

Exodus: New and Old

Week 4 - God's Provision

Leader's Note: In this study, we will talk about God's provision for the people of Israel as they wandered in the desert—and the unexpected way in which He offered that provision. We'll also discuss what it means for us to trust God to provide for all of our needs.

? What is one thing you absolutely could not do without?

Optional Transition: Let's continue our journey with the Israelites by hearing about something they thought they could not do without.

Read this passage out loud as a group.

Exodus 16:1-5

¹ The whole Israelite community set out from Elim and came to the Desert of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they had come out of Egypt. ² In the desert the whole community grumbled against Moses and Aaron. ³ The Israelites said to them, "If only we had died by the LORD's hand in Egypt! There we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death."

⁴ Then the LORD said to Moses, "I will rain down bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day. In this way I will test them and see whether they will follow my instructions. ⁵ On the sixth day they are to prepare what they bring in, and that is to be twice as much as they gather on the other days."

? The Israelites are approximately six weeks out of Egypt at this point in their story. How do they approach Moses and Aaron?

Possible Answer: Grumbling, not clearly asking for anything specific...but instead accusing them of intentionally starving the community.

? What's your typical approach to others (boss, spouse, God, etc.) when you want something?

? Can you think of a time where you wanted something for a long time, but didn't receive it? What did that feel like?

Optional Transition: God honors His word and provides for the Israelites. Let's see how they respond.

Read this passage out loud as a group.

Exodus 16:13-20

¹³ That evening quail came and covered the camp, and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. ¹⁴ When the dew was gone, thin flakes like frost on the ground appeared on the desert floor. ¹⁵ When the Israelites saw it, they said to each other, “What is it?” For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, “It is the bread the LORD has given you to eat. ¹⁶ This is what the LORD has commanded: ‘Everyone is to gather as much as they need. Take an omer for each person you have in your tent.’”

¹⁷ The Israelites did as they were told; some gathered much, some little. ¹⁸ And when they measured it by the omer, the one who gathered much did not have too much, and the one who gathered little did not have too little. Everyone had gathered just as much as they needed.

¹⁹ Then Moses said to them, “No one is to keep any of it until morning.”

²⁰ However, some of them paid no attention to Moses; they kept part of it until morning, but it was full of maggots and began to smell. So Moses was angry with them.

? What could have prompted the Israelites to keep extra bread until morning?

Possible Answer: They didn’t trust that more bread would be provided on the following day. They wanted to control their circumstances.

? Our society highly values independence (financial, decision-making, living, etc.). What do you think of this value? Is this something you value as well? Why?

Possible Answer: There could be many answers here - this is designed to provoke discussion! There is not necessarily a right or wrong answer.

Optional Transition: In Matthew, we hear Jesus reminding His disciples that God alone would also meet their needs.

Read this passage out loud as a group.

Matthew 6:25-34

²⁵ “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? ²⁷ Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? ²⁸ “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. ²⁹ Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. ³⁰ If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? ³¹ So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we

drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' ³² For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³ But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴ Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

? In what areas does Jesus specifically command His audience not to worry?

Possible Answers: Life, food, and clothes.

? In which areas of your life do you most wrestle with worry?

? What do you think it means to focus on "his kingdom and his righteousness"? How does redirecting our focus in this way fight against worry?

Possible Answers: Dependence on the Spirit, and on God, to provide.

? How do you tend to react to stress?

Possible Answers: Complaining, work hard to reduce it, anxiety.

? If you could be 100% sure that God would take care of the stressful situation about which you are most concerned right now, how would that change your reaction?

Possible Answers: Hopefully reduced anxiety. Increased dependence on God.

Read the following passage together:

Romans 8:26-27

²⁶ In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. ²⁷ And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.

Leader's Note: Break into smaller groups (2-3). In each group, share about a stressful situation, then pray for each other about trusting God for His provision in that situation. You may also choose to transition into accountability time now and complete this exercise there instead.

? What is our community application of these passages?