

I Need a Vacation  
Version III

By

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Theme:

This play portrays an all too familiar situation that occurs in churches all across the world: people's reluctance to dedicate themselves to faithfully tithe to their church. Other expenditures are given a higher priority than the tithe and the church ends up with a portion of what is left over after we have spent our money on things of this world.

Biblical References:

Malachi 3

2 Corinthians 9

Approximate Running Time:

10 minutes

Props:

A desk with various papers and opened books

2 chairs

One addressed envelope that contains an invitation for Josh and his family to spend the week at the "Get Away" lodge with the pastor and his family.

Cast of Characters:

Josh: Josh is a Christian man who is a member of the church that PASTOR pastors. He takes his faith seriously and lives out the walk of a Christian. He faithfully tithes to his church. He has found out that a friend has benefited from not tithing and his jealousy spurns him to confront his pastor.

Pastor: Pastor is the pastor of a Bible believing church. He believes that he must invest himself into the personal lives of the members of his church if he is to effectively minister to the church members.

## Scene:

A desk with various papers and opened books appears at center stage. There is a chair behind the desk and one alongside of it. There is one addressed envelope on the desk that contains an invitation for Josh and his family to spend the week at the "Get Away" lodge with the pastor and his family. As the play opens we see that Pastor is sitting at his desk working on his next sermon. Josh approaches the door to pastor's office and knocks.

Pastor: [*Turning towards the door.*] Who is it?

Josh: [*He is obviously nervous.*] It's me. Uh, Josh. I was just wondering if I could talk at you for a few moments. I mean I was wondering if you had a few moments so that we could talk, I mean, together, if you know what I mean.

Pastor: Are asking if I have some time for the two of us to talk?

Josh: Yeah, that's it.

Pastor: [*Putting his things aside.*] Why sure Josh, come on in. [*Josh enters. Pastor motions to a chair.*] Why don't you take a seat? [*Josh sits down.*] Now what was it that you wanted to talk about?

Josh: Well, this is kinda' hard for me. I'm not too sure how to say this, but I...

Pastor: [*In a soothing tone.*] It's hard for you to sit here and talk with me?

Josh: [*Pastor's words were effective.*] Well, I've never had to talk about something personal like this with you, so it's hard for me to know how to get started.

Pastor: Whenever I'm counseling someone who has a hard time getting started I always tell them to start at the beginning. It's the easiest way.

Josh: All right. I can do that. The beginning. Let's see. The problem that I am having right now started a few weeks ago. I was talking to a friend of mine who goes to this church, I don't want to tell you who he is...

Pastor: That's fine.

Josh: Well, he and I were talking about the vacation that he and his family went on. I guess that he was gone for a couple of weeks and during that time he neglected to tithe anything at all.

Pastor: I see.

Josh: It's not as if he wanted to spite the church or anything like that. I guess that he just forgot to tithe with all of the planning for the vacation and all.

Pastor: Yes, I understand.

Josh: He's a really nice guy and all. A real strong Christian man. His family is in order and he's really successful at work. I mean, if there's someone who can afford to tithe a full 10 percent, it's him.

Pastor: I can understand the point that you are making.

Josh: I don't know if you do. After we were talking about his vacation for a while he came to the realization that he had spent just about the same amount of money on his trip that he would have tithed if he had been in church during that time. So I guess that you could say that by not tithing while he was on vacation - he got a free vacation. It's like God paid him to take some time off.

Pastor: Well I guess that you could take it that way.

Josh: And then there are people like me. I don't make that much money, as you know, at least nowhere near what this other guy makes. I tithe a full 10 percent even if it means that we have to go without some things for a week or two until I get paid again.

Pastor: I know that you do. You are a faithful servant when it comes to your financial resources - and you are also faithful with your non-financial resources as well, I might add.

Josh: Thanks. But the point that I am trying to make here is this. [*Takes a big breath.*] Well, my family hasn't been on a vacation in about five years. We just can't afford to go away after we pay all of our bills, put a little away for retirement, for savings, and well, after we give our tithe. I was wondering if it would be possible for you to return some of our tithe money so that we can take a family vacation this year.

Pastor: Well, I don't know...

Josh: It wouldn't have to be much money at all. We wouldn't be taking a vacation in Hawaii or anything drastic like that. I'm just talking about taking a trip into the mountains or something like that for a week. You know, canoeing, fishing, boating, hiking, that kinda' thing. With the kinda' money that this church receives in a month I would think that a few hundred dollars wouldn't be that much to ask - I mean taking into consideration all that we have given to this church and all.

Pastor: Josh. Do you understand what you're asking for?

Josh: Yeah. I'm asking you for money so that we can take a vacation this year.

Pastor: You're asking me to take from the money that the people in this congregation have given to us to use for the betterment of the Lord's kingdom and give it to you so that you can take a vacation. Josh, I don't even take money from the church so that I can go on vacation.

Josh: But I just told you that this other guy did.

Pastor: That's not the same thing. What he does with his money is up to him. What this church does with the money that the members of this church has entrusted us to do is up to me and the rest of the board. I can't just go and take a few hundred dollars out of the church's bank account without accounting for it.

Josh: You can't?

Pastor: No.

Josh: It's just not fair. I can't afford to take a nice vacation this year because of the money that I've donated to this church and I have to sit at home and watch all of my friends have a good time on the money they didn't give to the church.

*[In the next portion of dialog, both characters are talking to themselves, but making an effort to let their 'thoughts' be heard by the other, hoping their 'thoughts' will persuade the other to see things his way.]*

Pastor: *[In a tone of pity.]* That's sad.

Josh: I know, isn't it.

Pastor: That's just too bad.

