



MAY

The Bread *of Life*

By Sarah Sargent

I currently teach the preschool Sunday school class at my church. My students do not know this, but I teach them two lessons every week: 1) the Sunday lesson from the D6 Family Ministry curriculum and 2) the same *life lesson* each Sunday. Their little minds might not remember what I teach them, specifically about Paul and Barnabas or Elisha, but I hope the *life lesson* we review each week will stick. Here is my Sunday *life lesson* routine: I hold up my Bible, and they usually do the same with theirs. Then, I ask them the same series of questions. After a few weeks, they know the answers without needing assistance.

“What is this?” “The Bible!”

“What is the Bible?” “God’s special book!”

“Everything in it is?” “True!”

“It tells us what?” “How much Jesus loves us!”

“We can ask it what?” “All of our questions!”

“What does it teach us?” “How to live like Christ.”

When those little children leave my class, I pray they will always know the Bible is special and its words are true! The Bible will tell them how to live and how much God loves them. And if they open its pages and dig into its truths, it will be their guide in life. As a small kid, I learned that lesson, and it is one I try to put into practice daily.

When we read our Bibles, we are blessed with the opportunity to read the entire stories. The warnings, the choices, the results, and sometimes even the consequences are open to us. This often leads to our judging the characters quite harshly. I can think of a few that, in our minds, we would like to throw stones at them: Adam and Eve, the disciples, and most often, the wandering Israelites. I mean, they provided us with over 40 years of material, right? In judging them, let us also remember we have required the daily mercy God provides because we, too, have made mistakes more frequently than we should.

We will spend some time in the desert with the Isra-

elites. In Exodus 16, we catch up with them not too long after crossing the Red Sea onto dry land. They have just left the palm trees and twelve springs of water and find themselves in a barren region. They are feeling ‘hangry.’ In this desperate state, they fall back on their repetitive grumble. “And the people of Israel said to them, “Would that we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt when we sat by the meat pots and ate bread to the full, for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger” (verse 16:3). This verse causes us to question their sanity. They had only been gone from Egypt for a couple of months. Didn’t they remember the taskmasters? The harsh living conditions? The killing of almost an entire generation of baby boys? Living as slaves? Surely, this is not the life for which they are longing. Unfortunately, it is. Looking past all the negatives of bondage, they only see the meat pots and endless bread. They ignore the Creator of the universe, the One currently leading them through the desert by pillars of clouds and fire, has



everything they could ever need; all they need to do is ask. “Hindsight is 20/20.” Indeed, it is. We look back at this story and identify their mistakes right away. But take a moment and think about your life.

Think About It



Do you ever look back at your past with a desire to revisit moments?

Have you ever gone back to the things that hurt you?

What about when you are vulnerable? Do you go back to the things that held you captive?

If we are honest, we find ourselves right beside the Israelites, looking back to what we know versus trusting God with what we don't know. But just like God did for the Israelites, He is creating something better for you and me than our past.

Let's not set-

tle for the “meat pots.” Let's reach with open arms toward Christ and all the goodness He is preparing for us.

“Then the Lord said to Moses, Behold, I am about to rain bread from heaven for you, and the people shall

go out and gather a day's portion every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in my law or not. On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather daily” (verses 4-5). I am so grateful we serve a Savior who loves us despite ourselves. Here we see how He lovingly provided a heavenly meal for His children. I wonder what manna tasted like. The description says a flake-like seed that tastes like a wafer made with honey. So ... it's not straight off the Krispy Kreme hot-glazed doughnut line I imagined as a kid! But initially, it tasted amazing to the Israelites! Verse 18 says they gathered as much as they could eat. As a picky eater, I can affirm you don't “gather as much as you can eat” of food that does not taste good. In fact, the manna was so good they ignored the “no leftovers” rule and saved some for the next day. As a result, God permitted the manna to breed worms causing it to stink. He tested their faith and their trust that He would honor His Word and provide this meal every morning except the Sabbath. He also tested their obedience. If they could follow Him in small things, like how to gather food properly, then He could begin to trust them with bigger, more important tasks.

