

A STRONG CRAVING

unit 6 | session 1



CHRIST CONNECTION

The people grumbled because they thought they needed more than God had provided. God has already provided what we need most—His Son, Jesus, who died and rose again so we could be saved. The Lord’s arm is not weak; He is able to provide for all of our needs according to His riches in glory ([Phil. 4:19](#)). And this bears witness to God’s power to save sinners, providing for our ultimate need of salvation from sin and death through His gift of Jesus.

This week, we’re covering the passages and main points below. But we encourage you to dig in and read all of the content on this timeline.

Numbers 11

Numbers 12

OUR COMPLAINTS REVEAL WHAT’S IN OUR HEART

NUMBERS 11:4-6

4 Now the rabble that was among them had a strong craving. And the people of Israel also wept again and said, “Oh that we had meat to eat! 5 We remember the fish we ate in Egypt that cost nothing, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic. 6 But now our strength is dried up, and there is nothing at all but this manna to look at.”

GOD’S PROVISION IS BETTER

NUMBERS 11:16-23

16 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Gather for me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them, and bring them to the tent of meeting, and let them take their stand there with you. 17 And I will come down and talk with you there. And I will take some of the Spirit that is on you and put it on them, and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, so that you may not bear it yourself alone. 18 And say to the people, ‘Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow, and you shall eat meat, for you have wept in the hearing of the LORD, saying, “Who will give us meat to eat? For it was better for us in Egypt.” Therefore the LORD will give you meat, and you shall eat. 19 You shall not eat just one day, or two days, or five days, or ten days, or twenty days, 20 but a whole month, until it comes out at your nostrils and becomes loathsome to you, because you have rejected the LORD who is among you and have wept before him, saying, “Why did we come out of Egypt?”’” 21 But Moses said, “The people among whom I am number six hundred thousand on foot, and you have said, ‘I will give them meat, that they may eat a whole month!’ 22 Shall flocks and herds be slaughtered for them, and be enough for them? Or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them, and be enough for them?” 23 And the LORD said to Moses, “Is the LORD’s hand shortened? Now you shall see whether my word will come true for you or not.”

MAIN POINT.

Ingratitude leads us to long for something other than God's provision.



THEOLOGY CONNECTION

GOD IS MERCIFUL

Mercy refers to God's **compassion** and is often expressed in God's **withholding something, such as punishment for sin** (Eph. 2:4-5; Titus 3:5). Both mercy and grace are undeserved, meaning humanity can do nothing to earn God's mercy and grace. If we could, then it would no longer be the free gift of mercy or grace.

DISCUSSION



COMPLAINING REVEALS OUR HEART

NUMBERS 11:4-6

- What did the riffraff's complaining do to the entire group? What does this show us about complaining?
- Why do we sometimes want more than what God provides?
- In what ways are we often like the complaining people in this passage?

GOD'S PROVISION IS BETTER

NUMBERS 11:16-23

- According to verse 20, what seemed to bother God the most about the people's complaint?
-  God decided to send an abundance of quail. How does this form of punishment show God's mercy and care?
-  What is our deepest need? How does Jesus meet this need?

WHAT CRAVING FOR OTHER THINGS PULLS YOU AWAY FROM GOD? HOW CAN YOU DIRECT YOUR CRAVING TOWARD GOD THIS WEEK?

CULTURAL CONNECTION

Have you ever wondered why you're drawn to sin? Why do we desire anything besides God? Paul struggled with this concept. He admitted that he didn't always do the good he wanted to do but often did the things he knew he shouldn't do (Rom. 7:15-20). Many of us feel the same way. Sin appeals to us because we are products of a fallen world; we're born into sin. Sin masquerades as fun. Sin wouldn't be so tempting if it didn't do so. Our flesh desires to sin because our flesh desires what's worldly. So, even though we know sin is wrong and that it harms our relationship with God, we choose it because it feels good in the moment. It satisfies a craving but only temporarily. And then we're met with the choice to continue that sin or repent of it and turn toward God. The good news is that we have victory over sin through Jesus. We don't have to choose it because we have His Spirit living within us! Our flesh doesn't have to rule us any longer!



