

GOD'S BLESSING OF KNOWING THE FOUR PURPOSES FOR MONEY

LESSON 2

ELIJAH

A great example to a backslidden nation



PROVISION

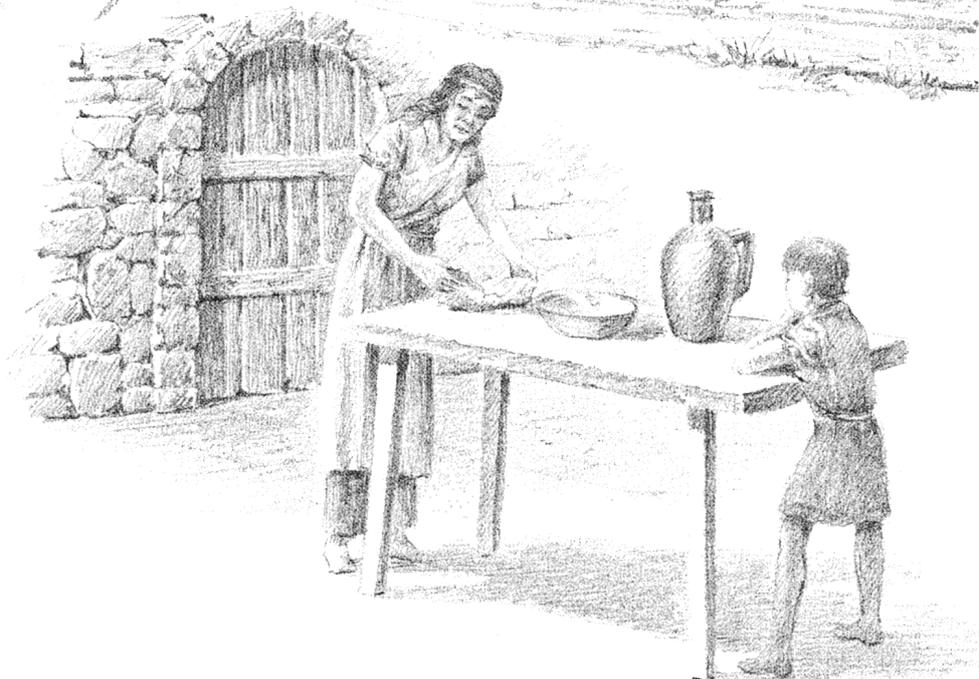
"...I have commanded the ravens to feed thee..." (1 Kings 17:4).

DIRECTION

"And it came to pass after a while, that the brook dried up..." (1 Kings 17:7).

FELLOWSHIP

"...I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee" (1 Kings 17:9).



GOD'S BLESSING OF KNOWING THE FOUR PURPOSES FOR MONEY

For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him..." (2 Chronicles 16:9).

DEMONSTRATION

"Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly..." (James 5:17).





DO YOU UNDERSTAND GOD'S PURPOSES FOR MONEY?

PERSONAL EVALUATION:

TRUE/FALSE

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Scripture teaches that money is the root of all evil. (See I Timothy 6:10.) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. God has promised to provide our food, clothing, and shelter. (See Matthew 6:30-32 and Philippians 4:19.) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Money is a means of providing personal security so we do not need to depend upon others. (See I Timothy 6:17.) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Because of the importance of money, God tells us to work hard to get as much as we can. (See Proverbs 23:4.) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. God does not evaluate a man's spirituality on the basis of how he manages his money. (See Luke 16:11.) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Scripture instructs us to use money to prove the supernatural power of God. (See Malachi 3:10.) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. If we fervently pray for money, we can expect God to give it to us. (See James 4:3.) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. When we pray for provision according to God's will, we will always receive what we ask for. (See I John 5:14-15.) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. God's purpose in giving us financial need is to increase our love for Him and our dependence upon Him. (See John 16:24.) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. If we ask God for money or possessions that will harm us, He will not give them to us. (See Psalm 106:15.) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. One of God's purposes for money is to unite Christians. (See II Corinthians 8:14-15.) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12. God intends for welfare to be on a temporary basis. (See II Corinthians 8:14.) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 13. Withholding food from any hungry person is not a Scriptural or Christian way to act. (See II Thessalonians 3:10.) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 14. The amount of money God gives to a person is based on how much faith he has. (See James 2:5.) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 15. If we desire to do a work for God, we should not let a lack of funds stop us. (See Luke 14:28.) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 16. God uses financial loss as one way to discipline a sensual Christian. (See Proverbs 6:26.) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 17. When it comes to managing our money, God expects us to use our own common sense. (See Proverbs 3:5.) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 18. God uses a lack of funds as a signal to stop and get clearer direction. (See I Thessalonians 5:24.) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| TOTAL CORRECT | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

EVALUATION SCORE:

- 18-16 correct =
15-13 correct =
12-9 correct =
8-0 correct =

THE SECRET OF KNOWING GOD'S PURPOSES FOR MONEY

In Scripture, God explains the difference between a "natural mind" and a "spiritual mind." A man with a natural mind uses human reasoning before he decides to obey God's Word. A man with a spiritual mind begins by obeying a Scriptural command. After he obeys, he then understands the hidden wisdom and purpose behind the command.