Think About It

Can you see in your life where Jesus has or is testing you with something small to prepare you for something bigger?

God will supply our every need, not necessarily our every want. Are you trusting God to know how much you really need or what you want?

In Exodus 16:32-34, the Lord commanded them to keep an omer (an Israelite unit of dry measure) of manna as a reminder of this heavenly meal. This preserved manna would stand as a testimony to future generations of God's provision for their ancestors. How great would it be if we were passing down our testimonies to future generations of all the times God provided for us? We should be teaching and speaking about the stories in God's Word, as instructed in Deuteronomy 6, but we should also be passing down

our personal stories of faith. Like the manna provision for the Israelite descendants, our stories will remind our descendants of God's provision in current world scenarios.

Think About It

How can you pass down your personal stories of faith to the next generation?

Is there a physical reminder, like the jar of manna, that could remind you of God's goodness in your life?

In Numbers 11, we read how the Israelites began to detest the manna God was providing. Again, they longed for the meat and fruit they had in Egypt. Despite their grumbling, God continued to provide the daily nourishment of manna until they reached the border of Canaan, the Promised Land. God does that in our lives as well. Despite our occasional grouchy disposition, He still provides us with our needs 'according to His riches in glory' (Philippians 4:19). *Baker's Evangelical Dictionary* says, "The purpose of manna was to test Israel's faith, to humble them, and to teach them that one "does not live on bread alone but every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord" (Deuteronomy 8:3,16). So, just as God provided nourishment through manna for the children of Israel in the wilderness, He has provided us with spiritual nourishment in the pages of our Bible. Our Women Active For Christ theme for 2025 is "Satisfied," and if we dig into God's Word, we will definitely be nourished and satisfied!

Think About It

If manna was a daily provision, doesn't that show how often we should be in our Bibles?

What other comparisons can you see between manna and the Bible?

"Jesus then said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." They said to him, "Sir, give us this bread always." Jesus said to them, "I am the

bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst" (John 6:32-35). This text affirms we no longer need manna from Heaven to maintain life. Jesus is the Bread of Life and the only source we will ever need. Our daily relationship with Jesus will sustain us, much like manna sustained the Israelites in the wilderness. Like so many things in Scripture, the arrival of Jesus provided something so much better than before.

Think About It

What other things did the arrival of Jesus replace?

Can you notice a difference in your day when you fail to spend time with Him in His Word?

2 Timothy 3:16 says, "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness." Just like we need food and water to maintain our physical bodies, we need daily time in God's Word to strengthen our spiritual bodies. Fasting is proof that the latter is more important than the first. Jesus verifies this in Matthew 4. He has been fasting for forty days and nights in the wilderness, and verse 2 says He was hungry. Satan begins his fight by going after Jesus' flesh. "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread" (verse 3). He knows Jesus hasn't eaten, and He is hungry. Jesus was 100% human, so His flesh felt the effects of no food. He was vulnerable. Satan is pushing the self-worth button, too, "IF you are the Son of God..." Oh, but I love Jesus' response. "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from God" (verse 4). Jesus is quoting Scripture to Satan. Satan takes the first punch then rallies with Scripture himself. All three times the devil tempts Jesus, Jesus counters with the Word of God. We should do exactly like Jesus when we find ourselves in a fight with the tempter. Use God's Word against him!

I struggle with a particular topic in my life and Satan drags me into the ring regularly. It's a topic where I am incredibly vulnerable. After fighting with him over and over and over again, I decided to fight back like Jesus. In my Bible I found a verse that spoke truth to my

struggle. I wrote it on a card and taped it to my computer monitor at work. Now, when the tempter brings this subject up, I read that verse. I remind him he is a liar and repeat God's Word to him. If he continues to tempt me, I flip my Bible open to Revelation 20:7 and simply remind him of his future.

Think About It

Is there a lie the tempter likes to throw in your face repeatedly?

If so, take time today to research Scripture to speak truth to his lies. If you need to, make copies of the verse(s) and hang them where you are most vulnerable.

