



I WANT LEFTOVERS!

KEY SCRIPTURES: John 6:1-13, 2 Samuel 24:1-10, 1 Peter 1:3-9

How many times have I read the story about Jesus feeding the five thousand? It's so familiar, we might even know it just by that simple title. We know what happened. We know who was there.

That's what I was thinking to myself when I read it again, this time in John 6, because that's where my ribbon marker in my Bible was.

I knew about the five loaves and two fish. I knew about the conversation beforehand that showed the disciples' confusion and disbelief. And I was guilty of wondering if God could show me something new as I read the story—again. I was guilty of wondering if God could really use this kind of story to meet me where I was.

He did.

The "where I was" part? I was in the middle of a sort of questioning time with God. Having started a new career, a career of self-employment in which I only had God to lean on, I have to admit those questions surfaced often, as in daily. "God, you're going to pay the bills, right?" I was in the middle of trying to run a business while keeping God in the middle and in the loop. I was in the middle of refusing to run, refusing to quit, but sometimes casting glances at Plan B options, even though I knew God didn't want me to count my soldiers. (That story is in 2 Samuel 24.) I was in the middle.

The middle isn't bad. It's just uncomfortable. But that's where God lets us have questions, and doubts, and fears. That's where He lets us do stupid. That's where He lets us worry, and fret, and lay the same inquiries at His feet over and over and over. And that's where He refuses to let go, as long as we refuse to let go, too.

So, I was in the middle, and I read the story of Jesus feeding the five thousand.

The cool thing about being in the middle is that it's also where God lets you dream of the end. He lets your spirit be strengthened. He lets you take a deep breath and plant your feet on the solid ground that is His Word.

(continued)

"...so we can know our value, live with purpose, and make a difference...**In that order.**"



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So, there in the middle, I read about Andrew. I read about him bringing the little boy with the five loaves of bread and two fish. Even though he didn't know what could be done with so little, he brought it anyway.

Lesson #1: Even though I don't know what Jesus will do with what I have to offer, I will bring it anyway.

Then I read about Jesus. I read about Him telling the disciples to have the people sit down. You see, He was getting ready to do something with the little that was brought to Him.

Lesson #2: If I will concern myself only with bringing what I have, Jesus will take care of getting the people ready for me.

Then I read about the people. I read about them eating as much as they wanted. They were full.

Lesson #3: God is a God of more than enough. He will be for the people I will touch, and He will be for me.

Then I read about the leftovers. I read about the disciples gathering up 12 baskets full of leftover fish and bread.

Lesson #4: Well, it's more like my dream. I want to live a life of such trust through lessons 1, 2, and 3 that I have leftovers! I want to be so blessed that I have enough to share. I want to share everything—His provision, His love, His compassion, His joy.

And I think, if I won't give up, God will make that dream come true.

So, today, that's my prayer, my dream, my strength to keep going through the middle and come out on the other side dancing. God, please give me leftovers!

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