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magazine
June '19

Blessings
God wants us
to enjoy

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A Lifetime OF CHOICES

By: Andrew Roebert

LIFE IS FULL OF CHOICES

So many choices. Which career to follow, which house to buy, which offer to accept, which business deal to take, who to marry. Each day many choices confront us. It calls for courage. Today is one of those days as again we make choices.

CHOICES DICTATE OUR FUTURES

Each choice has an effect. E.g. If we decide to marry, this can affect the direction of our lives for a long period of time. Some people rush in and make choices without much thought. Other people hold back and never end up making a choice. Others regret not having made certain choices. Have you ever heard someone say, Oh, I should have done that, or I am glad I did that?

OFTEN CHOICES CARRY COSTS

Choices carry risks. Marriage is an example of this. Many times our choices cost us something.

Joshua 24:21-23 the people answered, we choose the Lord! You have heard yourselves say it, Joshua said. You have chosen to obey the Lord. Yes, they replied, we are witnesses. All right, he said, then you must destroy all the idols you now own, and you must obey the Lord God of Israel.

For the people of Israel to obey called for action. They had to destroy those things that had been their priority.



1. Repentance.
2. Forgiveness – to others and towards ourselves.
3. Surrender of our lives to God.
4. Develop a lifestyle of dependence.

GOD HAS ALSO GIVEN US CHOICES

God wants to help us with our choices.

Psalm 25:12-13 Where is the man who fears the Lord? God will teach him how to choose the best. He shall live within God's circle of blessing, and his children shall inherit the earth.

God gave men in the Bible choices.

1 Chronicles 21:10 "Go and tell David, 'The Lord has offered you three choices. Which will you choose?'"

CHOICES BRING REWARDS

Even a right business choice has its reward. Good and correct choices bring a positive reward. The Bible indicates that the effect of our choices affects our lives. It goes further to say the effect of our choices will influence the lives of our children and our children's children. This is why choices need to be carefully and prayerfully considered. God wants to help us to always make the right choices.

THE REMEDY FOR WRONG CHOICES

Wrong decisions are also part of life. We do not always successfully achieve the right decision every time. God can even take wrong decisions and turn them into something that works for our good. Perhaps you have made some wrong choices, but how do we remedy those

WHAT CHOICES HAS GOD GIVEN US?

1. We can choose God.

Psalm 91:9 Jehovah is my refuge! I choose the God above all gods to shelter me.

Joshua 24:18 It was the Lord who drove out the Amorites and the other nations living here in the land. Yes, we choose the Lord, for He alone is our God.



2. We can choose our own way.

*Isaiah 66:3 but those who
choose their own ways,
delighting in their sins, are
cursed.*

3. Even children need to be taught to
make the right decisions. This will affect
their entire lives.

*Proverbs 22:6 Teach a
child to choose the right
path, and when he is older,
he will remain upon it.*

4. We can choose life or death.

*Deuteronomy 30:19 "I call
heaven and earth to
witness against you that
today I have set before you
life or death, blessing or
curse. Oh, that you would
choose life, that you and
your children might live!*

5. We can choose to love God.

*Deuteronomy 30:20
Choose to love the Lord
your God and to obey Him
and to cling to Him, for He
is your life and the length
of your days. You will then
be able to live safely in the
land the Lord promised
your ancestors, Abraham,
Isaac and Jacob.*

6. We can choose Heaven or Hell.

*Matthew 7:13-14 Heaven
can be entered only
through the narrow gate!
The highway to hell is
broad, and its gate is wide
enough for all the
multitudes who choose its
easy way. But the
Gateway to Life is small,
and the road is narrow,
and only a few ever find
(choose) it.*

7. We can choose whom we will serve.

Romans 6:16 Don't you realize that you can choose your own master? You can choose sin (with death) or else obedience (with acquittal). The one to whom you offer yourself – he will take you and be your master, and you will be his slave.

8. We can choose the type of Christian life we live.

1 Corinthians 4:20-21 The Kingdom of God is not just talking; it is living by God's power.

JESUS ALSO HAD CHOICES

In the garden of Gethsemane – Jesus chose His Father's will over His own will and in the process died for you and me! Jesus chose you and me!

John 15:16 You didn't choose me! I chose you! I appointed you to go and produce lovely fruit always, so that no matter what you ask for from the Father, using my name, He will give it to you.

