

# Christian Families Foster a Spirit of Gratitude

## Introduction

Our heavenly Father lovingly provides everything we need for body and soul. And it is His desire that we recognize with grateful hearts that He is the Giver of every good and perfect gift. Yet, there are times when we grumble, complain, and are not content with all that he does for us.

## Scripture

### Exodus 16:2-5,11-12

<sup>1</sup>In the desert the whole community grumbled against Moses and Aaron. <sup>3</sup>The Israelites said to them, “If only we had died by the LORD’s hand in Egypt! There we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death.” <sup>4</sup>Then the LORD said to Moses, “I will rain down bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day. In this way I will test them and see whether they will follow my instructions. <sup>5</sup>On the sixth day they are to prepare what they bring in, and that is to be twice as much as they gather on the other days.” <sup>11</sup>The LORD said to Moses, <sup>12</sup>“I have heard the grumbling of the Israelites. Tell them, ‘At twilight you will eat meat, and in the morning you will be filled with bread. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God.’”

### Exodus 17:1,2a,4-6a

<sup>1</sup>The whole Israelite community set out from the Desert of Sin, traveling from place to place as the LORD commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. <sup>2</sup>So they quarreled with Moses and said, “Give us water to drink.” <sup>4</sup>Then Moses cried out to the LORD, “What am I to do with these people? They are almost ready to stone me.” <sup>5</sup>The LORD answered Moses, “Go out in front of the people. Take with you some of the elders of Israel and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. <sup>6</sup>I will stand there before you by the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it for the people to drink.”

### Numbers 11:4-10

<sup>4</sup>The rabble with them began to crave other food, and again the Israelites started wailing and said, “If only we had meat to eat! <sup>5</sup>We remember the fish we ate in Egypt at no cost—also the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic. <sup>6</sup>But now we have lost our appetite; we never see anything but this manna!” <sup>7</sup>The manna was like coriander seed and looked like resin. <sup>8</sup>The people went around gathering it, and then ground it in a hand mill or crushed it in a mortar. They cooked it in a pot or made it into loaves. And it tasted like something made with olive oil. <sup>9</sup>When the dew settled on the camp at night, the manna also came down. <sup>10</sup>Moses heard the people of every family wailing at the entrance to their tents. The LORD became exceedingly angry, and Moses was troubled.

## Study

1. In what ways do these texts from Exodus and Numbers paint a perfect picture of *discontentment*?

2. The apostle Paul wrote, “Godliness with contentment is great gain” (1 Timothy 6:6). What is the connection between the two concepts of *godliness* and *contentment*? (Also see Matthew 6:21-24.)

3. Paul writes, “Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus” (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18). In this text, Paul places three concepts side by side: *joy*, *prayer*, and *thanksgiving*. What is the relationship between being joyful, being constant in our prayer life, and being grateful?

4. Our culture stresses hard work and striving to achieve success as the way to get ahead in life. How might this human ideal tend to compromise a Christian’s godly contentment?

5. Jesus taught his followers to pray, “Give us today our *daily* bread” (Matthew 6:11). Why is it better for Christians to ask God to bless us with the things we need for this life just one *day at a time*?

6. Read Matthew 4:1-4, Luke 9:57-58, and 2 Corinthians 5:21. What comfort do we have, as we think about the times we have been discontent?