

Food For Thought

Big Idea: The feeding of 5000+ people by Jesus and his disciples gives us hope that God can help us care for the needs of others and still take care of us in the process!

We expect Jesus to provide miraculous intervention when it comes to healing fatal diseases (like the ten lepers) or saving hardened sinners (like Matthew), but why does He get involved in providing wine for weddings or free lunch for a mob of uninvited groupies? The simple answer: He cares about people in their everyday lives and he expects His followers to care too. He wants us to see the people around us with His eyes of compassion and lovingly reach out to help with His power.

1. See the need

Now the day began to wear away, and the twelve came and said to him, "Send the crowd away to go into the surrounding villages and countryside to find lodging and get provisions, for we are here in a desolate place."

Luke 9:12

The disciples had just returned from a very exciting and no doubt exhausting missions trip. They had performed miracles of healing and deliverance, and they just needed some time away. But people kept finding them and following them – likely more than 10,000 (there were 5,000 men, not counting women and children). The disciples wanted them to just go away and take care of themselves, but Jesus helped His disciples see these people and their needs like He does.

2. Be the answer

But he said to them, "You give them something to eat." Luke 9:13a

This was the turning point in Christ's ministry. He had just sent out His disciples to do what they had been watching Him do and now He was expecting them to take care of this need too.

3. Use what you have

They said, "We have no more than five loaves and two fish--unless we are to go and buy food for all these people."

Luke 9:13b

We sometimes hesitate in offering to help because we are well aware of our limited abilities and resources. But Jesus wants us to think instead about the limitless abilities and resources He can supply through us when we are willing to step out in faith.

4. Divide and delegate the work

For there were about five thousand men. And he said to his disciples, "Have them sit down in groups of about fifty each." And they did so, and had them all sit down. Luke 9:14,15

Difficult jobs become easier when we learn to divide up the work and include others in the process (Exodus 18:13-26).

5. Ask God for the rest

And taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing over them. Luke 9:16a
"God helps those who help themselves" is **not** in the Bible. The truth is, God helps those who know they are helpless and ask Him for help. Jesus modeled that by looking to His Father.

6. Give it away and let God give back

Then he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd. And they all ate and were satisfied. And what was left over was picked up, twelve baskets of broken pieces. Luke 9:16b,17

He made it clear to His disciples: *He will give you all you need from day to day if you live for him and make the Kingdom of God your primary concern* (Matt. 6:33 NLT) - 12 baskets, 12 disciples – coincidence?