

God meant it for good

Christmas can be very stressful. It was 9 years ago this Christmas that I found myself unemployed. I had worked for 19 years in the retail bicycle business. Now losing my job was not a bad thing because my boss was a real Ebenezer Scrooge and I was Bob Krachet. I hate to speak ill of anyone but he had me working 7 days a week and even at night. There was no overtime, no health benefits and a few times when funds were short the owner even wanted me to work for free. You are probably asking yourself why I would stay and work for a business that treated me so badly. Well, I had to because Sue kept making me go to work each day since I was the owner.

It was like a giant faucet of God's blessing had been turned off as the sales in our business plummeted. We prayed but sales actually got worse. Many of my employees were also my friends and I had to lay off some and finally all, of them. We took all the logical steps to resuscitate the business but it was still clear that the patient was dead. We sold all the inventory and fixtures and gave the rest to charity and I walked away from my 19 years in the bike business.

I had been attending some night college courses to retrain in a different occupation but I had hoped to make a more gradual transition. Why had God seemingly removed his hand of blessing right now? What would I do now to support my family? I went out on a few interviews but there were no positive employment prospects. There were many questions and no obvious answers other than the knowledge that that God had always been faithful to us before.

Then came the unexpected phone call from someone who I had spoken to only once, many months before. His call was to offer me a job working for a small Information Technology Company in another state. One of my evening college instructors was working for this same company and had recommended me. With little knowledge or experience, no job interview, nor any skills test, I was given a job offer based on my old instructor's recommendation.

Suddenly, it became crystal clear why God had allowed the retail store to fail. If it had been doing well, I might have overlooked this wonderful opportunity. If it had been doing well, I might have been too busy to study as extensively for my college classes. If it had been doing well, I would have missed this opportunity to see His hand at work in my life and receive this blessing. I was mistaken - God's blessings had not been turned off at all. My heart overflowed with gratitude for the Lord and that His plan and timing was so much better than the script I would have written. He had indeed been working in the background in ways that were revealed so clearly in that one 5 minute phone call.

A friend reminded me of when Jeremiah spoke about the Babylonian captivity. They were sent into exile but it was actually to pave the way for blessing, restoration and spiritual renewal.

JER 24:4-7 Then the word of the LORD came to me: "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: `Like these good figs, I regard as good the exiles from Judah, whom I sent away from this place to the land of the Babylonians. My eyes will watch over them for their good, and I will bring them back to this land. I will build them up and not tear them down; I will plant them and not uproot them. I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the LORD. They will be my people, and I will be their God, for they will return to me with all their heart.

Oh, what a wonderful caring Heavenly Father we have.

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