

Receiving God's Provision – A Ram in the Bush

by Philip H. Page, Jr.

When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. But the angel of the LORD called out to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied. "Do not lay a hand on the boy," he said. "Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son." Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called that place The LORD Will Provide. And to this day it is said, "On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided."

Genesis 22: 9-14

Last year, my wife and I submitted to a twelve-week program sponsored by our church. The program was created by Crown Financial Ministries and was designed to help Christians develop a Godly attitude about money and finances. In twelve short weeks, God used that class to miraculously get us out of debt and change our attitudes to treat debt like the enslavement that it is. ("The rich rules over the poor, And the borrower becomes the lender's slave. Proverbs 22:7 NASB)

From the Author of *Getting Up Again – Surviving Unemployment and Pursuing Destiny*

Fast-forward about 6 months and we are faced with one of many opportunities to forsake our freedom and get back into debt. The brake warning light suddenly comes on so we take our car to have it checked out. We know that there is a problem that must be fixed but we only have \$180 in our checking account and we don't get paid until a few more days. Well, the mechanic calls and tells us that the repairs will be about \$165 so we tell him to go ahead. Meanwhile we realize that we forget to enter a check into our check register and we only have \$170 in our account.

My wife and I talk over our options and try to decide if we should use our credit card instead of cash in order to give us some breathing room (In other words, we contemplated forgetting our commitment to live a debt-free life as soon as it became inconvenient.). Remembering Romans 13:8, we decide to “owe no man nothing but to love Him.” and use our available money to pay the debt. We were a little leery as we picked up the car but when we went to pick up the car our mechanic told us that the price would actually be \$159. It was as if God was saying, “Here's your breathing room!”

The odd thing about this situation is that I wasn't immediately happy about it. God had provided for our needs, yet again, and I didn't jump on my knees and praise Him as I knew I should have. Instead, I chose to question God. *Why is our money so tight? When will we get the harvest we've been waiting for? Why? Why? Why? When? When? When?*

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Well, I eventually came to my senses and repented for my brief period of ungratefulness. I also reflected on what God revealed to me through that experience. I realized that, for many of us, God's provision is not enough. Although we claim to rejoice in the fact that God supplies our needs, we would prefer He just bypass our needs and respond immediately to our wants. (Like when we were teenagers and we just wanted our allowance without having to spend time without our parents.)

The danger of this attitude is that it separates the gift from the Giver. Unfortunately, many of us don't realize that without the Giver, the gift is useless. If God had given me \$500 while I was in the wrong state of mind, then the extra \$340 would have been seen as a gift from a sugar daddy. Instead, I have the priceless gift of knowing that my heavenly Father is always present and always aware of my problems. And by causing the mechanic to give me a price that was lower than his estimate, God showed me that His power extends beyond the control of material possessions. He has the hearts of Kings in His hands (and He can even make a mechanic lower his rates). God's provision is more than enough for those who love Him and desire to receive His love in return. With this in mind, I urge you to reflect on His love and give Him any praise that you have withheld. We serve a living God and He is worthy of all praise!

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