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Exodus 16

"The Manna Miracle"

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We read in Exodus 16 that the Hebrews were in their second month of their journey out of Egypt to the Promised Land, and they are running out of food, so they complained against the Lord. Rather than kill them, the Lord graciously and miraculously provided food for them by supplying quail at night and manna in the morning.

Manna¹ is somewhat of a mystery food. What we know about it is found in [Exodus 16:14-15](#), which says: *"When the dew was gone, thin flakes like frost on the ground appeared on the desert floor. 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.'"* It appeared on the ground with the dew, and it burned off or melted in the hot sun.² According to [Psalm 78:25](#) it was called *"the bread of angels,"* and in [Psalm 105:40](#) it was known as *"the bread of heaven."* [Exodus 16:31](#) indicates that manna *"was white like coriander seed and tasted like wafers made with honey."*

In this study, we're going to learn more about the things God wanted to teach his people regarding obedience, trust, rest, and satisfaction in the Lord.

Obedience

1. God gave specific instructions about gathering manna.

¹ The Hebrew word *"manna,"* means, "What is it?"

² [Exodus 16:21](#) - *"Each morning everyone gathered as much as he needed, and when the sun grew hot, it melted away."*

2. They were to take as much as they needed and no more, which means there was to be no hoarding or storing it for the following day.
3. Some of the people disobeyed and basically said, “I don’t care what Moses said, because I don’t see any harm in keeping some for tomorrow, just in case there isn’t enough to go around.”
 - a. The results of their disobedience were the maggots they found the next day!
4. God’s blessings come with basic instructions attached, but he wants us to know that “with privilege comes responsibility.”
 - a. He gives us so much in life: his blessings, his love, his forgiveness, and a future with him.
 - b. He loves us and gives us his Word as a lamp, but many people develop a personal philosophy, which says, “I want to live my life, my way, and I don’t see any harm in what I’m doing.”
 - c. Just like rotten manna, this mindset always brings rotten results.
 - i. [1 Samuel 15:22](#) - *“Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the Lord? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams.”*
 1. In other words, more important than what we do *for* God, is obedience *to* God.
 - ii. God is not impressed with how we serve him or the sacrifices we make for him if we are not obeying him.
 - iii. God is looking for obedience in simple, everyday ways like loving your wife, respecting your husband, honoring your parents, loving your neighbor, refraining from telling a lie, and keeping your eyes from evil.

Trust

5. [Exodus 16:21](#) - *“Each morning everyone gathered as much as he needed, and when the sun grew hot, it melted away.”*
6. Even though the manna that wasn’t needed *“melted away,”* the fact is that God gave them a fresh supply the next day and, in doing so, taught them that he could be depended on to provide for their needs on a daily basis.
7. God was essentially saying, “Gather as much as you need for today, and trust me for tomorrow.”

8. [Proverbs 8:34](#) - *“Blessed is the man who listens to me, watching daily at my doors, waiting at my doorway.”*
9. The same can be said of fellowship with the Lord.
 - a. The truth is that yesterday’s prayer time and yesterday’s Bible study were only sufficient for yesterday.
 - b. Sadly, many are content to come to church once or twice a week and think that they’re “good to go.”
 - c. The reality is that being with the Lord every day, without being legalistic, is the only way to live.
 - d. No one can have a relationship with another person if they are content with having casual contact with him or her for about an hour, once a week or so.
 - i. Imagine what kind of marriage you’d have if you only saw your spouse one hour a week on Saturday night or Sunday morning!
 - ii. The amazing thing is that some people have this kind of a relationship with the Lord, and therefore, they miss out on a real relationship with him.
 - iii. They figure they’ll squeeze him into their schedule when they have time in between everything else they have to do or want to do.
 - e. [Matthew 6:33-34](#) - *“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”*

Rest

10. There was one exception to the daily gathering of manna, and that was Friday, the sixth day of the week.
 - a. They were permitted to gather twice as much as any other day of the week so they wouldn’t have to work on the seventh day.
11. This is the first time in the Bible³ that the concept of a Sabbath rest appears.
 - a. This requirement of the Lord comes before the Sabbath was codified as one of the 10 Commandments in the Mosaic Law.
12. The Sabbath rest was for their sake, because human beings need time to be refreshed and recharged.

