

4-6 FINANCIAL ADVICE FOR TROUBLED TIMES

Do you find yourself wanting to donate to various ministries, yet holding back because you barely have enough money to pay your own bills? Have you put off dealing with financial issues because you don't know where to start? Read this section and discover simple ways to gain financial strength and position yourself to bless others.

7 HOPE BEYOND THE BATTLE: MINISTERING IN KUWAIT

By *Jamin Goecker*

Jamin shares a firsthand account of chaplain ministry from a trustworthy source, his own dad. Find out how chaplains cope with ministry to those serving in harm's way and learn how you can support our military families.

8 MOVE: SERVING THE GOD OF THE IMPOSSIBLE

By *Don Tietz*

Thirty-seven men experience God's ability to do the impossible when they return to Nicaragua to finish the largest project attempted by this team.

9 I'M ALIVE!

By *Dyrie Francis*

Carla Thomas dropped her 11-year-old son off at day camp the morning of December 28, 2007. Shortly after noon he was vomiting and unable to stand. Discover Carla's reaction when told to "expect the worst."

Plus Much More!

Do You Trust Me?



ANDREA JOHNSON/Editor

After this very long winter I am most ready for spring. I'm eager to see flowers and herbs—not snow – grace our backyard. Of course, if I want

to harvest anything besides dirt and weeds, I had better get busy. I can reap only what I have sown.

The law of sowing and reaping is just one of the many principles God implemented when designing the universe. If we want petunias, we won't plant marigold seeds. If we wish to reap kindness, we must plant kindness. We must give to receive.

Proverbs is a treasure-trove of these kinds of principles. In fact, a few years back my then high-school-aged son came home excited about his Sunday school class. His teacher, Jeff Farmer (President Farmer's son), told the kids if they wanted to be rich, they should read this book. I now read from Proverbs daily, attempting to assimilate some of the advice. "With [wisdom] are riches and honor, enduring wealthy and prosperity" (8:18). "The plans of the diligent lead to profit as surely as haste leads to poverty" (21:5). "He who increases his wealth by exorbitant interest amasses it for another, who will be kind to the poor" (28:8). "He who is generous will be blessed" (22:9, NASB). "Honor the Lord from your wealth and from the *first* [emphasis mine] of all your produce; so your barns will be filled with plenty and your vats will overflow with new wine" (3:9, NASB).

Earlier in my first marriage, my husband and I became convicted by the last verse. We paid our tithe, but it was certainly not first on our list of priorities. We always got behind. Then when we had a month with an "extra" paycheck, we would have to

use the entire amount just to catch up on our tithe. We never had any extra money.

Finally, we felt the Lord asking us, "Do you really trust Me?" I had to admit, I was depending on our employers to provide for us, and that only as long as we stayed healthy! We had no medical insurance.

Nonetheless I added up our expenses. We had enough money to pay all our bills – or pay tithe and only a couple of bills. Neither scenario included groceries. It would have been easier to "trust" if I could think of another source of money. (I'm always imagining ways to "help" God out.) But I could think of none; and I HATED the thought of being late on a payment, having already experienced life with a small baby, an empty refrigerator, and no electricity.

I felt a little like Jasmine in the Disney movie *Aladdin*, when the young man shows up outside the castle tower and asks the princess to join him on a magic carpet ride. When she hesitates, he asks, "Do you trust me?"

"Are you kidding me?!" would be my reaction. Still, we paid our tithe. A few days later a check came in the mail from a deposit we'd long ago forgotten about, enough to pay one more bill. Before the next bill was due another unexpected check came. We paid all our bills on time, and still had money for groceries.

Since that time I'm nearly paranoid about paying my tithe first; because I *know* God is the source of my provision. You have probably had a similar experience. If not, what are you waiting for? Trust Him!



Andrea Johnson,
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