

**How Do I Know?  
A Want vs. A Need  
October 7, 2018  
Philippians 4:11-13**

I remember so many times in my life seeing something cool like a new gadget, or a new bicycle or something and immediately finding ways to rationalize to myself why I "needed" whatever it was. And usually the question that comes to mind is, "Do I want it? Or do I need it?" We've all been there right?! I mean that's the American way. Get as much stuff as you can. And when the new version of that stuff comes out, get rid of your old stuff, which was working fine, and get the new version. Oh, and when you run out of room for your stuff – buy a bigger thing to hold the new stuff, build a bigger closet even if you have to convert a bedroom. Or heck, let's just buy a bigger house to hold all our stuff...and while you're at it don't forget we need a bigger car too. That's the American way isn't it? I mean how many of us in this room have a garage that we can barely fit our cars in, because of our stuff. Or that bedroom that is really just a "stuff" container. Or that closet that is so full of stuff that we have to brace for avalanche every time we open the door. We want, want, want...keep, keep, keep...but how much do we really need?

This hit home for me the first time I went to Sierra Leone, and many of you have probably heard me say this before. But we got to the Sierra Leone, but this part of Africa, ain't beautiful safari with elephants roaming and giraffes eating off tall trees and a bunch of Lion King moments. Sierra Leone is stricken with poverty. The animals for the most part are gone. People are struggling. Just when they were starting to bounce back from the civil war that tore their nation apart and took everything they had...Ebola comes and life as they knew it had to stop for 18 months. No farming. No going to work. No going to school. Imagine what that does to a society. But we get into the village, and I'm looking at these people living in mud huts and houses with no running water or electricity. Living off one meal a day which is rice and some sauce and maybe some cassava. I asked one of the people how they're doing, and he says without hesitation, "God is good." I immediately melted. My eyes filled with tears. Tears of repentance for every greedy moment in my life. Tears of gratefulness for this man who had what looked like absolutely nothing, who is reminding me of how much we really do have. Tears from a moment that I would never forget. And over and over that week, every time I asked someone how they were doing or as they say there, "How de body?" they would reply, "God is good."

At some point in our lives, we all have to reach a place of spiritual maturity, a growing point in our faith, where we can say, no matter how much we have, or if we end up in a Job-like situation and lose everything we have, God is still good. And He will supply all our needs.

**God will supply our needs.**

It's easy to say that, when we think about just material things though, right? Because I'm sure that every one of us at some points in our lives have had to wrestle with what we need, versus what we want when it comes to material things. Wanting a big house but learning to be okay with a small one. Wanting a new Tesla but being thankful for the 10-year-old Camry. Wanting steak but being thankful for a hamburger. But what about when it comes to situations and circumstances? What about when things don't turn out the way we think they should or when things aren't going the way we planned? When the marriage goes from fun dates and surprises and lovey-dovey stuff to bitterness and hostility? When that sweet little angel you gave birth too is now turning your hair gray with their sassy mouth, stubborn ways, giving into temptations from bad influences, or you get those phone calls about them that no parent ever wants to get and you wonder why couldn't they just be like such-and-such or why couldn't they just do what I said? When you're the hardest working, most dedicated person on your job and everybody else seems to be moving up but you. Or you've been struggling to find work and you keep finding the dream job, but the door never seems to open. Or when finances get tight in the household and you have to make tough decisions and downsize a bit. Or when someone you love is struggling with a sickness and God isn't healing them the way we want Him or when we want.

**If we believe God will supply our needs, then we have to trust that He knows what we need.**

You see, there are times in our lives when have to wrestle with things not going the way we want. But it's in those moments we have to trust that God knows what we need.

There are so many explanations for why trusting that God knows what is best for us is so important. Maybe He's allowing things to happen to you because He knows you can handle it. Check out Job. If you don't know Job's story, it goes kinda like this. Chapter 1 – Job is a good man with integrity who is a very wealthy, family man. So, one day Satan (the devil), who has been "wandering all over the earth" (Satan's job is to wander the earth seeking who he can devour...kill,

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steal and destroy) says to God, let me take everything Job has, and I'll bet he'll curse you to your face." God tells Satan, "Everything he has is in your power, but you can't touch him." So, Satan takes all his belongings, his kids, his health, everything and it gets so bad that even Job's own wife says, "why don't you just curse God and die?" And Job says, the Lord gives and the Lord takes away, blessed be the Name of the Lord....and he says I'm going to wait until my change comes but, there's something that we so often miss in the beginning of this story and that's what I want you to see today.

