

What a Stranger on a Red Bicycle Can Teach Us About God's Miraculous Provision

"Are you sure?" I could feel myself clutching the pen as I started to write the check.

"Yes." My husband was insistent. "That's what I feel we need to give." I quickly did the math in my head. We did have that amount in our checking account, but it was the amount that I needed to go grocery shopping. I could see the faith in my husband's eyes. I knew if he was this sure, then it had to be God. I struggled. Really? When the offering was announced to send money for food for an organization, I was all about donating something. But my grocery money? Surely my husband must have heard wrong.

I sighed. I tried to ignore the internal turmoil about the amount or thoughts of where we would get food for the two weeks, and I wrote the check. I wish I could tell you this had been an easy choice for me at the time, but today over 14 years later, I remember how nervous I was at that moment. I can remember going to our home and looking at our pantry. Like many Americans, we had way more than we needed. Surely, I reasoned in my head, I could get creative in my cooking, and we'd have enough of something to stretch for the next two weeks until pay day. The days began to roll by, and I found I was getting more and more creative with meals. About 10 days into this adventure, we were down to barely anything.

"We could charge groceries, you know." It was me trying to explain to my husband that we really didn't have anything to eat for the next few days. I knew God was faithful, but fear was kicking in. I remember hearing Jesse Duplantis joke about force fasts, and I kind of determined that if we needed to do

one, then we'd still be OK, but we had a 2-year-old daughter. I found myself praying, "Dear God she can't do a forced fast."

"Anna, if God told us to sow that seed, He is going to take care of this." My husband was determined. He was emphatic that we weren't going to charge groceries. I wanted to argue. I saw the dwindling supplies, but we never went hungry.

The next morning, I found myself with a sudden urge to go for a long walk. I was tired of sitting at home and worrying about how I could stretch everything for two more days. I found myself walking toward a park about a mile from our home that I had never walked to. In my head, I remember trying to renew my mind and convince myself that we'd be okay, but the momma in me worried about our daughter.

Suddenly a man riding a red bicycle came up beside me and stopped. I was so caught up in my own worries that his interruption startled me. He didn't even bother to get off the bicycle. "Here," he said. He was emphatic.

"Sir, I can't take your money." My first response was to push him away. This whole situation was weird.

"It's for the baby." He shoved the money in my hand and rode quickly away. The money he gave me wasn't a lot, but it was enough to buy what we needed until payday. About two months later, I was in a minor car accident, and the insurance claim ended up being exactly 10 times the amount we'd sowed.

Over the years, I've found myself telling this story and revisiting it over and over again. God took care of us, even if it looked a little scary in the natural. I've often thought about that man on the red bicycle. I've prayed for him too. I've joked that one day in heaven I'll get to really thank him for being obedient to the Lord that day. He didn't know us. He didn't know our situation, but God did. If the situations had been flipped, would I have taken my bicycle out and stopped to give money to a random man pushing a baby? Would I have

argued with God too much about it and never left my house? We must remember that we are blessed to be a blessing. We must remember that we are one in the body of Christ, and when one hurts, we all hurt; when one triumphs, may we all rejoice (see 1 Cor. 12:26).

I am determining in my walk to be more sensitive to the world around me. Here are some things I think we all could keep in mind:

- If God says to do something. just do it, whether it's to get on a red bicycle and bless someone with money or just pray for a person. God knows where there is a need, even when we don't. Don't second-guess what He is saying, just do it. It's past time for signs, wonders and miracles to happen outside of the four walls of churches. Peter and John didn't care that they were at the Gate Beautiful in Acts 3:2; that lame man needed a touch from heaven that day. You have to stop ignoring God's nudges.
- Don't get so busy with life that you forget to listen to God. I get it. Sometimes we can be so rushed. I've been guilty myself of rushing through Wal-Mart, not to even listen to anything God had to say about that slow cashier. In my mind, I reason I have other places to be; however, maybe the cashier just needs a smile and a simple "God loves you."
- Really love the people around you. So often we aren't hearing from God regarding people around us because we just don't care about them. It's easy to rush through our days. God's heart is for people. Is ours?
- Not everyone is going to receive what you say or do. You do what God says. Even Jesus said sometimes you have to shake the dust from your feet because people do not receive you (Matt 10:14). Fear God and not man.

Remember God sent us to be His hands and feet on the earth. In the situation with the man and the red bicycle, God didn't

drop money at my feet. He used one of His servants to get up that morning, despite him not knowing me and ride on his bike. He didn't know what he would encounter. Maybe that money was needed in his life for something else, but God used him to bless my family. His obedience wasn't just about the money but about a story that I will forever tell of how God was faithful to us. When you are obeying God, you are creating a ripple effect to the people around you. Will you create waves? Or are you just barely a tremor? {eoa}

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