

Give It YOUR Best Shot!

*“⁹ “Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?”¹⁰ Jesus said, “**Have the people sit down.**” There was plenty of grass in that place, and they sat down (about five thousand men were there).’ – John 6 :9-10.*

According to James 4:26, “... faith without works is dead!” So, if we are believing God for divine increase then we must back up our faith with action. We must do our part in order for God to do His! In other words, we must first give it our best shot, and then and only then should we expect God to step in and bless us supernaturally.

God works supernaturally after we have done everything naturally. So if you are believing God for the restoration of a relationship that has been dead for a while then at least work at keeping the lines of communication open with the other person. Similarly, if you would like healing, then you should ensure that you first visit your doctor and get a medical opinion on your problem and receive the necessary treatment.

Are you are believing God for a new job? Then have the outfit that you are going to wear on the first day washed, ironed and waiting. What about that new house for which you have been praying? Go ahead and make the appointment with the loan’s officer, or submit that housing application to the housing authority.

If you have always wanted to start a business and you are waiting for God to do something....”Newsflash! God is waiting for **you** to do something.” Start thinking of the business name, and take the first step in having the business registered.

If you are already in business, and you are expecting supernatural increase from God in your sales, then you should first attend to the needs of the small number of customers that you presently have, and God in seeing your faithfulness, will give you the increase.

Almost every great thing always starts small, and with time, success is achieved in stages. This biblical principle can be seen in nature as stated in Mark 4:28-29.

“All by itself the earth produces a crop — first the stalk, then the head, then grain that ripens within. And as soon as the grain is ripe, he swings the sickle, because the harvest has come.”

Wow! Our harvest –our divine increase – may take some time before it manifests in the natural, but it is bound to arrive ONCE WE ARE WILLING TO WAIT! While we wait, let the fruit of patience grow in us. Do not give up! It is true, God blesses us with success after a great deal of dedicated and disciplined work.

Persevere in doing your part, and soon, as day follows night, you will reap that abundant blessing from God! In the end, God is God, and He will do it His way and in His own timing!

Jesus highlighted these key principles in the miraculous feeding of over five thousand persons.

1. **A Little Goes A Long Way!** Jesus emphasized that in order to expect an abundance of food, first make available the little that you have to give, and God will do the rest.

‘ 9 “Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?”¹⁰

Very good! We found a boy with some loaves and fishes. At least we have something to which we can pin our faith and with which God can work. Remember, **it is about partnership....You and God!** You do your bit and let God do His part and work His wonders!!

2. **Reality Is What It Is. Stop Complaining.** Don't make excuses nor complain when it is your turn to do your part! Andrew was quick to give us a reality check! But our circumstances should not prevent us from doing our part.

‘ 9 “Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?”¹⁰ -

My friend, God is waiting for us to see beyond our realities....it is called faith. Although God loves us, He is not daunted by how impossible the situation looks! He is God. **Where impossibility ends with man, it is at that point possibilities begin with God.**

Jesus Himself said, *“What is impossible with man is possible with God.”*

Someone needs to receive this!!

3. **Be Obedient and Trust God.** Let's guard against doing things our way to find a solution to our problems, especially when life pushes us to the brink and near breaking point. When have become difficult and unbearable, we can become desperate and do things that we would not normally do in order to survive!

Although Andrew did not believe that five loaves and two fishes can feed over 5000 people, he was obedient and continued to trust Jesus in spite of how impossible the situation looked. He brought the boy with the meal before Jesus, and he did as he was told. Trust God and be obedient to His Word.

4. **Have a Mind to Work!** You have already heard that the only place 'success' comes before 'work' is in the dictionary. We need to work! We need to do our part! We need to work! We need to do our part! This is not a typo. We need to work! We need to do our part!

This is the beginning of the account of the feeding of the five thousand people as recorded in Matthew 14:15-17:

*‘¹⁵ As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, “This is a remote place, and it’s already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food.”¹⁶ Jesus replied, “They do not need to go away. **You give them something to eat.**”¹⁷ “We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish,” they answered.’*

Jesus underscored that the disciples should not take the easy way out, and “send the crowds away.” Instead, they should work at giving them something to eat. **Don’t take the easy way out of your difficult situation.** Hang in there, and start to work at arriving at a solution.

