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## God's Faithfulness

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Free media and discipleship resources for pastors, leaders, and growing disciples.

## God's Faithfulness

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“Then Jesus, when he looked up and saw that a large crowd was coming to him, said to Philip, ‘Where can we buy bread so that these people may eat?’ (Now Jesus said this to test him, for he knew what he was going to do.) Philip replied, ‘Two hundred silver coins worth of bread would not be enough for them, for each one to get a little.’ One of Jesus’ disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to him, ‘Here is a boy who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what good are these for so many people?’” —John 6:5-9

Philip should have taken his cue from the prophet Ezekiel’s response to God in the valley full of dry bones:

“The hand of the LORD was on me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the LORD and placed me in the midst of the valley, and it was full of bones. He made me walk all around among them. I realized there were a great many bones in the valley and they were very dry. He said to me, ‘Son of man, can these bones live?’ I said to him, ‘Sovereign LORD, you know.’” —Ezekiel 37:1-3

We discover great truth in the prophet’s words: “Sovereign LORD, you alone know.” Indeed, God alone knows.

I love the command and promise presented to us in Proverbs:

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding. Acknowledge him in all your ways, and he will make your paths straight.” —Proverbs 3:5-6

We see and reason imperfectly with our limited vision and understanding. Human insight and reasoning will always be found wanting; it is simply incomplete. Contrast, on the other hand, God’s ways, which are incomprehensible, His paths, beyond tracing out. We read in Romans:

“Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how unfathomable his ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor” —Romans 11:33-34

Isaiah tells us:

“Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is an eternal God, the Creator of the whole earth. He does not get tired or weary, there is no limit to his wisdom.” — Isaiah 40:28

Needless to say, Jesus already knew the answer to His question before He even asked it. Our Savior was not searching for information; He was simply helping Philip to go deeper. Philip, who had been Jesus’ disciple from the first, and had been privy to His miracles, should have known without a doubt that Jesus could provide. Those who have witnessed and participated in God’s works should certainly maintain a deeper understanding of His ways.

Ever been with your back against the wall and nowhere to turn? Ever been empty of ability when presented with great need? Ever been clueless when the questions just kept pouring in? Jesus has asked His disciples where they can buy bread for 5,000 plus people. The disciples do not have the money. They are in a remote area. They totally lack the ability to do as Jesus has requested. It is no wonder the other three gospels tell us the disciples told Jesus to send the people away. That sounds like a reasonable response to me. Yet Jesus is not looking for my reasonable responses. He is looking for dependence on Him.

Oftentimes, when we are confronted by an out of our league need, our initial response is to send it away, get rid of it, flee, or turn a deaf ear. What we need to do is turn to the Lord! He gives His direction and power as we place our trust in Him. I can’t imagine Moses thought he would part the Red Sea, or Joshua thought he would level Jericho’s walls, or Gideon thought his three hundred men could lay flat an army as numerous as the sand on the seashore. Fact is, they did not have the ability in and of themselves, but God did. And because of His great love for His people, He chooses to use those who put their trust in Him.

It was Jesus’ desire to show His disciples—and us as well—not to look inward or outward for help, but to look upward. When we learn to lean into Him, He proves himself faithful to either miraculously change the circumstance or change us by bestowing upon us the grace sufficient to meet the need.

## **Become More**

“Confidence in the natural world is self-reliance; in the spiritual world it is God-reliance.” —Oswald Chambers

“God’s work done in God’s way will never lack God’s supply.” —Hudson Taylor

## **Further Reflections**

“Our extremities are the Lord’s opportunities.” —Charles Spurgeon

“Faith sees the invisible, believes the unbelievable, and receives the impossible.” —  
Corrie Ten Boom

“Faith raises the soul above the difficulty, straight to God Himself, and enables one to stand still. We gain nothing by our restless and anxious efforts ... It is therefore true wisdom, in all times of difficulty and perplexity, to stand still—to wait only upon God, and He will assuredly open a way for us.” —C.H. MacIntosh