

“God Has Not Given Up On You, Don’t You!”

By Mrs. Sojourner



Have you ever had God ask you to do something that seemed impossible? Have you failed at a test he’s put before you again...and again...and AGAIN!

I certainly have. I was very discouraged and felt hopeless. My hurdle seemed too much to conquer.

Fortunately, God is not human. He does not give up as easily as we sometimes do. Let us remember this scripture:

⁵And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons: “My son, do not make light of the Lord’s discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, ⁶because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son.”^[a]
⁷Endure hardship as discipline...
¹⁰Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. ¹¹No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. ^{Heb. 12:5-7a, 10-11 (NIV)}

Do not give up irregardless of the hurdle, be it quitting smoking, forgiving people

Notes:

[a]
Prov.
3:11-12

[b]
Matt.
28:20,
Deut.
31:6

who have done despicable things to you or those you love, or be it laying down something or someone that you love more than our Heavenly Father (that someone could be ourselves and our own desires).

God, in his persevering love, came up with and executed such an elaborate and self-sacrificing plan to bring redemption to mankind, thus proving his never-ending supernatural love for us. God has not given up on mankind as a whole, and he has not given up on you.

So look again at the hurdle before you with eyes of thanks giving knowing that God promised to never leave or forsake us^[b] so he is with you as you walk in obedience, run again toward the hurdle before you, and **DO NOT GIVE UP!**

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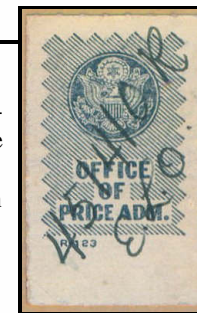
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...with The Sojourner

“Ration Book” (Teaching Sketch)

John 6:1-14



Few people would ever say they liked the idea of rationing. Rationing is often done in time of war and time of extreme shortages of certain foods or goods.

Loaves & Fishes

When Jesus and the disciples encountered a great throng there would be concern on the part of the disciples regarding food provisions for such a great number. Jesus asked Philip where they could buy bread to feed so great a number of people. Notice, Jesus did not ask how can we afford to buy bread, but where can we buy bread. Philip showed his concern immediately, especially regarding the financial cost of such an undertaking (about eight months wages or in today’s terms \$25,000 to \$30,000) and that would only purchase an inadequately small amount of food for each person. Philip was soon joined by Andrew in this seemingly impossible matter.

Andrew spoke up and told them about a small boy who had five loaves and two fishes. Andrew saw there was

food but in an inadequate amount to meet the demand of the task at hand.

Morale

When there is lack there is usually low morale among people. The scriptures tell us, “hope deferred makes a heart

sick.”^{Proverbs 13:12} When a person is “heart sick” they can easily become convinced the condition will never change and will never get any better. They may even decide, with great ease, things will actually deteriorate even further.

Lack

The natural mind tends toward lack—the perception of not enough. We must learn to expect more than enough while, perhaps, experiencing temporary lack.^{Philippians 4:11-12}

There were not enough loaves and fishes to feed the throng but this turned out to be a temporary thing. Jesus knew the seed of the boy’s five loaves and two fishes would be more than enough when combined with thanks to the Heavenly Father for what there was at that moment! How did Jesus know it would

Notes:
[1]
Ration—
A fixed allowance of food, clothing, fuel, etc., during a time of war or shortage.

[2]
Ration Book
A book containing coupons which can be exchanged for rationed goods.

Scripture:

John 6:1-14 (NIV)

Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand

¹Some time after this, Jesus crossed to the far shore of the Sea of Galilee (that is, the Sea of Tiberias), ²and a great crowd of people followed him because they saw the miraculous signs he had performed on the sick. ³Then Jesus went up on a mountainside and sat down with his disciples. ⁴The Jewish Passover Feast was near.

⁵When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, "**Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?**" ⁶He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do.

⁷Philip answered him, "Eight months' wages^[a] would not buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!"

⁸Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up, ⁹"Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?"

Notes:
[a]
Greek
two
hundred
denarii

¹⁰Jesus said, "**Have the people sit down.**" There was plenty of grass in that place, and the men sat down, about five thousand of them. ¹¹Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted. He did the same with the fish.

¹²When they had all had enough to eat, he said to his disciples, "**Gather the pieces that are left over. Let nothing be wasted.**" ¹³So they gathered them and filled twelve baskets with the pieces of the five barley loaves left over by those who had eaten.

¹⁴After the people saw the miraculous sign that Jesus did, they began to say, "Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world."

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John 6:1-14

be enough? Jesus knew the will of God. He knew it was God's will they be blessed in this life, in that moment, to meet their temporal needs. We are told Jesus only asked Philip to test him to show Philip he was focused on the problem in the natural rather than the desire of God to bless in the natural.

Do You Ration?

Philip and the disciples were trying to figure out how to ration an inadequate amount of food to feed the throng. Many people do the same with what they have, as they impose rationing on themselves rather than looking to God's methods and desire to bless them. They make their check book their ration book and their debit card their ration card, rather than give true thanks for what they have and planting a seed from it as did the boy with his basket. The boy's basket fed them all, with 12 baskets of food left over. Be thankful for what you have and plant it as a seed to the Lord. You are being tested just as was Philip when Jesus questioned him. Just as Andrew was tested with what he could see that was not even his. Andrew's test was with what belonged to someone else, and a child at that. Have the faith of a child!!!

Just so you'll know:

Our service is informal. We look to the Holy Spirit of God to guide us corporately and individually.

Our service usually follows this general pattern:

- **Informal sharing** of what we have seen the Lord do in, through, and around us since we last met.
 - Testimonies are often a part of the conversation.
- **Opening Prayer**
- **Praise & Worship**
- **Words of Prophecy or Knowledge** if they have been given during "Praise & Worship" (other times as the Spirit moves).
- **The Pastoral Message**
- **Prayer Requests**
 - Ministry to those present & intercession.
- **The Blessing**