In John 6:10, Jesus again put the disciples to work:

*¹⁰ Jesus said, “**Have the people sit down.**” There was plenty of grass in that place, and they sat down (about five thousand men were there).*

It by working that we are showing God that we are filled with joyful expectation and ready to receive from Him. The disciples made the people sit. Although there was not as yet any signs of divine increase, the disciples were preparing the hearts and minds of the people to receive. So too, by our work, our hearts and minds are being prepared to receive God’s blessings in the midst of our situations.

In spite of how challenging life may become, we must have a mind to work. Don’t expect God to do everything. He won’t. We are partners with Jesus in unlocking the promise of divine increase.

5. **It Is A Test!** Jesus said that it was a test, and He already knew what he intended to do:

*⁴⁵ When 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?”⁶ **He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do.**” – John 6: 5-6.*

Likewise, our tough and seemingly impossible situations are also tests. Jesus already knows what He intends to do in our case. All that is required is for us do our part, so that when the tests are over, we will have testimonies to give of the goodness, mercy and love of God.

6. **An Example.** There was this widow, a single parent, who lived in Zarepath. Her husband passed away and she was left in need. She needed divine increase from God because there was a drought in the land, and food was running out. A Prophet named Elijah visited her. He asked her for a drink of water and for something to eat. She complained about her situation. However, **she first had to work and give out of the little that she had before she could have received her blessings from God.** She took the little flour that was left and she first baked a cake for the prophet to eat! You will read in Verse 9 below that God already knew that she would have used the little to give to the prophet. Like Andrew, she gave a reality check of how desperate and dire her situation was. She said, “Mr. Prophet, things not nice with me! Pressure! This is the last drop of flour that I have to make a bread and eat before I die!” Nothing is wrong with being aware of what the reality is. But we must not continually focus on it, that we become so discouraged and stop trusting God. Like Andrew, she obeyed and gave the man of God something to eat. Yes,

even this widow who was in dire need had to work and give from the little that she had, that is, to bless someone else – the Prophet Elijah. Then....and only then...God stepped in, heard the prayer of the prophet, and her blessings flowed. The full account is given here in 1 King 17: 8 – 16:

The Widow of Zarephath

⁸ Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, ⁹ “Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and stay there; behold, *I have commanded a widow there to provide for you.*”

¹⁰ So he arose and went to Zarephath, and when he came to the gate of the city, behold, a widow was there gathering sticks; and he called to her and said, “Please get me a little water in a jar, that I may drink.”

¹¹ As she was going to get it, he called to her and said, “Please bring me a piece of bread in your hand.” ¹² *But she said, “As the LORD your God lives, I have no bread, only a handful of flour in the bowl and a little oil in the jar; and behold, I am gathering a few sticks that I may go in and prepare for me and my son, that we may eat it and die.”*

¹³ Then Elijah said to her, “Do not fear; go, do as you have said, but *make me a little bread cake from it first* and bring it out to me, and afterward you may make one for yourself and for your son. ¹⁴ For thus says the LORD God of Israel, ‘The bowl of flour shall not be exhausted, nor shall the jar of oil be empty, until the day that the LORD sends rain on the face of the earth.’” ¹⁵ *So she went and did according to the word of Elijah, and she and he and her household ate for many days. ¹⁶ The bowl of flour was not exhausted nor did the jar of oil become empty, according to the word of the LORD which He spoke through Elijah.”*

God expects us to do our part, before He can do His.

Heavenly Father,

“I thank You for the gift of life. In spite of my present circumstances, I refuse to focus on the lack in my life. I refuse to complain, and to become discouraged because I believe that things will get better. Instead, I focus on what I already have as I work and faithfully do my part, and all that is expected of me. I continue to trust in You , O Lord, knowing that in due season, I will reap my blessings. In Jesus’ name I pray with thanksgiving. Amen.”

Memory Verses: *“You give them something to eat.” – Matthew 14:16*