

JEHOVAH-JIREH
(The Lord will provide.)
By Paralee Eadie

The winter of 1982-83 in Southern Oregon was a financial challenge for the entire area. Lumber mills were a main stay of the area. As one after another shut down or went to reduced shifts, it started a domino effect. There was not one business or industry that was not affected, including ours.

We moved to Oregon in 1977. It's something we had talked about doing for years, because we preferred a slower paced, rural life than Southern California afforded us. But it was difficult to just up and leave the familiar -family, friends, church, business, etc.. The Lord gave us the push we needed when we learned our middle child was slowly going to lose his hearing if he continued to live in a smog-ridden area. We left knowing that our income was going to take a big drop, but it was a sacrifice we were willing and happy to make for the sake of our child and our lifestyle.

Apparently thousands of others had the same idea as Southern Oregon began to fill up with Southern Californians. You could even buy license plate holders stating, Native Oregonian since _____. (You filled in the year.) As one business and industry after another began to lay off workers, more and more families packed up and moved back to what they considered greener pastures in Southern California. Many of those people were my husband's customers, good customers, customers who left big tips!

My husband is a hairdresser/barber. The best, I might add. He usually had a list of customers waiting to get in because he was so booked up. That changed until there were only enough customers to fill four days instead of five. Those who could afford to get their hair done had little or no money left for a tip, which further reduced our income.

We felt our children, of junior high/high school age, were old enough to know what was going on, so we showed them the bills and the income. As a family, we went to the Lord in prayer, asking Him to show us how He would have us handle our situation. We could have gone to our parents and asked for help, but we clearly felt like God was saying, "I am your Father. Trust in Me. Tell no one but Me of your needs and see what I will do." I am not advocating this is the way everyone's situation should be handled, only that at the time that was how we felt God was asking us to handle ours. So we did. We established priorities, what needed to be paid first, and what expenditures could be eliminated. Entertainment, goodies, etc. bit the dust, along with excessive driving. No more running here and running there. Trips were consolidated to conserve on gas. We saw our children go from complaining because they couldn't get some goodie from the store, to being very thankful for the things the Lord was providing. Their faith and trust in the Lord, and ours, grew. The lessons

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learned during this time of their lives was to stand them in good stead as each grew up and went into various ministries for the Lord. Whatever trials you may be going through, do not discount the fact that these times are as important for your children, maybe even more so, than they are for you. How you respond to the trials will teach your children more, either positively or negatively, about the Lord than all the words you, or their Sunday school teacher, or pastor ever speak.

Number one on our budget was tithe. It was a non-negotiable. Tithe was not a law to us, it was a privilege. We had learned over the years that you can't outgive God. His promises in Malachi 3:10 proved true over and over again.

"Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the Lord Almighty. "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it." (NIV)

Next on the list, of course, was our bills. The way things were going, we figured soon it may come to a choice of paying bills or buying groceries. And it did. Prayer time again. The Lord directed us to Matthew 6:31-33. "So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." (NIV) So we paid our bills, and paid for gas for the car so Rod could drive to work, and whatever was left was for food. It quickly came to be that there was enough money for tithe, bills, and gas, which we were very grateful for, but there was no money left for food, except whatever tips Rod got for that day, which left no money at all on the week-ends. We followed the Lord's lead and just told Him our needs. Our first miracle was the chicken miracle. We had a flock of 20 hens. In the summer that meant 20 eggs a day. But in winter, chickens do not lay eggs unless you keep them under artificial light so they think it's summer. We had no electricity in the hen house and no chance of getting any there any time soon. When Jesus said He was the light of the world, He wasn't kidding! He apparently was a light to our hens, for all through the winter every hen laid an egg a day just as though it was the middle of summer! We weren't going to eat steak, or even hamburger, but we weren't going to starve! We ate eggs in every form and shape you can imagine - fried, scrambled, boiled, baked, egg tacos, egg burritos, egg burgers. If you could make it with hamburger meat, for the most part, you could make it with eggs.

In the evenings we turned off all the lights and read aloud by candlelight, the reader getting all the candles. We did it just to make things a little special, but the bonus was that the electric bill took quite a drop. It took an even more substantial drop when dishes were washed by hand instead of in the dishwasher. Evening snacks became a hot cup of tea and a big bowl of popcorn. It sounds like a weird combination, but it was quite good, and inexpensive. (However, a recipe I picked up where you crisped popcorn in the oven and used it as a cereal didn't go over at all.

