

YOUTH PRAYS-GOD ANSWERS!

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Name: _____

Date: _____

Lesson 09

STRANGER THAN FICTION

THERE IS an old adage that says, "Never underestimate the power of a woman." After experiencing firsthand the determination of many sisters in claiming certain Bible promises, I believe there is something to it.

There is also a statement penned by my favorite author in the book "Evangelism", page 647, that tells us: "The interests of Christ's kingdom call for diligence and faithfulness." Again in Volume 5 of the Testimonies, page 109, she says, "Fervent prayer, humility, and earnestness must be combined with God's help."

Nina was a combination of all of these as she and her husband Ken knelt together to bring a serious problem before the Lord. She had her Bible opened to Matthew 21:22 which says, "And All things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."

Husband Ken suggested, just before they prayed, "This will be a prayer of commitment, of course."

"NO," Nina answered with determination, "this will be a prayer of reception."

"But, Honey," Ken argued, "we just can't tell God what to do. I know we need the money we would have gotten for this job, but one doesn't paint in a heavy rain storm. You know that!"

"Yes, Dear, I know that you can't paint while it's raining. But it isn't going to rain! Even if the weather forecast does say so, God can and will hold back the storm. So, let's ASK, BELIEVE, and CLAIM this promise in Matthew 21 so we can also bring Malachi 3:8-10 before God. He means what He says in Mark 11:24. 'What things so ever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them and ye shall have them,' doesn't He?"

Yes," Ken answered, still not fully convinced, but weakening a little under his Nina's earnest reasoning, first let's pray a prayer of reception and thank Him for holding back the rain."

"I overheard them arguing there on their knees—a rather strange procedure", confided Nina's father, who was visiting them at the time. "But neither Ken nor I were aware of the desperate situation that Nina had gotten into. Neither did we know that many others were also involved.

Nina was so right when she argued that God means what He says. She believed that the promised blessings in Malachi 3:8-10 were given on a strictly conditional basis. Especially did she know this because of the recent experience through which they were even then passing.

A few months previous Ken and Nina had received a terrible disappointment from an unsuccessful business adventure in the East. In fact, it was so frustrating to Nina, the family treasurer, that, even

though the tithe check had been written, she decided not to mail it, because their bank account was depleted.

As a result, God could not keep His part of the bargain made in Malachi 3, and one thing after another occurred to keep Nina from repaying the full amount of back tithe.

Instead of being "the head, and not the tail" or "above . . . and not beneath", as the Lord promised in Deuteronomy 28:11-14, Ken and Nina were two months behind with the house rent and one month in arrears with the utilities. They had also received notice from the college that Ken could not matriculate for the second semester unless the eighty dollars he owed was paid, plus an advance on the next semester's tuition.

Things had finally come to a crisis. Nina realized that something must be done immediately. Although she and Ken tried to conceal their weighty problem from their friends and close associates, they were getting more and more concerned over the matter. Nina reasoned, How can Ken continue to teach others the prayer of reception with its specific conditions, one of which is tithing, when I am failing to comply?" The outlook was anything but hopeful.

On the day that Ken and his working partner were scheduled to do a paint job for a party in Santa Monica, the drenching rain was forecast and they received word not to come. No work meant no pay. No pay check meant no food, no bills paid, including the back tithe.

Instead of worrying Ken by speaking of their problem, Nina quietly went to the only Source of help she knew. She had already told the Lord that the back tithe would be paid from the money received from this promised work in Santa Monica. Now she began to reason with God as He has asked all of His children to do (Isaiah 1:18).

"Dear Lord," she said, "You've promised that You will never go back on Your Word; that each and every one of us can trust in You completely. And so it doesn't seem quite fair for us to fail in fulfilling our promise to You. I promised to pay back all the tithe that we owe from this day's work. It will be impossible for me to keep my word to You if the rainstorm reaches Santa Monica as it has been predicted. Dear Lord, as You calmed the storm on the Sea of Galilee, You can hold back, or change the course of the storm that is threatening to keep me from fulfilling my promise to You. I know that You can do this, for Thy name's honor and glory, and I believe that You will do it, and so I thank You for doing it. In Jesus' name, Amen."

