

Read: Exodus 16:2-20

Stop Whining!

Exodus 16:11-12

The LORD said to Moses, "I have heard the grumbling of the Israelites. Tell them, 'At twilight you will eat meat, and in the morning you will be filled with bread. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God.'"

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

What is your favorite food? Take a moment and think about that favorite food . . . can you picture it? Can you smell it? What are you thinking about? Chocolate chip cookies? Crisp, fresh bacon? Warm apple pie? Something else?

What if God did a crazy miracle and provided that food for you right now? What if an entire room was filled with that food? Or what if that food dropped out of the sky for you to eat like in the movie *Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs*? What if God provided you with that delicious treat every single day? Wouldn't that be amazing!

Or . . . do you think that over time you would get sick of that food? Do you think after a while you would start to complain? How long before you didn't think about the amazing miracle of getting that food, but rather about how you just wanted something different to eat?

This is what happened to the Israelites. What a bunch of whiny complainers! God miraculously brought them out of Egypt. But they complained! They complained they didn't have water. So God did another miracle to provide water for them. Then they complained some more because they were hungry! Yet rather than punish them, God blessed them. He did another miracle. This time he provided birds called quail and a special bread called manna for them to eat—every single day. They were in a wilderness where there wasn't much to eat, yet God provided for around two million people every day with good food to eat. But you know what they did? They still complained!

Do you do this too? Ever get sick of your toys or technology, your shoes or your clothes, your car or your house? Ever wish you had something bigger or better? Ever wish you had what other people have? So often we forget about the endless blessings that God has given to us and complain that we want something different, something "better" in our minds.

Take a moment to think, this time not about your favorite food. Take a moment to think about all the things God has blessed you with. Listen to the reason God provided manna and quail for the Israelites. He said, "Then you will know that I am the LORD your God." Think about your blessings and know that the LORD is your gracious God who has given you everything you

have. But even better than cookies or bacon or shoes or phones or cars, God has given to you the best blessings. He has given you his own Son Jesus. He has given to you forgiveness of all your sins. He has given to you all the treasures of heaven that you can enjoy with him for all eternity. No need to complain and ask for something better! God has already given to you the best. Thank God for that!

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- What were the two kinds of food that God provided for the Israelites in the wilderness?
- Why did they complain about these things?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- When the Israelites complained so much and so often, why didn't God destroy them and wipe them out forever?
- Explain how we Christians today sometimes act like the Israelites in the wilderness.

Questions for Middle School and Above

- How can Christians better learn to treasure Jesus more than all other things?
- What does it look like when Christians act like Jesus is the best thing in their lives?

Closing Prayer:

Dear Lord, thank you for providing what I need for both my body and my soul. You have given me the very best, especially your own Son Jesus. Help me always to be thankful. Amen.

Hymn: CW 402:1,3 – My Faith Looks Up to Thee

My faith looks up to thee, Thou Lamb of Calvary,
Savior divine.

Now hear me while I pray; Take all my guilt away;
Oh, let me from this day Be wholly thine!

While life's dark maze I tread And griefs around me spread,
Be thou my guide.

Bid darkness turn to day, Wipe sorrow's tears away,
Nor let me ever stray From thee aside.