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The kids decided they'd rather skip breakfast than eat that.)

Groceries were bought one day at a time, depending on whatever tips my husband received that day. I would give him a grocery list in the morning, in order of priority, and he would stop on the way home from work (saving a separate trip to the store from home, which saved on gas) and would purchase whatever he could with the money he had. We were amazed how, day after day, week after week, God provided just enough tips to buy everything on the list, even when I occasionally put down ice cream! God even increased tips toward the end of the week allowing us to get enough groceries for the weekend.

Then one day it happened. Not enough money for the things on the list. It was a short list, milk and rice, so my husband knew these were essential. No matter what size and brand combination he tried, he came up 15 cents short. He stood in that grocery aisle, with a box of rice in his hand, praying, "Lord, am I not going to be able to bring this rice home because of a measly 15 cents?" Just then an older lady tapped him on the shoulder and asked him if he was going to buy that rice. He told her he wasn't sure, wondering why she was asking. She said, "I have a coupon I'm not going to use, so you can have it." You guessed it. It was for 15 cents off!

Although I felt I always had compassion for the poor, and gave to many needs, I now understood in a way I never had before, just how difficult the struggle was, and my compassion grew. With money so tight, it was difficult to put things like laundry soap on the list when I would rather add food items. Then an idea popped into my head. I would tithe on my laundry soap! (I was using a powdered detergent at the time.) Then, when I heard of someone in need, I would pass along the laundry soap. I taped a paper inside my laundry room cupboard to keep track. I'd take the first cup out, put it in a special box set aside for that purpose, and mark one line on my paper. That was the Lord's. The next nine cups were mine. Then one more for the Lord, and nine more for me. Finally, one weekend I ran out of soap, but not laundry. I had to go to the store for milk and laundry soap. I only had enough money for the milk with just 25 cents left over, obviously not enough for laundry soap. I asked the Lord, "Was I being foolish to tithe on laundry soap?" Not getting an answer, I got in line with milk only, expecting to go home and use all the laundry soap I had saved. I was feeling very stupid and foolish at that moment. To make matters worse, the lady in front of me had a cart heaped up, pressed down, and flowing over. Fighting to practice the "Thou shalt not covet" commandment, I tried to make it obvious to the woman that I had only one item, hoping that she would let me go first. It didn't happen. With neither a good mood nor a good attitude, I watched enviously as the clerk rolled out reams of "saver shields" and handed them to the woman. Saver shields were stamps given by the store as a promotional item. For every so many dollars you spent, you would receive one stamp. It took numerous saver shield stamps to fill a card. With one or two saver shield cards you could get some fantastic savings. I was even more incensed when the lady handed them back to the clerk and said she didn't want them.

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It turned out that she was not from the area and couldn't use them. She told the clerk to give them to someone else. The clerk said she was not allowed to do that, the lady would have to give them to someone. The lady turned to me and asked if I would like them! Repenting and rejoicing, I gratefully accepted the stamps. There were enough for cards and cards full. I checked the ads, and that week I could get a box of my detergent for 25 cents and two saver shield cards! I continued to tithe on laundry soap and was never again in want of soap for that entire winter!

