

My inspired bishop knew better than I did what I needed to do.

A TITHING CHALLENGE

By Stephen Knight

As a child, I paid tithing faithfully without ever thinking of holding back the money for myself. But at 17, I faced a defining moment when I had to decide if being a full-tithe payer was really what I wanted.

As a senior in high school, I'd been working part-time at a fast-food restaurant for a year and a half. At the beginning of the school year, I'd convinced myself that I needed more time for homework, school choir activities, and the rehearsals and performances for a musical in which I'd received a small part at a local theater. So I quit my job.

I had always set aside my tithing as soon as I cashed a paycheck, but a few months before quitting the job, I stopped paying tithing. Instead, I unwisely used the money for other things, putting what was left in my savings account.

In late December, I had an appointment for tithing settlement with my bishop. It turned out to be a very uncomfortable experience. He asked if I was a full-tithe payer. I told him the truth—I was not. I think I owed about \$65. I had twice that much in the bank, but I didn't want to use any of it, because without a job, I needed money for gas, dates, and other "important" expenses.

I thought my bishop would simply encourage me to do better next year and make a note that I was a part-tithe payer. But no. He invited me to make a commitment to pay the Lord what I owed. I wasn't expecting that, and I would not commit. I told him I'd think about it, but I had no intention of paying.

Over the next few days, strange things happened. Until now, the bishop and I had rarely seen each other except on Sundays. But that week, I saw him every day—at the store, at youth activities, and more. Each time he'd greet me with the same question: "Have you made a decision?" And my response was always the same: "No."

After several days of these unusual meetings, I finally realized that the Lord was using my bishop as a reminder for me to do the right thing. In my heart I always knew what I should do, and finally, wanting to be obedient, I withdrew the tithing money from my savings account and paid all that I owed that next Sunday.

Even though I knew I'd done the right thing, I was still worried about having very little money in the bank for the rest of the school year—and no job.

Then came the phone call. Two days after I paid my tithing, the manager of the fast-food restaurant I'd worked at called me. She was desperate. Several employees had recently quit, and she pleaded with me to come back to work—immediately.

Some might say this was just a coincidence, but I knew better. I accepted the job offer with the firm belief that the Lord was now blessing me for being obedient to His law of tithing.

I know the Lord used my bishop, who showed up day after day and wouldn't take no for an answer. Ever since then, I've come to understand, in a very personal way, these words of King Benjamin: "He doth require that ye should do as he hath commanded you; for which if ye do, he doth *immediately* bless you" (Mosiah 2:24; italics added). **NE**

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