³ [Exodus 16:23](#)

13. God was teaching his people early on not to be workaholics, and who better to understand the need for rest than the Hebrews, who had been slaves all their lives, never having a day off, a holiday or a vacation.
14. God wanted them to know it was not only OK to have a day of rest; it was required.

Satisfaction (In Jesus)

15. The ultimate picture of the bread in [Exodus 16](#) is Jesus Christ.
16. Jesus is the one who can provide the satisfaction that covers every human longing and every human appetite.
17. [John 6:29-35](#) - *“Jesus answered, ‘The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.’ So they asked him, ‘What miraculous sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? Our forefathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written: ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’ Jesus said to them, ‘I tell you the truth, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.’ ‘Sir,’ they said, ‘from now on give us this bread.’ Then Jesus declared, ‘I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.’ ”*
18. People who don’t know Christ are on a life-long journey trying to find the next buzz, the next fix, the next relationship, or the next something.
 - a. They think to themselves, “If I just get that, have that, taste that, sleep with him or her, or whatever the case may be, then I’ll be satisfied.”
 - b. They will always find that disappointment awaits them, because these things come with promises that don’t deliver.
 - c. We should never be surprised to find that those who look like they have it together on the outside are often the people who are hurting and empty on the inside.
 - d. How devastating it must be to go to bed lonely and wake up with a stranger and wonder, “Is this it? Is this all life has to offer?”
 - e. [Psalm 107:9](#) - *“... for he satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things.”*
 - f. [John 6:35](#) - *“... He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.”*

Discussion Questions

1. Review the introduction to the study guide with your group to provide the appropriate background.
2. Read [Exodus 16:11-36](#) to provide an overview for this study.
3. Have there been times in your life when you've not trusted the Lord to provide whatever was needed the next day or in the future?
4. Read and discuss [1 Samuel 15:22](#).
5. How have you seen the Lord honor your trust in him for your tomorrows?
6. Read and discuss [Proverbs 8:34](#).
7. Allow the people in your group to share their experiences concerning daily Bible reading and prayer, and focus on the blessings they have received because of their commitment to their relationship with the Lord.
8. Read and discuss [Matthew 6:33-34](#).
9. How do you keep the Sabbath and find the rest the Lord wants you to experience?
10. Read and discuss [John 6:29-35](#) and [Psalm 107:9](#), and focus on the ways the Lord can bring satisfaction for every human need.
11. Spend time discussing the sad story of the death of Casey Johnson, ⁴ the heiress to the Johnson & Johnson fortune.
 - a. What are some of the characteristics you've observed in the lives of folks like Miss Johnson? ⁵
 - b. Do you know people who, like Miss Johnson, seem to have it all, but if the truth were told, they are hurting and empty on the inside?
12. Close your time in prayer by asking the Holy Spirit to help each person: determine that obedience to the Lord will be a priority in their life; depend on

⁴ <http://abcnews.go.com/Entertainment/casey-johnsons-friends-baffled-death-heiress/story?id=9484882#.UFDSHUIsEyE>

⁵ Pastor Gary made the statement that Miss Johnson represents the multitudes who are looking for fulfillment and satisfaction in all the wrong places, and in her case, she had beauty, fame and fortune, however, at the time of her death, she was alone, penniless, and surrounded by rats in an apartment that had no electricity or running water.

the Lord today, and trust him for tomorrow; intentionally set apart time for rest and renewal; and finally, ask the Holy Spirit to help each person see how important it is to invest time in their relationship with Jesus.

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New International Version (NIV 1984).