Paul's birthday was coming. Paul was my husband's stepdad and a very dear man. We always had Mom and Paul over for dinner on his birthday. To do anything different would arouse suspicions. Given the state of the economy, Paul would have added two plus two and figured out we were having trouble. Trusting in the directions the Lord had given us, I was careful to save toward items for a nice dinner. I was very happy with what the Lord had blessed us with for that dinner. As I was setting the table with our best china for the occasion, my husband asked me what kind of bread we were having with dinner. Bread! I had completely forgotten about bread. Paul had been a farm boy, and bread was served with every meal. If you forgot to put out bread, he would politely ask you if you had any. I had no bread! I had no money for bread! I checked the flour. Not enough to make rolls. I searched the cook book for a recipe that would fit the amount of flour I had. Nothing. Then my eye landed on a cornbread recipe. Cornbread, Paul's favorite. I had a bag of cornmeal I had bought in bulk to sprinkle on the pans when I made rye bread. Yes! There was enough between the corn meal and the bit of white flour I had to make the recipe. Being a northern girl who had never eaten cornbread until she was an adult, I had no idea that cornbread recipes were much simpler and required far less ingredients than the recipe before me, but it was the only cornbread recipe in the book. It was more like Marie Calender cornbread than anything Paul was used to. I happily began mixing the recipe when I discovered it called for one cup of sugar. After pouring the rest of the sugar into the measuring cup, I was horrified to find I had only a level 1/2 cup of sugar. "Oh no!" I cried. Everyone came running to see what was the matter. "Look at the sugar." They looked. "So?" was their response. "How much is there?" I asked. They looked again. "A half a cup." "Look at the recipe, it takes a whole cup!" Someone suggested checking the sugar bowls. I have various tea sets about my house, so everyone went to searching the sugar bowls to see if any had some sugar left in it. No. No. No. No. All came up empty but one, and it only had a tablespoonful in it. I now had a level 1/2 cup of sugar with a small lump of sugar on top of it. Everyone looked at it very sadly. We all prayed that the Lord would allow the recipe to work with only 1/2 cup of sugar. I returned the sugar bowl to its set. When I returned to the kitchen, I had exactly 1 level cup of sugar in the measuring cup!! Everyone returned to the kitchen to see the miracle God had just performed. A lot of praise went up that day. Paul had a wonderful dinner with some very special cornbread!

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Disaster struck early in the day. The hot water heater went out. I had to boil water on the stove every time I had to wash dishes. There was definitely no money to repair the hot water heater. What were we going to do? Cold showers? In winter? Pour boiling water in the tub one kettle at a time? How long would that take for five people every day? I tried to keep my spirits up, but when Rod came home from work, gave me a hug, and asked about my day, all I could do was cry, literally cry, out my tale of woe. I failed in my resolve to be a pillar of faith in front of my family as I sobbed out loud, "Lord, this is too much! It's more than I can take!" *Immediately* the hot water heater started making strange noises. Kind of glub, glub. I went over and turned on the faucet. Hot water! The Lord was true to His word; He did not give us more than we could bear. For the next 22 years that water heater worked perfectly. In fact, we had to pray the Lord would break it!

Many years after the hot water heater had broken down and was miraculously repaired by the Lord, our electric company offered insurance on hot water heaters for a small fee each month. I didn't think they would insure ours because it was getting up in years. But since this was a new program, they were insuring anyone who applied. If your water heater broke down, they would send a repairman to determine if it could be fixed. If it was fixable, you would have to pay for the repairs. If it was not, then they would replace it for free. We had nothing to lose, so we signed up. In the water heater's 22nd year, a letter came from the electric company informing us that the insurance that covered the hot water heaters had gone bankrupt. They would only cover the hot water heaters for one more month. After that, they would not replace them any more. You were on your own. We started praying again. Thanking the Lord for how well He had repaired it, we now asked Him to break it before the time was up. In fact, we asked Him to break it in such a way that it couldn't be repaired, but would have to be replaced. It seemed only fair that we would get what we had been promised and had paid into. One week, two weeks, three weeks went by and that hot water heater kept on working perfectly. We got nervous as seven days turned into six, and then five, and then four. Then it happened. The thermostat got stuck. We called. A hundred questions later, they sent a plumber of their choice. Amazingly, it was the one we would have chosen. After a thorough exam, it was declared non-fixable. Apparently our size, shape, and type of hot water heater was no longer available. It was too old. So on the last day of the contract, our new, and better, and bigger hot water heater was installed!

Many more blessings were given than are shared here. We learned that God is truly JEHOVAH-JIREH (The Lord will provide.) What He did for us, He will do for you. I can hear you saying, "But my husband doesn't have a job where he gets tips. We don't have chickens or hot water heater insurance." What is that to God? Jeremiah 32:27 KJV "Behold, I *am* the Lord, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for me?" Jeremiah 32:17 KJV "Ah Lord God! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, *and* there is nothing too hard for

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thee." Luke 18:27 KJV "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God." Luke 1:37 KJV "For with God nothing shall be impossible." Look up. Have faith in God!