stumble, they will never fall, for the LORD holds them by the hand. Once I was young, and now I am old. Yet I have never seen the godly abandoned or their children begging for bread.” (Psalm 37:23-25)*
- **Paul’s promise teaches us about *The Standard Of Our Provision* - “from His glorious riches”**
 - **The Lord has an unlimited “bank account” from which to supply all of our needs.**
- “6 to 10% of Americans have a high spiritual faith. These individuals are happy and influential. They are more tolerant of people from diverse backgrounds. They are more involved in charitable activities . . . They are far, far happier than the rest of the population.” (George Gallup)
- *“Now all glory to God our Father forever and ever! Amen.” (Philippians 4:20)*
- ***What is the Lord saying to me through today’s message?***

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