We are blessed to have so much access to God's Word. I can name multiple ways to access God's Word. You likely have a Bible app on your phone. You have the Bible you carry to church. The internet contains various versions of the Bible. Your bookshelves at home probably have at least two or three copies of the Bible on them. Do you have bad eyesight? Audio Bibles are available. Again, we are so blessed to have access to His Word. Many people worldwide do not have access to the Bible in their heart language. (We must pray about that and provide financial support if possible. Check

out—<https://illuminations.bible/>)

Think About It

Take a moment and try to count how many Bibles you have access to in your home.

What simple sacrifice could you make to help financially support translating the whole Bible into the 6,640 languages without it?

Owning a Bible does not make you a student of God's Word. Just like having a membership to a fitness gym doesn't make you skinny. Effort and commitment are required. The same is true with studying the Bible. We have access to translations, commentaries, concordances, and dictionaries, but without effort and commitment, these resources are meaningless. God has provided us with the bread, but we must put effort into gathering it for our good. Just like manna gave the Israelites daily nourishment, time in God's Word will provide for our spiritual needs. When we read the Word, God will open our minds to His plan for our lives. He will guide us in the way we should love and forgive. When we spend time with Him in His Word, He will show us how to be good friends, stewards, and family members. He will open our minds to His promises and the many blessings He bestows on us. As we



grow closer to Him through His Word, He will surround us with His peace, joy, comfort, grace, and the freedom of living by faith.


Think About It

What needs are you longing for that can be met through Scripture?

Does spending time studying your Bible feed your spiritual needs?

I have wrestled with wanting to be a better student of the Bible for many years. One time, I heard an illustration that really helped me; unfortunately, I can't remember the speaker to give proper credit. We often get frustrated with ourselves when we don't quite understand the Bible's meanings right away. When we don't become scholars after a few studies, we get flustered and might even think it'll never happen. Why do we think the Bible is different from learning any other thing? I would never sit through a couple of Spanish classes and get mad that I'm not fluent in the language. I would never pick up a tennis racket and expect to be a skilled player after a few lessons. The Bible is no different. Time and continued effort is necessary to study His Word. What is so great about the Bible is that we can study it until Jesus returns, and it will always breathe new life and value into our days. Isaiah 55:11 promises His Word will not return void but will prosper in where it was sent. So, spend time with Jesus and His Word. Open your heart and mind to what He wants to share with you daily. Remember, it is within the pages and stories of our Bibles that our own story will find meaning.

I want to end this study with an illustration that wraps up our lesson. Author and speaker [Jackie Hill-Perry](#) shared a video on her Instagram account I found very challenging and relatable to this topic.

Let me share some of the video in her words. "Have you ever been to Olive Garden? If you've never been there, let me tell you what happens. Once you have been seated at the table they bring you a basket of breadsticks. The most delicious breadsticks you'll ever have in your entire life. (Second to maybe Cheesecake Factory brown bread with the oatmeal on top.) They bring the basket out and you have yourself one breadstick. Then you lose your absolute mind, and you eat two breadsticks. You may even eat three breadsticks. They may even bring you a little salad with the cheese. Then they bring you a menu. You scroll through and decide you'll eat chicken marsala or lasagna. Then when the waitress comes out with your meal something strange happens when you realize you don't even want what you thought you wanted. The reason you don't want it anymore is because you consumed so much bread that you don't have capacity for anything else. That's what happens when you get the bread of life. Knowing Jesus means we can be so full of His love, so full of His power, so full of His truth, so full of His grace, that we don't have the capacity for foolishness anymore. Because the thing is, we sometimes forget Jesus said I am the Bread of Life. You know what happens when you eat bread? It can hold weight in your body. And so, Jesus is saying, "I'm not just here to save you. I am here to satisfy you!" 

About the Writer:

Sarah Sargent is a third-generation member and leader in FWB Women's Ministries. She has been active at all levels of the ministry from an early age. In 2013, she began serving on the WNAC board and has been a member of the Shine team since its inception, as both a speaker and writer. She serves as President of the women's ministry at Reynoldsburg FWB Church and President for Ohio FWB Women's Ministries. She is a proud alumni of The Ohio State University, loves all things Disney and her labradoodles Regal and Lexi.