

# Devotional



## Day Five

### WHERE WILL IT COME FROM?

*“You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion...”  
- II Corinthians 9:11*

*“Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity.” – II Corinthians 8:2*

Before we ask where money for a faith pledge will come from, we need to consider what a faith pledge is. It is not first and foremost faith in what God will give me, but it is faith that God will enable me to give. It is more important that you pray for a giving heart than that you pray for added income. Giving is a gift of the Holy Spirit (Romans 12:8), and experience teaches us that the gift of giving is an uncommon gift.

Paul challenges the Corinthians, *“just as you excel in everything – in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us – see that you also excel in this grace of giving”* (II Corinthians 8:7). Increase giving starts, not with increased income, but with the grace of God enlarging our hearts with the joy of giving.

Some seem to argue that the money given in a faith promise pledge commitment can be expected from unusual and unexpected sources. God can provide for us any way He chooses, and often He delights in reminding us of that fact in dramatic ways.

Recently I met an energetic young couple who had gone to the mission field. As they prayed for funds, God began to provide, and eventually all they lacked was 700 dollars. One day a beautiful cockatoo landed in their backyard.

Amazed, they caged it in and advertised for the owner. Receiving no response, they sold it to a pet store for exactly 700 dollars. “The last money we needed fell out of the sky!” they exclaimed, “Literally.”

Some might consider them “lucky.” Not so. God may astound some of us as we pray for an increased gift of giving, but we should never sit back and enjoy the windfall.

Others have enjoyed generating creative sources of income. One man made an investment and dedicated all the proceeds his faith promise. A woman with a special recipe made and sold Vidalia onion relish. A housewife did word processing, while some teenagers engaged in extra lawn work and babysitting. Possibly God will provide a second job for a few hours a week or an idea for making and marketing crafts or baked goods. We can ask the Creator for little sanctified creativity. The results may be amazing.

No doubt, the greatest source of money for faith promise comes from what may be

called lifestyle giving. Such giving is rooted in a resolution to make our stewardship a major priority in our lives. Lifestyle giving, simply stated, begins with better management of our finances. Think how much you might save if you put the brakes on impulse spending. Even shopping for groceries with a list and sticking to the list can save money for giving. Shopping at sales, watching the newspaper for coupons, or finding low-budget menus all can become adventures in depending on God. I know a family who was able to give several hundred dollars by halving the amount spent on Christmas presents one year.

Lifestyle giving can also grow out of living more simply. Taking a less expensive vacation, driving an older car, or wearing our clothes for several seasons can also be the source of substantial funds for giving. We can pray and ask God to show us things we can do without. Proverbs 8:12 in the old King James translation says, "I, wisdom, dwell with prudence and find out knowledge of witty inventions." Prudence is not simply an old fashioned girl's name. It is a virtue of thrift and simplicity that will honor our Father and serve us well. God will use it to lead us to new insights in wise and joyful living.

Maybe the most challenging aspect of lifestyle giving involves what we were willing to give up. The Macedonians had graduated to the level of sacrificial giving. This kind of giving takes a great deal of faith and a great deal of prayer.

Finally, there is giving from abundance. God blesses His people. The people of Israel sang, "Then the land will yield its harvest, and God, our God will bless us" (Psalm 67:6). Have you not experienced this? God allows us to save money, earn interest, and succeed in our occupations, all so we can give. As our wealth grows, our giving ought to grow faster.

*By the gates of the treasury still he sits,  
And watches the gifts we bring,  
And he measures the gold that we give to him  
By the gold to which we cling.*

*-F> C. Wellman*

When you ask, "Where will the money come from?" consider the advice of John Wesley: "Make all you can, save all you can, and then give all you can."

#### PRAYER:

*Father, You are the source of all I have. As I consider my faith promise, I ask first that You provide me with a giving heart. Begin to show me how much you want me to give and also where you want me to give from. Make me willing to work harder, to live more simply, and even to sacrifice. Amen.*

#### QUESTIONS:

How have you decided what to give in the past?  
How would you like to change your giving priorities in the future?  
How can you increase your giving through faith promise?

*Dennis the Menace was walking out of church with his dad and mom. As they approached the pastor, Dennis asked, much to the embarrassment of his father, "What are you going to do with my dad's quarter?"*