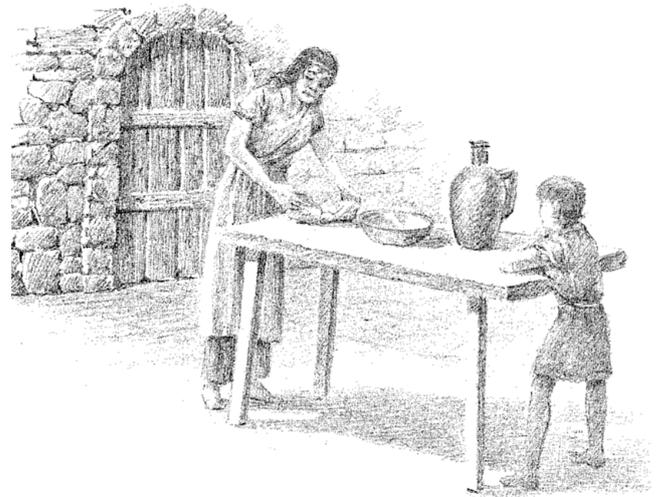
The tragedy of a man with a natural mind is that he is not able to understand the wisdom of God. Instead, he resorts to his own understanding and experiences the destruction and disillusionment that go along with it. (See I Corinthians 2:14-15.)



- **PROVIDING NEEDS**
- **DEMONSTRATING SUPERNATURAL POWER**

Elijah was commanded by God to flee to a brook in the wilderness. He obeyed God, and as a result he was protected from the wrath of wicked Queen Jezebel. God then miraculously fed Elijah by ravens every morning and evening. (See I Kings 17:1-6.)

The purposes of God's command were only understood by Elijah after he obeyed. During those months by the brook he overcame severe depression. He found rest for his body and mind. He enjoyed intimate fellowship with the Lord, and he experienced the daily evidence of God's miraculous provision during a time of severe famine.



- **INDICATING DIRECTION**
- **UNITING CHRISTIANS**

Soon, however, the brook dried up; and although God could have miraculously provided more water, He used this lack of provision as a signal for Elijah to change direction. God commanded him to go to Zarephath. Again Elijah obeyed God, and later he understood God's purposes for the move.

God has promised to give special care to widows and fatherless children. (See Psalm 68:5.) The widow of Zarephath had only enough food for one more meal. God directed Elijah to instruct her to make a meal for him first. She obeyed, and because she did, God miraculously multiplied her food. God's provision lasted for over a year, until the famine ended.

The widow's obedience allowed her to discover and understand an important principle: When we give of our assets to God first, He causes the remainder of our assets to meet our needs.

The widow also discovered the rewards of thanksgiving and fellowship that come through meeting the needs of others. (See II Corinthians 9:8.)

FOUR BASIC PURPOSES FOR MONEY

Financial bondage is an immediate consequence of misunderstanding God's purposes for money. The purposes for money are not to provide security, establish independence, or create power and influence. God's purposes are:



1. TO PROVIDE BASIC NEEDS

Only a few things, such as food, clothing, and shelter, are necessary to maintain life.

God demonstrates His loving care by providing the resources for these items. *"Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?"*

"And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these... Shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" (Matthew 6:26, 28-30).

"...Having food and raiment let us be therewith content."

1 Timothy 6:8

God's wisdom in this purpose

- **To establish daily dependence on Him**

Since the beginning of time, mankind has attempted to become independent of God. There is within each one of us a desire to be self-sufficient so that we can be our own boss. We tend to pray: "Give us riches for our future needs," or "Give us this month our monthly paycheck." However, God taught us to pray, *"Give us this day our daily bread"* (Matthew 6:11). He knows that daily needs produce daily dependence.

- **To deepen our love for the Lord**

When we fail to recognize our need for a person, we tend to lose our love for that person. God created us to need Him. We

are only complete in Christ, and apart from Him we can do nothing at all. (See Colossians 2:10; John 15:5.)

When the Israelites were in the wilderness, God taught them to look to Him for daily food. Every man, whether rich or poor, must recognize his daily dependence upon God.