LET'S MAKE THE RIGHT CHOICE

Choose life.
Choose blessing.
Choose to love God.
Choose His way.
Choose to serve Him.
Choose Him.



Attitudes THAT GET In the way

By: Andrew Roebert



We all want to make spiritual progress. We all want to grow in the things of God. We all want to experience more of God. Our spiritual lives are meant to take us from strength to strength and from glory to glory. But sometimes things get in the way. There are attitudes and dispositions that block us from going where God wants to take us. We need to identify these attitudes or heart conditions and deal with them ruthlessly so that we can move on with God.

THE ATTITUDE OF INVESTIGATION

Some people spend their lives investigating what God is doing and never experiencing what He has for them. I call it an attitude of investigation. Perhaps that's what the people of Israel had in the desert?

Exodus 20:18 All the people saw the lightning and the smoke billowing from the mountain, and heard the thunder and the long, frightening trumpet blast; and they stood at a distance, shaking with fear.

Exodus 20:21 As the people stood in the distance, Moses entered into the deep darkness where God was.

Some people have developed a way of life where they are content to watch what God is doing or perhaps scrutinize it. When God intended us to be drawn to Himself. As a result of this attitude people end up as 'experts' without experience, and miss what God has for them.

A CASUAL ATTITUDE

We can also begin to develop a casual attitude. At this point we begin to think that we are 'experienced'. We begin to think that we have seen all that God is going to do. We begin to speak like this: 'I have been around for a while' or 'I experienced that years ago' or 'I've see everything' or 'I have seen all this before'. God has more and more for us. We never arrive with God. Never become casual or complacent about the things of God. When we develop a casual attitude we belittle what God has done and what He wants to do.

AN ATTITUDE OF MOVING ON

This is also something that can get in our way. We can get to the stage where we feel that we have now experienced what God HAD for us and we need to move on. The Holy Spirit never plays catch up to humanity. Humanity always needs to play catch-up to the Spirit of God. Sometimes we run ahead of ourselves and then we look back and we say: 'Look how well I've done' to the Holy Spirit. The Bible says that what we do in our own strength is like filthy rags.

*Isaiah 64:6 All our righteous acts
are like filthy rags.*

*Galatians 5:25 Since we live by the
Spirit, let us keep in step with the
Spirit.*

AN ATTITUDE OF SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS

This attitude develops when we begin to think that we are right. The problem with this attitude is that it is based on our opinion and our opinion is usually based in our perception. I have found perceptions to be one of the most deceptive things in life. If I allow what I feel is right and what I feel is acceptable to be the standard, it can block anything new that God may want to do.

2 Kings 5:1-15 The king of Syria had high admiration for Naaman, the commander-in-chief of his army. So he was a great hero, but he was a leper. Syrians had invaded the land of Israel, and among their captives was a little girl who had been given to Naaman's wife as a maid. One day the little girl said to her mistress, "I wish my master would go to see the prophet in Samaria. He would heal him of his leprosy!" So Naaman arrived and stood at the door of Elisha's home. Elisha sent a messenger out to tell him to go and wash in the Jordan River seven times and he would be healed of every trace of his leprosy! But Naaman was angry and stalked away. "Look," he said, "I thought at least he would come out and talk to me! I expected him to wave his hand over the leprosy and call upon the name of the Lord his God and heal me! Aren't the Rivers of Damascus better than all the rivers of Israel put together? If it's rivers I need, I'll wash at home and get rid of my leprosy." So he went away in a rage. But his officers tried to reason with him and said, "If the prophet had told you to do some great thing, wouldn't you have done it? So you should certainly obey him when he says simply to go and wash and be cured!" So Naaman went down to the Jordan River and dipped himself seven times, as the prophet had told him to. And his flesh became as healthy as a little child's, and he was healed! Then he and his entire party went back to find the prophet; they stood humbly before him and Naaman said, "I know at last that there is no God in all the world except in Israel; now please accept my gifts."

It is only when we are humble that God can become the reality that we are looking for. There may be many reasons for you to hold on to your views and your opinions, but what about God's?

THE ATTITUDE THAT WHAT GOD HAS DONE IS OVER

This is another attitude that can hinder us from getting where God wants us to go. We see this in the attitude of some people who believe that what people experienced in the New Testament was for then. They think that it is not for now and we live in a different era. The tragedy is that when you believe that what God has made available, is for some other time, it is over for you. If we think the days of healing are over, then they're over for us. If we think that the days of the moving of God's Spirit are over, they will be over for us. What God did in the New Testament, He wants to do today and even more!