This, then, was the just cause for Nina's great determination as she disputed with Ken over the type of prayer they should use. "If ever I heard my daughter speak with firmness," testified her father, "It was that morning as they were on their knees."

Ken gave in for the sake of peace, but his heart was not in this prayer of reception. Yet, he and his partner Royal were soon on their way to Santa Monica.

As they traveled along the freeway, Ken and Royal discussed the foolishness of their wives. (Royal's wife, Vina, had also prayed that it might not rain.) Under the circumstances they were still of the opinion that they should have prayed a prayer of commitment and not a prayer of reception. They fully expected to see the dark storm-clouds roll in from the ocean with the two inches of predicted rain.

God was honoring Nina's prayer of faith, for when Ken and Royal arrived at Santa Monica after the one-hundred-mile drive, the storm had not yet appeared. All that day they worked long and hard, expecting to pack up and return home at any time.

When the lady for whom they were working remarked, "Someone at USC (University of Southern California) must have prayed for good weather for today's graduation," Ken and Royal suddenly came to

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the realization that they knew "who that someone" was. They had to admit that the prayer Nina had prayed that morning was a prayer of reception, for truly they received an answer.

The next day was Friday, and the young painters were on the job at seven o'clock in the morning, and did not stop working until two o'clock in the afternoon. They left shortly thereafter so as to give them plenty of time to get ready for the approaching Sabbath hours.

The following appeared on the front page of the Los Angeles Times of January 28, 1966:

"No Rain"

"FORECASTING GOOF BLAMED ON COMPUTER"

"That predicted heavy rain that never arrived Thursday in Los Angeles was based in good measure on forecasts from a computer, near Washington, D. C.—and the computer goofed.

"But Weather Bureau forecasters here won't let the mechanical brain take all the blame. 'We goofed, too,' John Frazee admitted. 'But we talked it over and decided if we had to do it all over again, we would have forecast the very same heavy rains.'

'Pours on Catalina'

"After all, he pointed out, it was pouring on Catalina Island, where almost an inch of rain fell Wednesday night and early Thursday before the storm swerved south. Frazee said it would be a sheer guess at this point as to what caused the weather system to change, but he noted that the staff 'wasn't all wet' since southern and western Los Angeles had showers. So did coastal areas from Long Beach to San Diego . . . "The storm that was misread late Wednesday was less than 100 miles at sea."

That evening other types of prayers ascended to the God of heaven, prayers of praise and thanksgiving. They praised the One who loves to 'cooperate with all who strive to do His will' (Prophets and Kings, page 587). "He also will hear their cry, will save them" (Psalms 145:19). And enough money came in for Nina to pay all the back tithe, Since she now had no reason to pray another prayer of reception, she left the weather in the Lord's hands. On Sunday Ken and Nina could again sing, "There shall be showers of blessings . . ." as the storm passed over La Sierra in drenching torrents.

When my wife and I were holding meetings in the Los Angeles, California area, the weather forecast indicated one day it would be one of the coldest nights of the year.

Assistant Professor Lee Davis, in charge of the crop division of agriculture at La Sierra College, was worried. His alfalfa crop, on which several thousand dollars had been spent, was at a stage of growth where a frost would kill it off. If this happened, it would have to be replanted at great cost and loss of time.

Lee had been learning about the prayer of reception from Hugh James. As they met together for prayer that night, Hugh suggested that they claim the promise found in Malachi 3:10, 11. Then, since all conditions had been fulfilled, they could see the Lord work miraculously to save the alfalfa field.

The two of them knelt down and claimed the promise: "Bring ye all the tithe into the storehouse, . . . and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts . . . And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes." Malachi 3:10, 11.

The next morning Lee again claimed the promise. On his way to church he stopped and looked at the alfalfa. The field was solid white with frost, from one end of the field to the other. Being an agricultural specialist, he knew, or thought he knew, that the crop was lost--destroyed.