- **To develop a spirit of gratefulness**

Gratefulness is a delightful by-product of contentment with basics. However, we begin to lose our contentment when we compare what we have with what others have. Expectations then dominate our focus. To the degree that our expectations increase, our gratefulness decreases.

- **To teach us to live within our means**

Contentment with basics equips us to resist the continuous barrage of advertising, which seeks to convince us that we are not able to really enjoy life unless we buy some new gadget or service. On the contrary, a contented person feels wealthy because he knows that he already possesses more than he needs for daily living. *"...Godliness with contentment is great gain"* (1 Timothy 6:6).

- **To help us enjoy our possessions**

Discontent destroys our ability to enjoy the things that God has given to us, since our focus is on the things that we think He should have given us rather than on what we do have. Therefore God warns us not to be covetous but to *"...be content with such things as ye have..."* (Hebrews 13:5).

2. TO CONFIRM DIRECTION

God will use the supply of money or the lack of it to confirm His direction for many of the decisions we must make in our lives.



If we think that we should buy a car but do not have the money for it, we can safely assume that until God does provide the funds, it is not His will for us to buy a new car.

If we have half of the funds needed for a new car, and a car is urgently needed, we can assume that God wants us to buy a lower priced car, unless He directs otherwise.

In order to get a driver's license, we must learn to recognize all of the road signs. In order to be in a leadership position, we must learn to recognize God's signals through the provision or lack of finances.

"Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way..."

Psalm 37:7

God's wisdom in this purpose

- **To build our faith and vision**

Faith is discerning what God wants to accomplish in and through our lives. "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark..." (Hebrews 11:7).

Every one of us should visualize how we can advance the work of God. What can we allow God to accomplish through our lives that will build up Christians and benefit the Kingdom of God?

We can be certain that if God gives us clear direction that is confirmed by Scripture, He will provide whatever is necessary to carry out that direction.

In contrast to faith, presumption is deciding what we want to accomplish and trying to get God to do it for us.

- **To determine who is the lord of our life**

It is easy to claim that Jesus Christ is the Lord of our life. However, His Lordship is only confirmed when we are obedient to

the promptings and limitations which He places on our daily decisions.

A person who has unlimited funds will find it more difficult to detect God's leading through finances. Because of this, God gives special warnings to the rich. "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God..." (1 Timothy 6:17).

- **To protect us from harmful items**

It seems that no matter how much God gives to us, we still want more. God gave Adam and Eve everything that they needed to enjoy life, yet Satan tempted them to desire something more. How clear and true God's warnings are on this point. "...They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition (1 Timothy 6:9).

- **To teach us patience**

Patience is an essential quality for maturity in life. It is so important that God assures us that it is worth going through tribulation in order to obtain it. (See Romans 5:3.) Having to wait for God to provide funds is one valuable way to perfect patience. "Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing" (James 1:3-4).

- **To concentrate on true riches**

As Paul matured in his Christian life, he came to the important discovery that temporal things tend to compete with eternal riches and to obscure the priceless knowledge of our inheritance in Christ. With this in mind, he wrote this testimony: "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ" (Philippians 3:7-8).



3. TO GIVE TO CHRISTIANS

Our generosity will determine how much spiritual light we have within our being. If we have a greedy eye, our whole being will be filled with spiritual darkness. But if we have a generous eye, our whole being will be filled with spiritual light.



GREEDY (EVIL) EYE
(See Proverbs 28:22;
Matthew 6:23.)

SPIRITUAL DARKNESS



GENEROUS (GOOD) EYE
(See Matthew 6:22;
Proverbs 22:9.)

SPIRITUAL LIGHT

"Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality." Romans 12:13

God's wisdom in this purpose

- **To unite Christians**

In the early days of the Church, the Jews had no social dealings with the Gentiles. When a severe famine caused many Jewish Christians to suffer, the Apostle Paul urged every Gentile church to collect an offering for these Jewish Christians.

That offering was an important means of tearing down barriers between Christians and building bonds of genuine Christian love. The basis for this kind of giving is explained in II Corinthians 8:14. "... *That now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want...*"

- **To demonstrate the mark of a Christian**

The mark of a true Christian is a zealotness for good works. This is one of the purposes for which Christ redeemed us, "Who gave himself for us, that he might

redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14).

God gives special desire and power to a generous Christian so that he is able to multiply his good works. "And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work" (II Corinthians 9:8).

- **To initiate spontaneous thanksgiving**

Giving to the needs of fellow Christians means that many will thank God. Spirit-directed gifts not only meet practical needs, but result in an overflowing tide of thanksgiving to God and to the giver. "*Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God*" (II Corinthians 9:11).