Josh: If I'd only thought of it before I sealed the envelope.

Pastor: To think that an upstanding member of our congregation...

Josh: Then I'd be able to live it up for one little week out of the entire year. Is that too much to ask?

Pastor: A man of God...

Josh: But instead I have to sit at home and take a make believe vacation.

Pastor: Who is faithful to his wife and kids...

Josh: And to think about my wife and kids. They won't have a vacation this year either. Deprived of an American right just because their dad gave all of their money to the church.

Pastor: Who faithfully gives of his time, his resources...

Josh: We may be able to head to Cedar Point for a couple of days, but that's about it.

Pastor: And money...

Josh: It's a waste of a summer, that's what it is.

Pastor: Would think that he's getting the raw end of the deal because he's giving his money to the work of the Lord, which has eternal consequences, rather than spending it on things of this temporal earth.

Josh: Not like the other men of this church who can afford to take their families on week long getaways like the ones that you see on covers of brochures of travel agencies. *[He gets caught up in his description. He stands and acts out each of the different scenes that he is describing. Pastor just sits back and watches the show.]* To run along beaches of crystal clear waters while the sun sets in a spectacular display of reds and oranges, to ride horseback along some of the most beautiful paths within this beautiful country of ours, to hang glide in the grand canyon, to sky dive out of an air force jet, to scuba dive amongst sharks, to walk the historic mall in this nation's capital, to visit some of the greatest historic landmarks this country has ever created, to...

Pastor: [*Having had enough.*] Are you through yet?

Josh: [*Realizing what he is doing. Sitting down abruptly.*] Uh, through with what?

Pastor: This adolescent self-attended pity party that you're throwing.

Josh: Uh, yes, I guess that I am done.

Pastor: Did you hear anything that I just said to you.

Josh: [*Ashamed.*] Uh, no, not really. I was a little caught up in the, uh, scenery.

Pastor: I know how you're feeling. When I was new in this ministry our family didn't have that much money either. There were many years when we couldn't afford to take a vacation. But there was one thing that I wasn't willing to do and that's take money out of the Lord's hands so that we could buy the things that we wanted. I don't know who it is that you are talking about, but I wonder if they are giving to this church, and to the work of the Lord, out of their abundance or out of their first fruits.

Josh: What do you mean?

Pastor: The Bible says that we should give to the Lord first. Then we can pay all of the bills that we have. If we don't give to the Lord first then we are just giving him what's left over after we do all that we want to do. It should be the desire of our heart to give our best to the Lord. I'm sure that you wouldn't want to scrape the scraps that had fallen onto the floor during dinner and offer them to the Lord as a symbol of your appreciation for what He has done for you, would you?

Josh: No way.

Pastor: Well, that's what you're doing with your money if you're giving the Lord what is left after you have spent all the money you want to spend.

Josh: I don't want to do that.

Pastor: I know that you don't. There's one other point that I'd like to make before I tell you of a surprise that I have for you.

Josh: A surprise?

Pastor: Hold on a minute. I want to mention something first. Are you paying attention?

Josh: Yes.

Pastor: We often tend to think that the Lord can only provide to us through financial means, but he can minister to us in spiritual ways too. I believe that a man, or woman, of God who is giving of his or her first fruits, financially speaking, and also of his or her first fruits as far as talents and abilities go, will be blessed by the Lord in a number of ways. Those blessings may come in the way of more money, but they more often come from the blessings that are received through seeing the spiritual fruit of their labor. I believe that our friendship is evidence of the Lord's blessing in both of our lives. I also believe that He can bless you by meeting your needs in unexpected ways.

Josh: What do you mean?

Pastor: That's where the surprise comes in. [*Reaches for envelope.*] There is an envelope on my desk that I was supposed to mail today. It's addressed to you. Now the contents of this envelope were there long before we had this conversation today, but I know that you'll agree that what you find inside is evidence of what I have been saying to you. [*He hands the envelope to Josh.*] I'd like you to open this right now.

Josh: What's this?

Pastor: Just open it, Josh. It'll speak for itself.

Josh: [*Opening envelope. Reading.*] This is an invitation for you and your family to spend the week of August 15th at the "Get Away" mountain lodge with our family. Give us a call and we can work out the details. Signed Pastor, Pam, and family.

[*Both men are near tears.*]

Pastor: We were recently given an anonymous gift that gave us the opportunity to choose one family to take along with us on a one week vacation to that mountain lodge. Pam and I felt led to invite your family.

Josh: I don't know what to say.

Pastor: Sometimes He provides in ways that we aren't expecting. Sometimes He makes us wait until we're at the end of our rope to reach down and pick us up - but He always does.

Josh: I feel so foolish coming here and demanding that you give me money. I mean, with you giving us this and all. I don't deserve it.

Pastor: Josh, we don't deserve anything that the Lord does for us. Just thank Him and do all that you can to show Him that you mean it.

Josh: Wow. You know, I've learned a great lesson here today. One that I won't ever forget. He gave me so much, and just what my family wanted, even when I was so greedy and jealous. I was willing to take money back from Him just so that we could spend it on ourselves.

Pastor: I don't think that He made a mistake. After what just happened here between us today I know that we picked the right family to take with us.

Josh: I can't thank you enough, Pastor. I don't know what to say.

Pastor: Thank Him, not me. This is a gift for me too, remember? Just say thanks and enjoy the vacation that you and your family need. [*Standing.*] Come on, let's go into the sanctuary and thank Him for His provision and then you can go home and tell your family. After all, you don't have too long to get ready for that trip.

Josh: [*Standing, joining Pastor, the two exiting arm in arm as brothers in the Lord.*] Let's do it.

- CURTAIN -



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