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But his faith in God did not waver. God would surely fulfill His promise in some way, so Lee bent over and touched the leaves. The ice melted away under his fingers. What he saw made him take a second look. The leaves showed no damage! They were perfect!

With a thankful heart he went on to Sabbath School and church. That afternoon the sun came out from behind the clouds and Lee examined the leaves again. By now the frost was all melted and he could see very clearly that God had answered his prayer of faith. There was no damage to the crop—none whatsoever!

The next night was colder than the one before. However, not a single plant in the entire alfalfa field was damaged by frost. Later that day, Lee learned from the seed representative about a neighboring farmer who had planted his alfalfa seed the same day Lee had. Both crops had reached the same stage of growth and development. Yet, while the farmer lost almost three-fourths of his alfalfa crop, and Lee's co-worker lost a hardy lemon tree because of the frost, the Lord protected the alfalfa field Lee Davis prayed for."

"He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." If Hebrews 11:6.

About the same time I received the following experience from two other friends, John and Joan.

John and Joan have four little children. In this modern age of high-cost-of-living, and the many demands that are constantly and ever present we sometimes cannot afford some of the "wants" that our families would like.

John works for a very fine man who sells house-trailers. When a sale is made it is up to John to hook the trailer to his truck - and haul it to wherever the customer wants it. He may be on the road for several hours, or he may be away from home for several days. But he accepts his work cheerfully, grateful to a loving God for His protection and constant care of his family.

Not too many weeks ago business seemed to slacken somewhat, and these two Christian parents, who had always paid a faithful tithe, seemed to forget a certain rule that God made for all His children. This rule says, "Prove me now. . ." (Malachi 3:10). It also says, "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse." But instead of proving God, they decided to work things out in their own way, and they would "borrow" some of the tithe money. Just for a while they would not pay a full tithe. Things did not get any better. The little that was "borrowed" did not seem to help a bit, and the next pay check just would not stretch over all their needs. And so it went on.

About this time the young people were beginning another series of classes on the prayer of reception. Although John was not able to attend because of the uncertainty of his working hours, Joan made up her mind that she would be there whenever possible, and she received much encouragement.

By this time business and other problems had come to the place where something just had to be done about it. One evening John and Joan made a very important decision. From the next pay check, all the tithe would be paid, present and past, and they would prove God and let Him take care of the future.

"The Lord has compassion upon us in our fallen condition, and accompanies His commands with promises," wrote the Lord's messenger. "He calls upon His people to prove Him, declaring that He will reward obedience with the richest blessings." (Southern Watchman. Feb. 14, 1905).

True to their word, John and Joan paid back every penny they had so foolishly "borrowed" from God. Then they knelt together to claim His promise in Malachi 3:10, "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, . . . and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it

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And true to His promise, God began to reward their obedience with rich blessings. When John was handed his next pay check he had to look at it a second time. Was it enough to cover all their needs? It certainly was, for it contained, not twice the usual amount, but three times what he had been receiving! The Lord had tripled his income!

God had also strengthened their faith in claiming other Bible promises, and helped them to get better acquainted with Him who is the, "Giver of all our blessings."

Quiz 09

1. Complete: "Nina was so right when she argued that _____."
2. Complete: The promised blessings in Malachi 3:8-10 were given on a _____.
3. God could not at first keep His part of the bargain made in Malachi 3 to Nina and Ken because _____.
4. Why did Nina pray a prayer of reception, instead of a prayer of commitment, to hold back the rain?
5. Why did the Lord save Lee Davis' alfalfa crop?
 - a.
 - b.
6. True or false: When John and Joan decided to "borrow" some of their tithe money, their financial situation improved. _____.
7. Multiple choice: "The Lord has compassion upon us in our fallen condition, and accompanies His commands with _____"
 - a. Condemnation for our past.
 - b. Promises to help us do His commands.
8. True or false: When John and Joan paid all the tithe they owed they went bankrupt. _____.