Praise and thanksgiving are the bases of dynamic, growing Christians and churches.

- **To multiply the potential for giving**

God likens giving to planting a harvest. "...*He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully*" (II Corinthians 9:6).

The potential multiplication of planting and harvesting is seen in the following diagram.



One kernel of corn	Produces a stalk with 2-3 ears	Resulting in up to 1000 kernels of corn
--------------------	--------------------------------	---

THE LAW OF THE HARVEST



4. TO ILLUSTRATE GOD'S POWER

God is a supernatural God. He wants to demonstrate His reality and power to both Christians and non-Christians. One

means by which He has chosen to do this is through the miraculous provision of money.



A miracle is a supernatural or natural event with precise timing to bring glory to God.

When a Christian prays about a special financial need, and an unexpected and unsolicited gift is handed to him by one, who did not know about the need, the supernatural power of God is demonstrated.

"... 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..."

Malachi 3:10

God's wisdom in this purpose

- **To cause Christians to trust Him**

In the day of Elijah the nation of Israel tried to worship God and serve Baal at the same time. Elijah knew that this would only bring God's judgment, so he proposed a test.

The test involved building two altars, one for God and one for Baal. Whichever god answered by supernatural power was the one whom they would worship.

The prophets of Baal cried out to their god all day long and nothing happened. Then Elijah prayed. God sent fire from heaven, which consumed the offering, the altar, and the water around it. (See I Kings 18:21-40.)

- **To mock the false gods of our age**

One of the false gods of our day is money. It has become an idol because people expect from it what only God can give. As the world seeks after money, God wants to prove that those who seek after Him will not lack any good thing. Seeking after God involves building our lives, motives, affections, and activities around Him and His will for us.

- **To purify our lives and motives**

A prerequisite in experiencing God's supernatural power is actively seeking Him with a pure heart and unselfish motives. God has warned us that if we regard iniquity in our heart, He will not hear us. (See Psalm 66:18.) The need for God's miraculous intervention in our financial affairs is a powerful motivation for us to examine our own lives.

- **To bring non-Christians to salvation**

When Christians are in right relationship with the Lord and each other, and when they are experiencing God's miraculous provision in their lives, non-Christians are drawn to Christ and to the local church.

This cause-and-effect sequence is well documented in the early Church. The greatest explosion of church growth occurred when the believers demonstrated God's supernatural power. (See Acts 5:12-14.)

- **To glorify God**

God is glorified when His people praise Him for His mighty acts. He does great things for us so that we can report them to each other and to our children and our grandchildren.

"And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me" (Psalm 50:15)

APPLY GOD'S PURPOSES FOR MONEY

1. If we need money for time payments on a car, can we expect God to provide them?

Answer: No.

A car is not a basic need, nor is it Scriptural to buy one on time payments. (See James 4:13-17.)

2. If we are rich, will we have greater difficulty in loving God than if we are poor?

Answer: No.

A rich man is tempted to deny God, but a poor man is tempted to curse Him. (See Proverbs 30:8-9.)

3. If the tuition for one school is \$1000 more than a comparable school, should we choose the less expensive school unless God provides an unexpected \$1000?

Answer: Yes.

When either choice is right, it is proper to ask God to confirm the more expensive one. (See Judges 6:36-40.)

4. Should we buy an exceptional bargain if it would require a second job to pay for it?

Answer: No.

God's instruction is to use only what we have to buy bargains. (See Matthew 13:44-46.)

5. If, after working hard and being successful, our boss refuses to pay us enough to meet our obligations, should we look for a new job?

Answer: Yes.

"...The labourer is worthy of his hire..." (Luke 10:7.)

6. If a poor Christian needs money for food and clothing, should we lend it to him?

Answer: No.

God wants us to give to the poor. (See Proverbs 19:17.)

7. If we ask God to provide \$500 by a certain date and it arrives three days after the deadline, should we reconsider our decision?

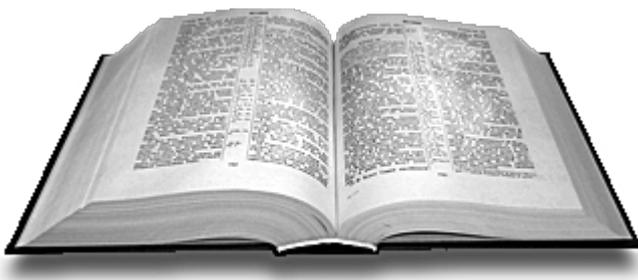
Answer: No.

Unless God gives additional confirmation, we can trust Him to provide money the day it is needed. (See Jeremiah 32:27.)

