

HOW GIVING HAS BLESSED OUR LIFE

I first learned about the power of giving several years ago when I began reading about financial success. At that time my husband and I thought we were financially strapped. We did, however, decide we could spare \$30 a month from our six-figure income to sponsor an international foster child. Later we began attending church regularly and added our \$2 - \$5 when the offering plate was passed. As we read more about the benefits of giving and the freedom it provides in terms of empowering prosperity thinking and overcoming feelings of lack we increased our offering to \$20. Interestingly as we increased our knowledge of financial success principles and laws we simultaneously experienced the worst financial struggle of our life. We saw our six-figure income and our life savings disappear almost overnight in a struggle with the tax department. During this difficult time we felt like we were being obedient to God's prosperity laws because the \$20 offerings each week seemed like so much money relative to our new lifestyle and to what we had given in the past.

We struggled along working hard to recoup the losses but we seemed to continually come up with disappointment after disappointment. During this time we implemented a "pay ourselves first" habit and started saving 10% of our income. Frequently this was the money that pulled us through in a pinch. It seemed that whatever we attempted to do to change our financial situation either backfired or went nowhere. After one extremely disappointing real estate deal collapsed we decided the only thing we hadn't tried was increasing our giving so it really did amount to 10% of our income. We did and the first week we gave \$75 at church that Sunday. The next week, we accidentally ran into a friend who had happened to look in the paper and see a small classified ad for a home for sale. We followed through and were only several feet into the home when we both looked at each other and said lets buy it. This was after a year of looking at dozens and dozens of homes and finding nothing suitable – even outside our price range.

The next week we gave our 10% again, \$200 this time, and I received two contracts for work at the same time doing the work I love to do. We continued with our 10% and I saw my first article published in a magazine, received a client from the article, got approval on the financing for our new home, received offers to deliver courses in my line of work, got paid out on a full contract, rather than half, which meant we had more money available for moving expenses. On-and-on the blessings have flowed. The week we received the full payment for my contract I said to my husband that we would be giving \$600 that week—how did he feel about that? We were both nervous and unsure because of the big expenses upcoming with our move yet we stuck with our plan. That afternoon we were looking for a freezer because our new home has a fridge but no freezer. We found a suitable one that would have been about \$600 but we needed to sleep on the decision before buying. Later that day, we received a call from a family member asking if we would like to use the freezer that had been my grandmother's before she passed away over a year ago.

These might not seem significant, or you could try to pass them off as coincidences, but we are convinced that we have been faithful – we trust that God will provide the opportunities for us so our needs our met. In the past we relied on our own 10% to pull us through, now it is the 10% we have given back that is providing far more than simply enough to get us by – for the first time in years we feel that we are truly blessed financially.

Trusting God with our finances by giving money when we are in such a state of financial uncertainty, might not seem logical, however, struggling along trying to make ends meet is extremely stressful and by turning the situation over to God, we finally have a peace of mind that was not there when we were trying to hang on to every little bit we had and trying to stretch every cent out of every dollar we could find. We feel truly blessed and are learning to share our blessings with others. Our desire now is to be able to share more and more of our prosperity as our income increases and our finances prosper.

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