

TRUTH & LIGHT

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HOW MANY LOAVES DO YOU HAVE?

“I feel compassion for the people, because they have remained with Me now three days and have nothing to eat; and I do not want to send them away hungry, for they might faint on the way.’ The disciples said to Him, ‘Where would we get so many loaves in this desolate place to satisfy such a large crowd?’ and Jesus said to them, ‘How many loaves do you have?’ And they said, ‘Seven, and a few small fish.’ And He directed the people to sit down on the ground; and He took the seven loaves and the fish; and giving thanks, He broke them and started giving them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people.” Matt. 15:32-36. The disciples must have expected Jesus to realize there wasn’t

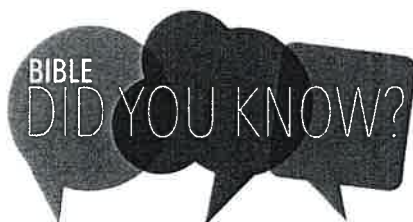
enough to work with since they themselves had such a small supply, and that Jesus would simply call down bread from heaven as Moses did with the Israelites in the wilderness. He could have. But He didn’t. He asked them to give what they had—and He did something amazing with it. “And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up seven baskets full of the broken pieces left over” Matt. 15:37. I think many today would be just as startled to find Jesus taking, what to us, seems too small to work with, and doing great things with it. Yet that is exactly what He is willing to do with each and every one of us. With Moses, God used a staff. “The LORD said to him, ‘What is that in your hand?’ And he

said, 'A staff.' Then He said, 'Throw it on the ground.' So he threw it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from it. But the LORD said to him, 'Stretch out your hand and grasp it by its tail'- so he stretched out his hand and caught it, and it became a staff in his hand," Ex. 4:2-4. There is no way Moses ever would have believed that something so seemingly spiritually insignificant as his walking stick could be used to convince people of God's authority. Nor would he have believed it would be used to part the Red Sea. "As for you, lift up you staff and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, and the sons of Israel shall go through the midst of the sea on dry land," Ex. 14:16. Peter could never have guessed that his own fishing boat would prove to be useful for the Son of God to preach from and perform an unforgettable miracle in regards to evangelism. "And He saw two boats lying at the edge of the lake; but the fishermen had gotten out of them and were washing their nets. And He got into one of the boats, which was

Simon's, and asked him to put out a little way from the land. And He sat down and began teaching the people from the boat. When He had finished speaking, He said to Simon, 'Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch,'" Lk. 5:2-4. To each and every one of us, the Lord is searching for something we already possess or some trait we already have for service in His Kingdom. How many "loaves" do you have? Does it seem too little to be useful for such a great work? For one man, a donkey that no one had ever sat on proved to be quite necessary for the Lord in His work of convincing others He was truly the Messiah. "As they approached Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, He sent two of His disciples, and said to them, 'Go into the village opposite you, and immediately as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, on which no one yet has ever sat; untie it and bring it here. If anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' you say, 'The Lord has need of it'; and immediately he will send it back here,'" Mk. 11:1-3. The

Lord has need of us. And He doesn't have to put something fantastic or better than what you already possess in your hand to be useful to Him. You may say, "How is so little enough for such a great work?" When we have unexpected guests, Jesus doesn't miraculously fill our pantry with company-worthy food, but a peanut butter sandwich with a heaping side of Christ's love will fill the hungriest soul. It is possible to give something or do something incredible and still leave people empty. What is it that makes our gifts and deeds, whether big or small, "filling"? What is our motivation? Is it out of pride, to show what we're capable of? Jesus could have called bread down from heaven simply to display His awesome power, but He didn't. "I feel compassion for the people...they have nothing to eat...they might faint on the way." Jesus acted in compassion, displaying to the disciples, to the people, to us, the power of His love to achieve great things—even through inadequate man. Take heart. Whatever we have, whatever

we give—a meal, a cup of cold water, a kind word, a helping hand—when we give it with a heart overflowing with the love of Christ, with compassion for those in need, and for the glory of the Father, it will always be more than enough. So go ahead, put your pitiful best into His hands, as the disciples with the seven loaves did, and prepare to be amazed!
— Daniel Ruegg



Epaphroditus was a Christian who literally worked himself sick as he served the Lord for his brethren. "For indeed he was sick to the point of death, but God had mercy on him...Receive him then in the Lord with all joy, and hold men like him in high regard; because he came close to death for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete what was deficient in your service to me."

Philip. 2:27,29-30

BIBLE TRIVIA

C H A L L E N G E

DIRECTIONS: After searching through your Bible, circle which answer is correct.

1. A fool rejects his father's _____, but he who regards reproof is sensible.

- a) Love
- b) Discipline
- c) Watch
- d) Money

2. The _____ of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, but the prayer of the upright is His delight.

- a) Singing
- b) Work
- c) Sacrifice
- d) Laughter

3. Without _____, plans are frustrated, but with many counselors they succeed.

- a) Muscle
- b) Intuition
- c) Commitment
- d) Consultation

4. The LORD will tear down the house of the proud, but He will establish the boundary of the _____.

- a) Widow
- b) Rich
- c) Prudent
- d) Cautious

5. He who neglects discipline despises himself, But He who listens to reproof acquires _____.

- a) Bruises
- b) Understanding
- c) Pain
- d) Honor

6. All the ways of a man are clean in his own sight, but the LORD weighs the _____.

- a) Outcome
- b) Effort
- c) Balance
- d) Motives

7. When a man's ways are pleasing to the LORD, He makes even his _____ to be at peace with him.

- a) Enemies
- b) Friends
- c) Family
- d) Livestock

8. A gray head is a crown of glory; it is found in the way of _____.

- a) Years
- b) Learning
- c) Diligence
- d) Righteousness

9. The refining pot is for silver and the furnace for gold, but the LORD tests _____.

- a) Faithfulness
- b) Hearts
- c) Sinners
- d) Strength

10. He also who is slack in his work is brother to him who _____.

- a) Procrastinates
- b) Quits
- c) Sleeps
- d) Destroys

- 1) B, Reference: Prov. 15:5
 2) C, Reference: Prov. 15:8
 3) D, Reference: Prov. 15:22
 4) A, Reference: Prov. 15:25
 5) B, Reference: Prov. 15:32
 6) D, Reference: Prov. 16:2
 7) A, Prov. 16:7
 8) D, Prov. 16:31
 9) B, Prov. 17:3
 10) D, Prov. 18:9