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SAVED FROM A FIRE

By: Patricia de Graff

God knows all things – and He makes plans for our safety when we are faithful to Him.

The last several years have been quite a challenge for our entire family – to say the least. Time after time, as we have faced different trials, I have been tempted to ask God “Why”? In spite of all the trials we have faced, praise God, our faith has remained strong – not unshaken, but strong. God has shown us time and time again that He loves us so much, and it is because of His infinite love that we want to remain faithful, to honor Him and glorify His name at all times. There are so many examples that I could share with you about how God has showered us with His love, but the most recent miracle He worked for us is what I want to share today.

I remember when I first became a Seventh-day Adventist and learned about tithing. I was in college training to be a nurse. I had never been a good steward of the resources God put in my care. I was deep in debt with no understanding of the value of money, credit and college loans. Learning about stewardship was a very difficult concept for me – as I guess it is for many today. But my new-found faith had created a clean heart in me and I didn’t want anything to stand in the way of completely serving God and putting my complete trust in Him. I faithfully gave my tithes and offerings, and immediately saw God blessing my efforts to serve Him. After Erwin and I got married, we continued to faithfully give back to Him even with many financial obligations.

In the 10 + years of our marriage, we have enjoyed many blessings He has showered upon us, and we have continued to give faithfully to Him. In the past three years or so, we have even challenged ourselves to give more and more of our income back to God. Never once have we been worried or even had to do without essentials because we gave more.

On January 16, 2010, I mistakenly left my Sabbath School quarterly at church after a busy day. I looked for it all over and didn’t find it so I decided to call one church member to see if she had mistaken for hers on Sabbath, but she assured me neither she nor her husband had taken it. So I started searching everywhere I had been since that day. I was so frustrated with its disappearance by bedtime, that I realized I needed to stop and pray about the situation again. At evening worship with my three kids, we all prayed for God to help me find my quarterly.

Several days after missing my quarterly, Erwin got up early and headed outside to burn some weeds with a propane torch. Some of our landscaping includes old railroad ties which come right up to the back of our house. After he finished weeding, the wind kicked up rather suddenly with 40 mph gusts. We had planned to go back outside after breakfast, but because the wind was so bad, we decided we should forgo working outside and instead do some work inside the house that day.

Nearly two hours went by, and I remembered that I had wanted to look outside and in our cars for my quarterly. When I headed outside, one of our cats wanted to come in, and he was acting strange. He came in but stayed right by the door looking out and crying. After just a couple seconds, I had a feeling the cat was trying to tell me something, but I hurried to continue the search for my quarterly. Once I got outside, I was sure I smelled smoke, or fire. I quickly looked around me, but the wind was blowing sand and the sky was very hazy looking because of the ‘sandstorm’. I had a strange feeling so I went back inside to see if Erwin thought there was any chance the wind could have reignited a fire when he was burning the leaves. He was certain all the fire had been consumed, and all the places he had been burning was surrounded by rock. My husband and I quickly looked outside in the back yard to see if there was any sign of a possible brush fire, but we didn’t see anything that caught our attention. I went back outside to continue the search for my quarterly where I had left off. Upon returning back outside, the smell of smoke was stronger to me. I looked all around for signs of smoke.

“The Faithful Steward”

I remembered that we had a pile of lumber stacked on the side of our house, and I suddenly feared that when I walked around to the side of the house I was going to find that pile of lumber ablaze. When I got to the side of the house, however, my fears were temporarily calmed to find no fire. But a power I couldn't explain at the time urged me to look further towards the back of the house. I was looking for grass or weeds burning, thinking the wind might have restarted a fire and caused it to spread. When I reached the back of the house, my fears were reignited. From this side of the house, looking to the back, I could see two different railroad ties engulfed in flames. I quickly alerted Erwin and we spent the next 1 ½ to 2 hours trying to get those stubborn, tar filled railroad ties to stop burning. They were three railroad ties length from the back of the house, and the wind was blowing the flames towards the house. In just one to two hours, the fire would have spread to the other railroad ties and our house. While I stood there dousing the burning ties with the hose, tears of gratitude kept surfacing. The Holy Spirit immediately spoke to me. I had been so upset by the misplacement of my quarterly, and now I knew the 'why'. God had foreseen this whole scenario and put circumstances in motion to save our house. Had the quarterly not been missing, I would not have been outside that day to look for it. I would not have smelled the smoke and searched until I found the fire. We would have had no other reason for going outside again for quite some time, and then it would have been too late.

The story is not over there though. After we finally got the fires out, we went inside and gathered the kids together and we all knelt and prayed thanksgivings to God for the way He had protected us. The kids also prayed again that their mom would be able to find her quarterly. I was no longer worried about the lost quarterly. It had saved our house!

That evening, I wanted to share our story at the board meeting. As I waited anxiously for everyone to arrive, the member I called the night before about my quarterly, who assured me neither she nor her husband had picked up the quarterly, said, "Oh, Tricia, Rodney DID pick up your quarterly on Sabbath" I was stunned. I was ecstatic. Many people would have immediately said something back like, "Oh, I wish you would have called me and let me know, because I have been looking everywhere for it." But my FIRST response was "Do you realize that you played a HUGE part in God's plan to protect us?!" I could barely contain myself, but I waited until we began the board meeting and shared the WHOLE story with the board members for a devotional thought.

God is so good! Erwin and I spent more time reflecting on His majesty, His mercy, His grace – and we were led to a number of scriptures that confirm our belief that this entire event was providential. I want to share those with you now:



Romans 8:28, 31



Hebrews 13:5-6



1 Peter 1:5



Exodus 15:11



2Corinthians 8:13-14; 9:7

God loves us so much and never plans for any harm to come to us. It is Satan that causes bad things to still happen to good people. But God challenges us in the Bible to test Him on the issue of giving. I truly believe because we trust Him and give what is His and even MORE to show our gratefulness for all He does for us, He works out miracles for us like this.

WANTED: Stories of how God has blessed you and others through you, as you have been His faithful steward. In an upcoming issue, we want to share your testimonies of what God is doing in your life as a result. Please send your story to:

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