

life group study guide

GOD'S DAILY PROVISION OF GRACE

December 9, 2012



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Exodus 16 - 17:7

Two million people in our text were traveling through the desert to their new home. What do you do when you can't go to the store, you can't stop long enough to plant a garden, and there are lots of hungry mouths to feed? It would be great if we could say the people prayed to God, but they grumbled to Moses instead. Yet God in his goodness and love provided for them for the next forty years. Every evening, quail came into the camp to give them meat. Every morning, there was something lying on the ground that could be boiled or baked or fried and used for food. *"What is it?"* the children of Israel asked. In Hebrew, the question is *"man hu,"* where the daily bread of Israel got its name. Manna.

We can learn something from the manna God put on the table for the families of Israel, and from the manna that God puts on our tables every day. The story of manna has many spiritual implications -

- It teaches us to look to the Lord for our supply. The Israelites are told that this supply will come *"from heaven for you."*
- It teaches us to look to the Lord daily for our needs. The manna was to be gathered daily. Fresh food must be gathered every day. You cannot live on yesterday's blessings. We must have something fresh every day. We cannot live today on the gathered provisions of yesterday. Dependence is a daily matter. Everyday fresh problems will arise to test whether or not we will depend on God.
- It teaches us that to feed on Christ is the only secret of strength and blessedness. **Read (John 6:22-58).** Here God provided "bread from heaven," to meet their physical needs but to give them eternal life.

Amazingly enough, the children of Israel have seemed to learn nothing from their past experience of God's faithfulness and care and again give into self-pity, grumbling and complaining. Yet we have to admit that all too often when faced with difficulties and problems we cannot personally solve we give in to despair and complaint. The truth is that some of us make grumbling an art form. We grumble habitually, only taking off for Sunday's, some-times that is. We grumble if we are caught in slow moving traffic, if our meal at the restaurant is not delivered in a timely manner, lots of things make us grumble and grouse.

- Grumbling is gratitude problem. Grumbling comes as a response to pain or problems in life. We grumble because we think that we should experience pleasure rather than pain and prosperity rather than adversity. *"When I think of all the ways the Lord has blessed me, though I don't deserve it. I wonder how I could possibly complain about the relatively insignificant things that go wrong in my life from time to time. If I could only learn to count my blessings."* [Ted Kyle and John Todd. A Treasury of Bible Illustrations. "Why Me Lord?"]
- Grumbling is a perception problem. Grumbling invariably causes us to distort the facts.
- Grumbling is a contagious problem. **(Exodus 16:2)**
- Complainers Have Already Failed The Test! **(Exodus 16:4)** God says. 'I'll provide the way out: I'll show you the way.' We accept his answer, His new direction, which introduces us to a whole

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new set of tests and trials of a different kind. So while we are relieved of one wilderness problem, we gain a new one.” [Charles Swindoll. Moses: A Man of Selfless Dedication. Gathering of manna was a test of their obedience

- Complainers Are Always Looking For Someone To Blame! They thought that they were only venting their frustrations on a man like themselves, but in reality they were grumbling against God. Grumbling was not a protest of his leadership, but of God’s.
- Complainers Are Never Satisfied With What They Are Given. Every morning the angels brought down this heavenly food and literally spread it before them. They did not have to work for it. They did not have to prepare it. All they had to do was eat it, but they still did not like it. ! Even when the people of God are being fed in abundance they grumble. Why? Because the food God provides is not what they would have preferred. We want steak and God provides bologna.
- Complainers Are Never Satisfied With How Much They Are Given. The efforts to hoard the manna were direct disobedience to the God’s instructions. It would seem that Israel was guilty of two sins; greed and grumbling

In verse 4, God said –“*I will test them and see whether they will follow my instructions*”. So every day was a test. Every day, they went to bed at night without a bit of bread in the house. There were no stores, no marketplaces, and no gardens. There was only God’s storehouse – manna in the morning and quail in the evening.

Learn from those tests that God gives you every day. God has not and will never fail you. It is a sign of God’s grace. God’s grace to us – like the manna in the wilderness – is totally free. It is also faithful. Think of it. For forty years, God didn’t miss a morning when the dew lifted from the grass and there was bread on the ground. There were no crop failures when God provided. There were no missed days. But isn’t every day a test for us as well?

- A TEST OF FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS - (**Exodus 16:4**)
- THE TESTING OF AUTHORITY - (**Exodus 16:8 and 20**)
- THE TESTING OF MURMURING - (**Exodus 16:8**)
- THE TEST OF REMEMBERING - (**Exodus 16:33 – 34**)
- TEST OF DISTANCE - You determine the distance at which you walk with or from the Lord. (**Exodus 20:20 – 21; James 4:8**)
- THE TEST OF THE FURNACE – (**Isaiah 48:10**)
- THE TROUBLED HEART TEST – (**John 14:1**)
- THE TEST OF THE DESERT – (**Deuteronomy 8:2**)
- TEST OF JUDGING OTHERS OR EXAMINE SELF – (**2 Corinthians 13:5**)
- THE TEST OF BUILDING MATERIALS –(**1 Corinthians 3**)
- A TEST OF LOVE – (**1 John 3:14; 1 John 5:2**)

Other testing points - our giving, how we spend our time, our attitude, what so we do in a crisis, are we consistently faithful, do we lose our temper.

This is a time of trying whereby God is proving you. He is preparing you spiritually, mentally, and physically to inherit the promise. He is developing your faith. He desires to have a people that are faithful going from faith to faith; people who will be spiritually outstanding. He is calling you to be his people patterned after his word, his likeness, and his glory. He is “proving” you; training you in the faith to grow your faith. He wants you to grow in your relationship with him. Nobody is perfect but you are being perfected (**Matthew 5:18, Hebrews 13:20-21, 1 Cor.1:28, 1 Peter 5:10**). You came to him broken,

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afraid, uncertain, sinful, and tired. And he took you as you were. Now he is refining you, shining you up like pure gold, getting the diamond of coal. Before you can increase your territory like Jabez, he wants to see if you will be faithful over what you have.

This is what not to do – murmur.

1. Fear is an abnormal sound. **(1 Corinthians 10: 1-5, 9-11; 2 Timothy 1:7; 1 John 4:18)**
2. Stubbornness and rebellion is an abnormal sound. **(Psalm 78:5-8; 1 Samuel 15:23)**
3. Disobedience is an abnormal sound. **(Romans 1:28-31; Titus 1:16)**

This is what should be done.

1. Be Obedient – **(Isaiah 1:9. Acts 5:29)**
2. Be Expectant: Live Expecting God to work in your life on a daily basis; live expecting him to provide for you daily. **(Matthew 6:11; Lamentations 3:22-23)**
3. Be Consistent (faithful): You need to know that God is looking for a people who are hungry and thirsty for him. The problem with the Israelites is that while in slavery, their lives were spent living on bread alone: being obedient to their taskmasters so that they may live. Yet, God is now trying to teach them not just live by their physical senses and desires but by his word. He wants them to walk by faith, trust his word not what he can give them.

How could God not watch over those whom he has made his own dear children through the blood of his own Son? How could God not provide for those who are heirs together of eternal life with his one and only Son? God has promised us that he will provide for us; he will send his angels to watch over us; he will make everything work out for our good. Why do we doubt? We have no reason. God has proved Himself faithful. For forty years in the wilderness, the bread truck came every morning and the meat delivery arrived every night. **(Psalm 37:22; Romans 8: 32)**