

7 Riches You Receive for Lending to the Lord

“He who has pity on the poor lends to the Lord, and He will repay what he has given” (Prov. 19:17).

Scott and I married in 1978. We were living in Alaska, minding our own business, when God asked us for a loan. The way this happens is first you tell Him you are willing then He will take you up on your offer.

We often think in terms of duty. We don't realize that God considers our gifts a loan or that He considers himself indebted to us, but the truth is that He never takes more than He gives.

Let's look at our part first. A loan can't be more than what you have in your pocket. That could mean literal money or experience or education or something else.

For me this started 40 years ago in Alaska where we lived very simply—without electricity or indoor plumbing. Scott was a homesteader, and I was a midwife. God said, “I can use that.” We never had a grand scheme to start Mercy in Action and deliver 15,000 babies at no cost in the Philippines.

First, we brought home a single mother and newborn baby to stay with us. Then God showed us a district of Fairbanks that had been full of brothels since the gold rush days, and he brought us pregnant prostitutes to care for.

A few years later, I was asked to go on a mission trip to Southeast Asia. The situations I saw there absolutely shattered me. It was a devastating introduction to the third world where infants had a 50 percent mortality rate. I saw pagan sacrifices. I saw child sex slaves. I saw twisted, maimed baggers who'd been injured by landmines. In spite of

all that horror, I knew these were the people I wanted to spend my life on.

Don't put missionaries on a pedestal, though. This lending to the Lord starts as soon as you stop doing nothing when you hear of a need. In fact, if you know of a need right now, please stop reading this and pray.

We are to be Jesus to the world. He lived here for 33 years, then left it in our hands.

This may sound too hard, but anywhere you go, there is going to be someone struggling. We all take turns being the "least of these." Even Jesus walked this earth as a homeless man. There's no pride in helping the needy, and there's no shame in being the needy. It's all part of God's plan, which is all about Jesus.

Now that I've encouraged you to look for ways to lend to the Lord, I want to talk about the way He repays you. This is the amazing part.

God does reward us, but that doesn't mean you are going to get rich. It hasn't been financial blessings for me anyway. In fact, my health has suffered, and my heart has been broken again and again. Doing God's work involves sacrifice and giving up of your rights. But when the Lord repays you, it goes beyond all of this.

- **You become rich in faith.** You see miracles and hear stories of answered prayer. You can look back at the times you were scared and see how God carried you through.
- **You become rich in friendships.** You not only create friendships all over the world, but the Bible says when you do God's will, He no longer calls you a servant, but a friend.
- **You become rich in family.** Because of my own medical condition, I didn't even know if I could have children,

but God gave me two. Then we helped a fatherless boy, and God gave him to us as a third son. They are all involved in our ministry.

- **You become rich in peace.** Life can be scary even here in America, but if you've given God your whole life, you can be assured nothing will happen to you that He won't allow.
- **You become rich in provisions.** You might be poor, but you won't ever be destitute. If God ever asks you to lend something you don't have, He will provide the means.
- **You are filled with peace when it comes to your own death.** My last near-death experience came a couple of years ago when a ferry boat broke apart and sunk in stormy seas in the open ocean. Everybody panicked, but I didn't fight for a life vest because I know where I'm going. I thought, "OK Lord. I'll see you in a few minutes. This won't take long." I felt the most incredible peace. More like curiosity. Like, "I always wondered how I'd die." Obviously I survived, but the memory of that peace is with me. It's a gift.
- **The final payback will come when we enter heaven and hear the words, "Well done, good and faithful servant."**

This is within grasp for all of us. Whatever you have, you can lend. And it is sure to be exactly what you need.

In 2013, the largest recorded storm to ever hit Planet Earth slammed into the middle of the Philippines. We'd just been through a terrible flood, where I was swimming through our living room. The flood also brought an epidemic where I came down with a tropical disease. I'd barely recovered, and we still didn't have a home when the big storm hit, but we had to go help because those people were hurt worse than we were. We set up tents, and in the first 60 days took care of 5,000 patients and delivered 134 babies. The hospitals were smashed. The homes were smashed. We had no food or water.

God prepared us for this through our previous living arrangements in Alaska. We had experience in our pocket. He also provided finances. By the time the worst of it was over, \$100,000 had been given to Mercy In Action to go straight toward the disaster.

I couldn't tell you how any of this has happened. I can only tell you it's all Him. So offer God a loan today, and watch how He repays you full well. {eo}

Angela Ruth Strong is a Christian romance writer who writes not only about a man and woman falling in love but more importantly about women finding out how loved they already are. She's won the Cascade Award for her novels and also had a couple optioned for film. To help other aspiring authors, she started IDAHOPE Writers in her home state of Idaho. When not writing, she's adventuring with her husband and teenagers, teaching group fitness classes and working her day job at an airline. She believes in the power of story and would love to hear yours. Feel free to visit or write her at and join her Facebook fan page for fantastic fun at [groups/1557213161269220/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/1557213161269220/).

This article was adapted from a sermon by Vicki Penwell, medical missionary to the Philippines.