DAY ONE

NUMBERS 11:31-35

Is it true that there can be too much of a good thing? For instance, think of your favorite food. What if you had to eat it for every single meal for a month—would you get tired of it? What started out as a good thing would likely begin to make you sick!

The riffraff had cried out because they missed the food of Egypt (Num. 11:4-6). But instead of simply asking God for help and trusting in His provision, they complained that it would've been better to remain in Egypt. In saying this, they were basically rejecting God (Num. 11:20). So, God spoke with Moses and promised to send meat for the people to eat for a whole month. He said they would even become nauseated by it, and it would come out of their noses! But Moses questioned how God could send enough meat for over six hundred thousand foot soldiers, plus the elderly, women, and children. In response, God reminded them He was not weak, and He would do exactly as He promised. In today's passage, the people greedily gathered as much quail as possible and spread it out all over the camp. God's anger burned against them, so He sent a plague that killed all of those people who complained of wanting to return to Egypt. If left in the camp, these people could've eventually been very convincing about returning to Egypt. Their complaints could've continued to spread. God gave the people too much of a good thing to show them that trusting Him was better.

- **WHY WAS IT IMPORTANT FOR GOD TO REMOVE THOSE FROM THE GROUP WHO CONTINUALLY WANTED TO TURN BACK?**

- **WHAT CAUSED THE PEOPLE TO COMPLAIN: HUNGER OR CRAVING? WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THIS?**

PRAY

GOD, HELP ME NOT TO CRAVE THE THINGS OF THIS WORLD. WHEN I EXPERIENCE A STRONG DESIRE TO SIN, HELP ME TO TURN MY GAZE TO YOU INSTEAD.



DAY TWO

NUMBERS 12

Think of a time when you either struggled with feeling jealous of someone else or someone else was jealous of you. What happened? Jealousy is a struggle for many of us. We envy others because of things like material possessions, popularity, physical beauty, or athletic ability. We may even be jealous of people because of the attention they receive from others. Usually, our jealousy leads to gossiping and complaining about them or critiquing them. In an effort to feel better about ourselves, we point out everything we think is wrong with them.

Moses was God's appointed leader for Israel. But even his own siblings became jealous of him. They took an opportunity to critique Moses on his choice of marrying a Cushite, but God knew their hearts: the real issue was jealousy. God even met with them in a cloud to defend His appointed leader and to punish Miriam with a skin disease. But Moses was quick to forgive his siblings and even begged God to heal Miriam. God healed Miriam but sentenced her to seven days of exile. Jealousy is like a disease that eats at us, spreading into our minds and hearts. It isolates us from the people God has placed us in community with. It divides us and makes us bitter toward others—even those who are doing great things for the Lord.

○ **EXAMINE YOUR HEART. WHERE ARE YOU BATTLING JEALOUSY?**

○ **WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM MOSES? WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM MIRIAM AND AARON?**

PRAY

GOD, I REPENT OF THE JEALOUSY IN MY HEART AND TRUST YOU INSTEAD. HELP ME STAY AWAY FROM GOSSIPING AND COMPLAINING ABOUT OTHERS.



DAY THREE

MATTHEW 6:25-34

What does it mean to worry? Think about the things you worry the most about. How often does worry creep in? And how do you battle it? Worry is a very real struggle for many of us. We worry about our family, health issues, money, our futures, who we'll marry, if people like us. The list could go on. We feel anxiety over these things, and it can be crippling. It often robs us of being able to see God's care and provision in our lives. Jesus actually addressed some of these things in His culture too. Food was a real issue. It often spoiled and led to sickness, starvation, and death. And in His sermon on the mount, Jesus practically addressed how to battle worry about food, clothing, and life in general. First, Jesus made the point that life is so much more than food and clothing (v. 25). Jesus directed the people to look at the birds and the wildflowers and to consider how they don't have to labor or fret because God supplies all their needs. How much more does He care for us—the ones made in His own image? Jesus even gave us the antidote to worry: seeking His kingdom and righteousness. He assured us that God cares for our needs because He is our Father in heaven. Our issues are real issues. But when we seek God, we're actively placing ourselves in His care. In God's care, we can experience peace even when we're faced with difficult circumstances that cause us to worry. God cares about our needs. He sees our worry and our anxiety. And He wants us to hand it all over and trust Him with our lives. He wants us to look and see the ways He is taking good care of us.

