

God Cares for His Disciples

By Crystal Green

for use as
STEP 1



Lesson 12

Focus:

God cares for His faithful disciples.

Lesson 12

Bible Basis:

Acts 9:36-43

Lesson 12

Memory Verse:

Peter sent them all out of the room; then he got down on his knees and prayed. Turning toward the dead woman, he said, "Tabitha, get up." She opened her eyes, and seeing Peter she sat up.

—Acts 9:40

Students will discuss how God cares for those who faithfully follow Him.

OPENING ACTIVITY: *My Rewards*

On many jobs, employees are rewarded among other factors for timeliness, meeting required quotas, longevity, efficiency, creativity, and consistency. Rewards are also given in schools for attendance, good grades, and athletic ability. Ask your students what rewards they have received for various reasons and also why you received those rewards.

This story reminds us that God provides for His faithful servants—He cares for His children.

OPENING STORY: [Make copies of the story or read it aloud to your class]

GOD MEETS OUR NEEDS

Erin Odom grew up in upper middle-class America—and she planned on spending her life as a missionary. Instead, at the pinnacle of achieving this lifelong dream, she saw her marriage in shambles and her family standing in line to apply for food stamps. In the midst of it all, God began to soften Erin's heart with humble pride she didn't even know existed, and draw her to a deeper trusting in His provision for all of her needs. This is a portion of her personal testimony from the blog of Ann Voskamp.com:

"God is the Great Provider. I'd known that since childhood, but I didn't truly recognize His personal provision for our every need until I was in my early 30s, with two young children and another one on the way, a husband who worked several extra jobs on the side, and an income that still didn't cover all our expenses.

"It was a desert season. We were frustrated by trying to make our money stretch, I was depressed, and our marriage was stuck in neutral. The tunnel looked dark, and I couldn't see a way out. On paper we were poor, yet I can look back now and see how I richly experienced

God's presence during that time.

“With a burgeoning belly, one toddler on my hip, and another wrapped around my knees, it wasn't uncommon for me to open my near-empty refrigerator and whisper prayers of petition wrapped in thanksgiving: God, You will meet our every need. You have never failed us. You are in control. It was a 'this is it' season. This, I would tell myself, is when our faith is proven real.

“It wasn't the first period in my life when I'd been forced to depend on God alone. A key example is the day my friend Courtney died tragically in a car wreck. I'd known Jesus as my personal Savior for 10 years at that point, but at just 19, my faith was still mostly untested and immature. I felt empty, alone, and abandoned by God.

“The day I lost Courtney is still clear in my memory. Stifling tear-filled screams as I clenched and unclenched my fists, I crumpled to my dorm room floor and clasped my hands over my heart.

“ ‘Where are You, Jesus?’ I asked audibly, as I nearly hyperventilated. ‘Where are You now? Why can't I feel You? Are You even real?’ ”

“Through heavy-hearted days during which sleep evaded me, God slowly, gently began to heal my grief. He soothed me through 1 Peter 1:6-9: ‘In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Though you have not seen Him, you love Him; and even though you do not see Him now, you believe in Him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.’

“Fast forward more than a decade, and the circumstances of this season were certainly different from that heartbreaking day in 1999. But in this trial, too, God was building our faith. Just as I personally had learned to trust Him as I walked through a season of grief, our family would learn to trust God during a season of need. It had been easy to trust Him when we weren't in want. Now that we were, God was cultivating in us a deeper faith, a stronger trust in His provision. I started looking at and crediting each and every incident—from the government WIC checks to the gift of a box of persimmons from a stranger—as God's provision for our family. Like manna in the wilderness, the Lord provided again and again and again.

“As time passed, I saw it more clearly than ever, and looking back, I realize He provided all along. The manna or 'bread' from heaven in Exodus 16 wasn't what the Israelites wanted, but it was what they needed. It wasn't extravagant, and in their shortsightedness, forgetting the turmoil the Egyptians inflicted upon them, they grumbled against God's provision. Still, it met their needs.

“Born in the United States to a semi-affluent family, I'd never experienced true want. Perhaps we desired more, but just as the Lord had provided for the Israelites in the desert, He covered our needs. . . .

“God's Word reminds us that everything we have comes from the Lord. Romans 11:36 says, ‘For from him and through him and for him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.’ If we are not careful, pride can take root in our lives, and we can begin to operate out of the false belief that success is the result of our own merits. I know that was the case with me, although I would never have admitted it or even seen it in myself before our season of low-income living. It

took a humbling, a knocking down of the pride that ran deeper than we knew, for us to realize that everything we have comes from God alone.

“When we live by the philosophy that we have earned and are entitled to our possessions, we’re more likely to hold onto them tightly rather than share them freely. When we remember that all things come from the Lord—it’s easier to hold His blessings with open hands and give generously.”

Have your students form small groups to discuss their answers to these questions.

- **How have you seen God take care of you during some very difficult times?**
- **What did He use as “manna” to help you when you were in your own “wilderness”?**
- **Have you ever been tempted like Erin once was to cry out to God and say that He doesn’t care for us as His faithful disciples? Explain your answer.**

(When you are finished with the questions, go on to Step 2 in your *Adult Teacher’s Guide*.)

News Source:

annvoskamp.com/2017/08/how-god-meets-every-single-need/

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God Cares for His Disciples

for use as
STEP 4



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Acts 9:36-43

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NOT FORSAKEN

God rewards His faithful people. Sometimes we don't see His provision until we look back later, but He takes care of those who live for Him.

His people have known that for centuries. In Psalm 37, the writer says that in his old age, all his life he has never witnessed a godly person overlooked or abandoned: "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread" (Ps. 37:25, KJV).

Now have your students return to the groups they had in Step 1 to discuss this question.

- **How is God taking care of you right now?**
- **How can you show your gratitude to Him this week for His caring for you?**

End the class in prayer. Give thanks for our loving and caring God who meets our needs and cares for us in every situation.

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THE BIBLE IN THE NEWS

An ancient seal found in Jerusalem confirms accounts in 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles:
<https://www.christianpost.com/news/2700-y-o-governor-of-jerusalem-seal-discovery-backs-biblical-accounts-in-2-kings-2-chronicles-212168/>