8. If our taxes are used for immoral purposes, should we refuse to pay them?

Answer: No.

God commands us to pay all taxes. Even Christ paid taxes to the government that eventually had Him put to death. (See Romans 13:7.)



Personal Commitment to God's Purposes for Money

My desire is to base all my financial decisions on being content with food and clothing, waiting patiently for God to provide, distributing to the necessities of the saints, and proving God with tithes and offerings.

I will discuss and pray about this with my spouse, or parents, or friend.

Date: _____

Signature: _____

CAN YOU IDENTIFY BASIC NEEDS?

God states that certain items are basic to a life of contentment. Check which ones would be on God's list.

1. TELEVISION SET



2. BREAD



3. BIBLE



4. REFRIGERATOR



5. STOVE



6. APARTMENT



7. CAR



8. TOOLS



9. EXERCISE



10. WATER



11. MONEY



12. COMPUTER



13. FOOD



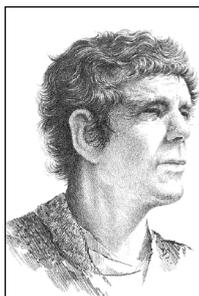
14. CHAIR



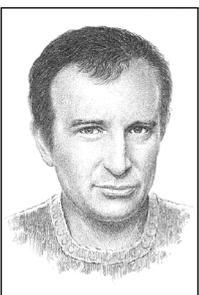
15. CLOTHES



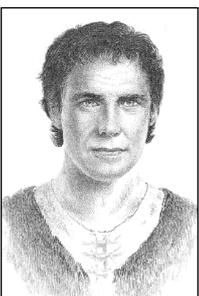
WHO ILLUSTRATES GOD'S PURPOSES FOR MONEY?



A. Peter
(Matt 17:27)



B. Cornelius
(Acts 10)



C. Paul
(II Cor. 9)



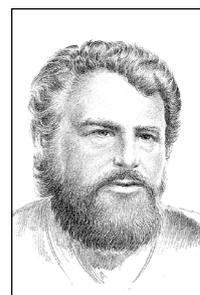
D. Boaz
(Ruth)

Match the following statements with the right persons.

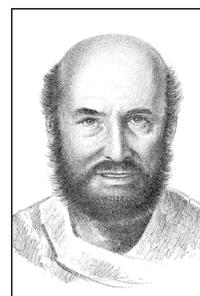
- 1. God directed his life, his family's location, and his children's future by creating a need for basic provisions and then supplying the provisions to meet that need.
- 2. He fulfilled the proverb that a good name is rather to be chosen than great riches. He had both. His generosity brought him praise from men and from God.
- 3. An improper tax was levied against him and the One whom he served. In order not to offend the tax collectors, he was instructed how to get the money in a miraculous way.
- 4. When he experienced a time of deep depression, God took special care of him, miraculously providing two meals each day.
- 5. He knew that generosity and love went together, so he used his personal influence to promote generosity; and he achieved remarkable unity among those who previously did not keep company with each other.
- 6. He was involved in a "welfare program" that allowed people to keep their self-respect. His just treatment and generous spirit won him a place in the genealogy of Christ.



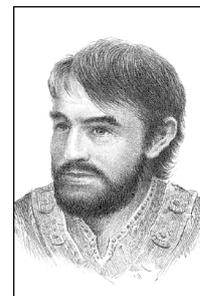
E. Joseph
(Genesis 41)



F. Elijah
(I Kings 17)



G. Elisha
(II Kings 4)



H. Abraham
(Genesis 13)

CAN YOU APPLY GOD'S PURPOSES FOR YOUR MONEY?

Indicate your response to the following situations.

YES / NO

1. If you bought a car on time payments and suddenly lost your job, would it be proper to expect God to supply this need on the basis of Philippians 4:19: "But my God shall supply all your need..."?
2. Is it true that it is harder to love God if you are wealthy than if you are poor?
3. If you are accepted at two equally-rated schools but the tuition for one is \$1000 more than the other, would you go to the less expensive one unless God provided an extra \$1000?
4. If you found an exceptional bargain but were not able to fully pay for it, would you buy it and then get a second job to pay for it?
5. If you worked hard and successfully on a job but were not paid enough to meet your financial obligations, would you look for a new job?
6. If you met a Christian family that was in financial need, would you lend them money to buy food and clothing?
7. If a sign for which you had prayed did not arrive until three days after you had to make a business decision, should you accept that sign as an answer to prayer?
8. If you discover that your taxes are being used for immoral purposes, should you stop paying them?



"Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls?" (Luke 12:24).