- **WHAT ARE THE THINGS YOU WORRY ABOUT MOST? WHAT MAKES IT DIFFICULT TO TRUST GOD CONCERNING THEM?**

- **HOW DOES THIS PASSAGE COMFORT YOU? HOW COULD SEEKING GOD HELP EASE ANXIETY YOU MAY BE FEELING?**

PRAY

GOD, THANK YOU FOR CARING ABOUT ME AND THE THINGS I WORRY ABOUT. THANK YOU FOR SEEING ME IN MY ANXIETY. HELP ME TO SEE YOUR CARE AND PROVISION.



DAY FOUR

ROMANS 7:15-25

Think about the foods you often crave. Are they healthy and nutritious or are they junk foods? Most of us crave the foods that aren't all that great for us. Why? Well, the ingredients in most junk foods actually spark cravings—especially sugar. There is even research to suggest that addiction to sugar can be just as strong as drug addiction. Like a drug, it keeps us wanting more—even though we know it isn't good for us in the long run.

Sin is often like this as well. We know it only leads to heartache, depression, loneliness, and separation from God. But we keep going back to it even when we don't want to. Why? According to these verses written by Paul, sin lives within us in our flesh. We live in a fallen state. So, while we mentally know sin is wrong and spiritually harmful, our flesh is drawn to it. Paul compares it to being in a constant state of war—our flesh versus our spirit. Here's something we have to remember when it comes to war: getting comfortable causes us to slip. If you were in a real war situation, you would have to be alert at all times. You'd need weapons and protection. You'd need to watch for the enemy from all angles. The reality is that we are in a war against sin and evil. We can't passively sit back and hope our struggle to sin goes away. We actively fight it. We have to be alert at all times. We need to put on the full armor of God (Eph. 6:10-18). It's a battle we will fight until we reach heaven, but we must remember that this is a battle we can win with the power of the Holy Spirit living within us!

○ **WHAT SIN DO YOU STRUGGLE WITH AND OFTEN RETURN TO?**

○ **WHAT STEPS CAN YOU TAKE TO WAGE WAR AGAINST THIS SIN?**

PRAY

GOD, I HATE THE SIN I COMMIT. I KNOW IT ONLY LEADS TO SEPARATION FROM YOU. HELP ME WAGE WAR AGAINST THE SIN IN MY LIFE BY RELYING ON YOUR STRENGTH.



DAY FIVE

PSALM 34:8-10

Think of something you were resistant to trying because of fear. Maybe you were scared to hop on your first roller coaster, but once you finally did, you realized what you had been missing out on and actually enjoyed it! Maybe you were scared to switch schools, but once you did, the situation was much better. Some of us are often hesitant to try anything new, but once we do, we realize we wasted time being fearful and should have tried it sooner.

We've talked about food a lot this week, but it's a common analogy in Scripture because it's something most of us can relate to. In this psalm, David encourages us to "taste and see that the LORD is good" (v. 8). Some of us only know of God. We only know what we've heard or seen from our parents or family members. But we haven't "tasted" for ourselves. We haven't experienced God's presence for ourselves. We stand in worship services and sing the words of worship songs, but we don't feel anything. We don't experience any change in our lives. We still choose sin. We have to taste God for ourselves by surrendering our lives to Him. We have to enter real relationship with Him. If we're honest, we often hold back out of fear. We fear God will change our lives too much. And we're right—He is absolutely going to change our hearts, and it'll overflow into our actions. But it will be better than we could've imagined. Today, let go. Surrender everything. Taste and see that He is good.

- **IF YOU'RE HOLDING ON TO A PART OF YOUR LIFE, WHAT KEEPS YOU FROM SURRENDERING IT TO GOD?**

- **IF YOU'VE TASTED AND SEEN GOD'S GOODNESS FOR YOURSELF, EXPLAIN HOW.**

PRAY

LORD, I'VE TASTED AND SEEN YOUR GOODNESS IN MY LIFE. HELP ME TO LIVE A LIFE THAT'S FULLY SURRENDERED TO YOU.