“Dear Lord, please forgive me for using your tithes in a time of need. But if You help me to repay it, I promise never again to use your resources to benefit myself, even if I die.”

Pavel was a married student in the communist-era Romania. He had no income. In the struggle to raise some funds, Pavel and his wife collected cans in order to sell them. But the money from this endeavor barely provided for his little son’s milk.

With nothing in hands, and starving, Pavel decided to borrow 40 lei ( Romanian currency) from his tithe money to purchase food for his family.

He took the money planning to return it as soon as possible, expecting that God would “understand.”

Well, things got worse. His father died and the stipend he had been receiving from his father stopped coming.
One day, as he got home from the university, Pavel found a letter containing 50 lei. This time, he resisted the temptation. He immediately mailed to the church treasurer the 40 lei he owed to God, plus the 5 lei due as tithe for this new gift. With the remaining 5 lei, he and Dana were able to buy only some bread and yogurt.

A few days later, a 92-year-old man who was a fellow church member asked him, “You don’t look OK. What’s happening? Why don’t you take the bus instead of walking?” Pavel was unable to dodge all his questions.

Understanding the situation, the man said, “Well, I’m a retired lawyer and have some funds. I was praying to God asking whom I could help. Now I have found him. From now on, until you finish your university education, I will send you 500 lei every month to take care of your needs.”

And then he added, “But don’t forget to share with others when you are blessed.”

Pavel Goia, editor of Ministry Magazine at the General Conference.

As you return your tithe and give your promise, always remember that it is in the darkest times of life that you’re most likely to experience the restoring power of Jesus.

May we put our desires last and God first.