

*He gave him tithes of all  
(Genesis 14:20).*

# Tithing Shoes

BY PATRICIA AND DEWAYNE WARNOCK  
(Based on a true story)

*I can't go to  
church on  
Sunday!*

Jene looked up in surprise when she heard those words coming from her older brother, Rolf. On Rolf's feet were shoes that were too worn out to wear anymore. His toes stuck out from under torn leather. Ragged ends of broken shoelaces dangled uselessly. These were the only shoes Rolf had.

"I can't walk around in these anymore," he said. "And I can't go to church or to town without shoes." He flopped down on the floor and rested his chin in his hands.

Mother walked over to the kitchen cupboard and



pulled out a jar. The children knew what was in that jar—tithing money.

Holding out a few dollar bills, Mother said:

***This is all the money I have.***

It's enough to pay tithing on what your father was paid the last time he found work." They all stared at it for a minute, and then she added, "It would be enough to buy shoes, but I can't do both."

She put the money back in the jar and sat down at the kitchen table. "I need to think about this for a while," she said.

For a long time the children played quietly, trying not to disturb their mother while she sat at the table. Finally, she stood up and walked toward the door. "I don't know what Rolf will do for shoes," she said quietly. "But I'll feel better if our tithing is paid. I'll go take the money down to the bishop's house right now," she said.

Jene ran out the door behind her. "Can I go too?" she asked.

"Yes, come along if you want," Mother said.

Jene and her mother silently walked the six blocks to the bishop's house. As they reached the door, her mother took the money out of her pocket and looked at it one more time. Jene



saw the worried look on her mother's face. "Come in, come in," Bishop Johnson said, smiling at them. He shook Jene's hand and thanked her mother when she handed him the money. Then he said,

***I know it's not easy sometimes to pay tithing, but the Lord blesses us when we do.***

On their way home, Jene and her mother saw their neighbor Mrs. Colgrove coming out her front door. She waved for them to come over to her front gate. As they got closer, Mrs. Colgrove held out a pair of leather shoes to Jene's mother.

"I've been meaning to bring these over to you," she said. "I thought maybe one of your children could use them."

Mother looked at the shoes with amazement. Jene clapped her hands happily as she realized they looked very close to the size Rolf needed.

Finally Mother was able to speak. "Thank you . . .





"If we decide now to be a full-tithe payer and if we are steady in paying it, blessings will flow."

**Elder Henry B. Eyring of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Spiritual Preparedness: Start Early and Be Steady," *Ensign*, Nov. 2005, 40.**



thank you so much," she said, rubbing the soft leather.

Jene took off running toward home. Bursting through the kitchen door she shouted:

*Rolf, Rolf!  
You have  
new shoes!*

Jene and Rolf followed her to her bedroom and watched as she opened a big wooden chest.

"Why would you want to put those old shoes in there?" Jene asked.

With a tear in her eye, Mother answered:

*These shoes need to be  
kept forever. Whenever we  
look at them we'll remember  
that the Lord blesses us when  
we pay our tithing.*

Rolf jumped up, looking puzzled. Jene pointed outside to their mother who was walking into the yard holding the shoes. Soon Mother was explaining to Rolf where the shoes had come from.

Rolf quickly put them on and marched around the room to show how well they fit. Picking up the old pair of raggedy shoes from the floor, he said, "Now we can dump these in the garbage where they belong!"

"Oh no," Mother said, taking the shoes out of his hands. "These are very special shoes," she said. "They need to be kept in a special place."



Jene and Rolf grew up and had children and homes of their own.

When their mother died, Jene was given the wooden trunk full of special things. The shoes are still in there and are taken out from time to time so that children and grandchildren can hear the story about the lesson learned long ago from a pair of old, worn-out shoes. ●