What God has done and made available is never over, but it is over for us when we develop an attitude that says, 'What God has done is over'.

AN ATTITUDE OF PRIDE

Pride can be a major stumbling block. Pride develops as we begin to have a high opinion of ourselves.

Proverbs 16:5 The LORD detests all the proud of heart.

Proverbs 16:18 Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.

Arrogance can also be seen as pride. When we are no longer humble and feel that we have everything in place and it is just that everyone else is missing it, we stand at a dangerous place. Pride is one of the major attitudes of the heart that is a stumbling block to going for God. It is as we are humble that God shows Himself to us.

Psalms 18:27 You deliver the humble but condemn the proud and haughty ones. James 4:6 God gives strength to the humble but sets himself against the proud and haughty.

AN ATTITUDE OF ACCEPTANCE

When we get to the point where we just accept things and are no longer pursuing God, we stand to miss the great things that God has in store for us. It is possible to accept an attitude of acceptance. 'This is as good as it is going to get.' 'I will just live with my life as it is.' 'God is not interested in me.' Perhaps it would have been better to call this an attitude of complacency. God wants us to press on towards the goal of knowing Him. We must exchange our complacency and acceptance for a desire for more of God. To seek Him and to find Him.

A NEGATIVE ATTITUDE

There is a story in the Old Testament about 10 spies. These ten individuals were sent into the new land to survey the situation. 8 came back with negative reports and only 2 came back with a positive attitude. A negative attitude can really rob us as individual. 'My life will never change.' 'Nothing works out for me.' We need to deal ruthlessly with negativity. Let's trust God to move in our situation and never allow ourselves to descend into negativity.

A WAIT AND SEE ATTITUDE

I have seen this attitude over and over again. When we have this attitude we do not go for God. It is like standing on the sideline of the sports field. Have you ever noticed how much advice spectators have at a sports event? They look on and know exactly what to do, but they do nothing. When we develop a wait and see attitude, we don't really want to miss out, but we end up doing so. I am so glad that the Bible does not say: 'wait and see that the Lord is good', but rather it says: 'taste and see that the Lord is good'. We need to be determined that we are pressing into all that God has for each one of us.

ATTITUDES CAN GET IN THE WAY

Perhaps this article has spoken to you today. Perhaps you have developed an attitude that is a stumbling block to receiving what God has for you. What can we do about this?

1. Repent.
2. Ask God to forgive.
3. Reject those attitudes that have held you back.
4. Make your life's goal the pursuit of God.
5. Enjoy all that God has for you!

We must never allow anything to get in the way of our determination to experience God and all He has for us.



Blessings GOD WANTS US To enjoy

God wants to bless us. That is God's heart towards us. Belonging to God should bring blessing on our lives. The blessing that God wants us to experience is really God's favour towards us. You and I were meant to share in the blessings that God planned for His people. But is there something that we can do to put ourselves in line to receive and enjoy these blessings? I believe there is and we are going to look at this.

By: Andrew Roebert

A. OBEDIENCE

Obedience is the key to receiving and enjoying the blessings that God has in store for us. Obedience is a readiness to respond to and do what we may sense God is telling us to do. Obedience is important to God.

1 Samuel 15:22 Obedience is far better than sacrifice.

Here is the promise of blessing:

Deuteronomy 28:1-2 If you fully obey the LORD your God and carefully follow all his commands I give you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations on earth. 2 All these blessings will come upon you and accompany you if you obey the LORD your God.

There are a few key words we need to take note of:

1. IF!
2. 'Fully obey'
3. 'Carefully follow'

This calls for a heart attitude, where we determine that we will obey God.

B. THE BLESSINGS

1. BLESSING ON WHERE WE LIVE

Deuteronomy 28:3 You will be blessed in the city and blessed in the country.

Just think of your city, town and your country. God wants to bless our towns our cities and our country. We can know a blessing on the place we call home. This can include your home or the place you call home.

2. BLESSING ON OUR CHILDREN

God wants to bless your children. This is a wonderful blessing that God wants us to enjoy.

Deuteronomy 28:4 The fruit of your womb will be blessed.

