

## MEN'S LIFE BLOOMINGTON & GOD @ WORK

*Tuesday, November 8, 2016*

# You Cain't Always Get What You Want

## Exodus 16

**Definition:** Do you struggle with knowing whether the things you want are motivated by need or selfish desires? Doesn't God promise to give us the desires of our hearts? And what about just being content? The experience of the Israelites receiving God's manna in the wilderness in Exodus 16 reflects our own struggle. Are the answers in the bread of Jesus available daily?

### Segment Questions:

- What's one thing you always wished for more than anything? If you acquired it, how did you feel about it?
- The people of Israel were again grumbling. Take some time to identify some things you notice about the instructions given regarding the Manna and the why's?
- Verse 18 says that he who gathered much did not have too much, and he who gathered little did not have too little. What does this say about "wants" and "needs" in God's economy?
- Psalm 37:4 says "Delight in the Lord and I will give you the desires of your heart." The promise is based upon delighting in the Lord. How might this correlation help resolve the dilemma of unfilled desire and unanswered prayer?
- Jesus claimed to be, not just manna but the true bread of life in John 6:32-35. What did we see about the manna that foreshadows how we should react to the bread of life?

### Action Questions:

- Would you say that you can be content in any situation as Paul did in Philippians 4:10-11? What can you do differently to develop that spirit of peace and contentment in your life?
- 1 Timothy 5:5-6 5."The widow who is really in need and left all alone puts her hope in God and continues night and day to pray and to ask God for help." Do you put your hope in God? Do you pray night and day? Are you depending on Jesus or self?

## **Axiom: You Cain't Always Get What You Want**

But if you try sometimes, you might find, you get what you need.

I wonder if you struggle like I do with knowing whether the things I want for myself and family are motivated by need or selfish desire? I grew up in a very small two (later expanded to three) bedroom house in a particularly poor area northwest of Detroit. I was the youngest of four boys, and so wore lots of hand-me-downs unless they were completely worn out. Maybe that's why as I grew into my teenage years, I became very conscious of style and struggled with envy with what others were wearing, or driving, or where they lived. Studying the Bible I learned that I should be like Paul who *"...learned to be content in any and every situation..."* **Philippians 4:10-11**. Yet doesn't God promise in **Psalm 37:4**, *"Delight yourselves in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart"*, and isn't that a contradiction? My life seemed a lot like the struggle the Israelites went through in the wilderness. God had promised them a land flowing with milk and honey, and yet that wasn't the reality they were living in. They desired the fleshpots of Egypt but God gave them Manna.

**Exodus 16:1-3** ... *In the desert the whole community grumbled against Moses and Aaron. The Israelites said to them, "If only we had died by the LORD's hand in Egypt! There we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death."*

*4 The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day. In this way I will test them and see whether they will follow my instructions. 13-14 ...in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. When the dew was gone, thin flakes like frost on the ground & on the desert floor.... 17-18 The Israelites did as they were told; some gathered much, some little...he who gathered much did not have too much, and he who gathered little did not have too little. 19-20 Then Moses said to them, "No one is to keep any of it until morning." However, some of them paid no attention to Moses; they kept part of it until morning, but it was full of maggots and began to smell. So Moses was angry with them.*

**21** *Each morning everyone gathered as much as he needed, and when the sun grew hot, it melted away. 31 The people of Israel called the bread manna. It was white like coriander seed and tasted like wafers made with honey.*

This passage in Exodus 16 helped me to get God's perspective on his provision in this struggle that we all have between our desires or our wants and or needs. It caused me to reflect upon the words of one of the world's great philosophers, Mick Jagger, who said ***"You can't always get what you want, but if you try sometimes, you get what you need."*** I needed to learn to accept and be content with what God provides as he determines what is best for me, and not worry after "all these things" or not work to accumulate stuff that might not be helpful spiritually

In **John 6:32-35** *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. ... 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. I need the daily manna of Jesus to unleash the Holy Spirit in my life so my heart is aligned with God's heart, His thoughts and His desires. Then I will truly receive the desires and my heart.*