

Discussion Questions Set #1

“By day the LORD went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night ... So the people grumbled against Moses, saying, “What are we to drink?” Then Moses cried out to the LORD, and the LORD showed him a piece of wood. He threw it into the water, and the water became fit to drink ... 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 ... The Israelites did as they were told; some gathered much, some little. 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.” (Exodus 13:21, 15:24-25, 16:12,17-18)

God will “equip [us] with everything good for doing his will.” (Hebrews 12:21)

1. God miraculously provided adequate direction, sufficient protection, water and food for the people of Israel and yet they still engaged in regular grumbling against God. What is it about the Israelites – and us – that permits us to grumble even though we experience the incredible provision of God?
2. Many of us have likely been taught to discern between “need” and “wants”. Our passage reveals that no matter how much one discerned their “need” – gathering little or much – God ensured they had “gathered just as much as they needed”. What does this teach us about our ability to understand our own needs? What does this teach us about God’s ability to understand and meet our needs?
3. Looking at Hebrews 12:21, what is the end goal of our being equipped? How might understanding this affect our views on provision and need?

Discussion Questions Set #2

We cannot help but note that, in our texts, God often led His people into difficult circumstances – the Sinai wilderness, the arid desert of Shur and the barren desert of Sin – and we learn that the people of Israel quite regularly cried out for the “comforts” of Egypt when faced with difficulty.

1. Why do you think the people of Israel craved the comforts of slavery in Egypt over the unknown of the Sinai wilderness?
2. Apply this same thinking to our own spiritual condition. Why do we sometimes prefer the comfort of “slavery to sin” over the unknown “freedom in Christ”?
3. In sermon, it was suggested that God positioned His people so that they might learn to trust in Him for provision. This happened at both a tangible, physical level and a more intangible, spiritual level. When you think of your own following of Jesus, how have you seen Christ positioning you for greater trust in His provision? What has this led to the development of in your life?

Discussion Questions Set #3

“I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength ... And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus”. (Philippians 4:12-13, 19)

1. Discuss the following statements, including how you envision this functioning and how you might have seen such a reality in action:
 - a. Provision without positioning for dependence leads to arrogant entitlement.
 - b. Positioning for dependence without adequate provision leads to barren fruitlessness.
2. The Apostle Paul suggests that he has “**learned the secret of being content in any and every situation**”. How might a better understanding of contentment help us to balance our views of God’s provision and His positioning of us for greater dependence?
3. How might you engage in a discussion on provision and positioning for dependence with someone who has yet to begin following Jesus? How might you confront cultural ideals related to wealth, rights and personal autonomy?