

Life Lesson 27
God's Provision in the Wilderness
Exodus 16

Introduction

The Israelites were on their way to the promised land, but they still had the wilderness to cross and things to learn about trusting God. The troubles started before they had gone far at all.

The Story

The people weren't happy, and they let Moses know about it!

"We wish we had died in Egypt," they whined. "At least there was plenty of food there. You have brought us out to this wilderness to kill us all with hunger."

God knew they were hungry, and he had no intention of letting them starve.

"God will send you bread in the morning," Moses told them. Sure enough, in the morning they walked outside and saw something small, white and round all over the ground.

"What is it?" they asked. In the language the Israelites spoke, that sounds like "manna." That's what they called it – manna. It tasted very good, somewhat like honey cookies (wafers made with honey).

"God said to gather only enough for you and your family to eat today," Moses said. "Don't try to store it up."

What do you think the Israelites did? They tried to gather enough to have some put back in case God didn't provide anything the next day. That didn't show much trust in God, did it? It didn't do them any good, either, because the manna became wormy and rotten overnight.

On the sixth day, God told them to gather extra. That's because the next day was the day of rest. He wanted them to get everything ready ahead of time. This time they gathered enough

to last two days, and the manna didn't spoil at all. But there were some pesky people who didn't do what God said. They presumed the manna would be there the next day, even though God told them through Moses, that it wouldn't. They went hungry that day, because God didn't send the manna on the seventh day.

The people had wonderful food to eat that they could just gather up for free. Next they began complaining that they didn't have enough water. God was providing their food, but they didn't trust Him for their other needs, too.

“Why did you bring us out here in the wilderness to die of thirst?” they asked Moses. They were about ready to throw rocks at him! Moses took his problem with the people to God, and He told Moses what to do.

“Take your rod, the one you used to hit the water of the Red Sea, and go to the rock on Mt. Horeb,” God told him. “Hit the rock with the rod and water will come out of it.” Moses did just what God said, and sure enough, when he hit the rock, water poured out. Can you imagine how happy the thirsty people were to see the water running down the mountain. There was plenty of sweet, fresh water for everyone.

The Life Lesson

The Israelites saw the miracles in Egypt. All the terrible plagues happened to the Egyptians, but the Israelites were spared. They saw the cloud leading them by day and the pillar of fire by night. They saw the Red Sea open so they could go across on dry land. You would think they would trust God to provide for them in the wilderness.

They complained instead of trusting God. Even when God gave them “angel's food” which they could just go outside and gather up – they worried and complained about the water.

Do you think taking care of those needs was any problem to God? Do you think He didn't notice that they needed those things until they yelled about it? Of course God planned all along to take care of them. It was no trouble at all for Him.

The Israelites were pretty silly, but sometimes we act silly in the same way. Do you think it is any trouble for God to take care of you? Of course not! He knows just what you need and He is happy to give you the very best. Don't worry about the things you need, and don't be a complainer like the Israelites in the wilderness.

Review Questions

What worried the Israelites after they crossed the Red Sea?

They were worried about food.

How did God provide food for them?

He sent angel food for them to gather from the ground.

What did the Israelites call the angel food?

Manna

What does “manna” mean?

“What is it?”

What did manna taste like?

Like honey cookies

Why couldn't they store the manna?

It spoiled and turned wormy

How did God provide water for the Israelites in the wilderness?

Moses struck a rock with his rod and water came out.

Was it difficult for God to provide for the needs of the Israelites?

No

Is it hard for God to provide your needs?

No -- not at all!