God says to Satan, "Have you tried my servant Job?" And Satan replies, "Don't you have some kinda protective fence around him?" Why would Satan think there was some sort of protection placed on Job unless he already been trying to harm him in some kind of way? God knew Satan had already been trying to attack Job, but God also knew that Job's faith was strong enough to handle it. Maybe you've experienced some of the treacherous, hellacious, dark, crazy things you've had to go through in your life because God knew you could handle it. It wasn't something that you wanted. It wasn't that God enjoys seeing us suffer. It's not that He's playing some kind of trick on us. But it's because he knows that Satan is going to do what he's supposed to do, which is kill, steal, destroy, stir up confusion, doubt, worry, and tension. But in spite of that God knows that while Satan is doing what he's supposed to do, that you're going to do what you're supposed to do too...and that's keep trusting, keep praying, keep believing, keep depending on God, keep fighting, and keep standing on the Word! And while Satan is doing what he's supposed to do, and you're doing what you're supposed to do, God is going to keep doing EXACTLY what He's supposed to do! He WILL supply your needs. He will watch over you. He will keep looking out for you. "He will not let you stumble; the one who watches over you does not slumber. Because He that watches over his children, neither slumbers nor sleeps. The Lord HIMSELF watches over you! The Lord stands beside you as your protective shade. The sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon at night. The Lord keeps you from all harm and watches over your life. The Lord keeps watch over you as you come and go." – Psalm 121. "He will never leave you nor forsake you." Deut 31:6 "What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?" Rom. 8:31

(pause)

And so, Job waits, keeps his faith, and in the end, God gives him double for his trouble. More riches, more animals, ten more kids, and he lives another 140 years to see three generations of his family before He went home to heaven.

**I may not get everything I want, because everything I want may not be good for me.**

So why else is trusting that God knows what's best for us so important? Maybe what you wanted wasn't going to be good for you. How many times in our lives have we wanted something, a relationship, a job, a position, a friendship...whatever it was...and we realized that thing we wanted would not have been good for us. And we realize that God kept us from it to protect us from it. Many of us have learned that lesson the hard way and the next time something like that came around and God kept trying to keep us from something...this time instead fighting and fighting to get it anyway...we stopped and prayed, and God showed us that this thing, this situation...whatever it was...was not good for us. And if you haven't learned that lesson yet, take it from some of us in this room who did learn the hard way, that's not how you want to find out. Trust and believe that God knows what's best for you. And if He knows what's good for you, then He also knows what isn't good for you.

The next reason for trusting that God know what's best for you, is that maybe He has something better for you. So often in my life I have seen God close a door in my face, and just when I was starting to get frustrated, impatient, and even mad at God for closing that door because I didn't know what I was going to do...God opened another door and it ended up being something better for me. And I had to learn that sometimes God isn't giving me what I need, because His ways are higher than mine, His thoughts are higher than mine, and His plan for me is so much better than mine. He sees in me and for me what I could never even imagine. How many in this room can say...God didn't give me what I wanted, because He had something so much better planned for me.

Last reason for trusting that God knows what best...maybe He's using your situation, your circumstance, wherever He has you in life to bless someone else. Picture Jesus. He's in the prime of His ministry, making disciples, working miracles, baptizing, preaching, and all these wonderful things. And now it's Passover and He's in the garden of Gethsemane praying while the disciples sleep, because He knows what's about to happen. And in his most human moment, he prays and says, "Father, let this cup pass from me." In other words, "don't make me do this." But then, I can just imagine, He opens His eyes...looks around the garden...sees the disciples there sleeping...thinks about them...thinks about you...and thinks about me...and He says, "not my will, Father...but Yours be done." In other words, if you have to let me go

through situation, be in this place that I don't necessarily want to be in, endure this thing...to bless someone else...then so be it. And Jesus finishes His prayer, and not soon after, he is arrested and sentenced to death on a hill called Calvary.

Now Jesus, was fully human and also fully God. So, though He prayed what He prayed in that human moment, He knew why He had to do what He had to do. But you and I are only human. We are not God. And our thoughts are not as high as His. But what if we start having more Jesus-like moments and said, "Not my will Father, but let yours be done." What if when we don't get what we want, when things don't go our way, when situations turn out differently than we thought they should, what if instead of pouting like selfish children, we would say, "Father, you know what's best for me. You know why. You know how. You know when. And You know just what I need."

When we get to that place...when we can pray that prayer, when we can make that statement with confidence...it is then and only then can we say, "Whatever state I'm in...I have learned to be content." (show Philippians 4:13 on the screen)

**Contentment is when you can trust God, regardless of what happens.** And trust that He knows what best for you. Think about it, if you believe and trust that Christ was willing to lay down His own life for you, will you not trust that He's thinking about what's best for you?

\*will need the underlined statements on the screen, but not necessarily as teaching notes.