This blessing is an inter-generational blessing. Because of our obedience our children can know blessing on their lives. This blessing speaks of two things;

1. Being blessed with the blessing of children (offspring) and
2. Children who are blessed.

3. BLESSED WITH PRODUCTIVITY

Deuteronomy 28:4 and the crops of your land and the young of your livestock—the calves of your herds and the lambs of your flocks.

God wants to bless what He has given us. God wants to bless us with productivity in all areas of our lives. God wants us to be productive in our work places. Productivity is a blessing that God wants to give us.

4. THE BLESSING OF PROVISION

Here is another blessing that God wants us to enjoy. God wants to bless us with provision.

Deuteronomy 28:5 Your basket and your kneading trough will be blessed.

The basket speaks of our provision and our resources. God is obviously interested in supplying our needs and going beyond this so that there is enough to share with others. This is another blessing that God has for us.

5. BLESSING ON OUR MOVEMENTS

As we come and go, God wants to bless us. Part of human life is movement. In a sense we are forever on the move and God wants this aspect of our lives to be blessed.

Deuteronomy 28:6 You will be blessed when you come in and blessed when you go out.

Trust God to bless you as you travel around and fulfill your various responsibilities and obligations.

6. THE BLESSING OF VICTORY

God wants us to enjoy victory in our lives. Victory over things that would like to get us down or destroy us.

Deuteronomy 28:7 The LORD will grant that the enemies who rise up against you will be defeated before you. They will come at you from one direction but flee from you in seven.

What enemy is rising up against you? Think of the enemy of discouragement, frustration and despair. This can also include fear, stress, alcohol, drugs, pornography, greed/selfishness and many more.

7. A BLESSING ON WHAT WE DO

God wants to bless what you do. As you go out and work, know that God wants to bless that work that you will do.

Deuteronomy 28:8 The LORD will send a blessing on your barns and on everything you put your hand to. Imagine that everything you put your hand to would end up blessed. Just read that scripture again.

8. THE BLESSING OF RAIN

Here is another blessing God has in store for us.

Deuteronomy 28:12 The LORD will open the heavens, the storehouse of his bounty, to send rain on your land in season and to bless all the work of your hands.

Without rain every aspect of our lives would be affected, but with rain every aspect of our lives can know blessing.

9. THE ABILITY TO LEND AND NOT BORROW

Here is another great blessing. Instead of always having to borrow money we will be able to lend others money. There is a different dimension when we lend money as opposed to when we borrow money. To be able to do this is a blessing. It means that we have enough.

Deuteronomy 28:12 You will lend to many nations but will borrow from none.

10. THE BLESING OF COMING OUT ON TOP

Deuteronomy 28:13 The LORD will make you the head, not the tail. ... You will always be at the top, never at the bottom.

The promise of success and the ability to come out on top is also a blessing that God has in store for us. You may feel that you are always coming off second best. God's plan and blessing for us is that we would know what it is like to come out on top.

C. THE BLESSING IS CONDITIONAL

There is a conditional aspect to experiencing this blessing. It is the aspect of obedience. It will be worth it if we will choose a life of obedience. The rewards for obedience will be the blessings that God has in His word for us.

Deuteronomy 28:13-14 The LORD will make you the head, not the tail. If you pay attention to the commands of the LORD your God that I give you this day and carefully follow them, you will always be at the top, never at the bottom. Do not turn aside from any of the commands I give you today, to the right or to the left, following other gods and serving them.

We must not allow anything to distract us from obeying God. This aspect of obedience encompasses two aspects:

1. Obedience to God's word.
2. Obedience to the direction of the Holy Spirit.

Let's decide on a life of obedience and trust that the blessing that God has for us will be the reward.

A little CAN BECOME Much

By: Andrew Roebert

We know that God can do great and wonderful things. But do we realise that He can take the little we may have to give Him and do something spectacular with it? I remember a song that was played some years ago. The words went something like this: 'A little becomes much, at the touch of the Masters hand'. You may say that you don't have much to give to God, but the issue is that He can take what we give to Him and cause it to become much more. We want to look at a wonderful story in the Bible. On this occasion a little bread and two fish fed 5000 people.

THE STORY

John 6:1-12 A huge crowd were following Him (Jesus) wherever He went. So when Jesus went up into the hills and sat down with His disciples around Him, He soon saw a great multitude of people climbing the hill, looking for Him. Turning to Philip He asked, "Philip, where can we buy bread to feed all these people?" (He was testing Philip, for He already knew what He was going to do.) Philip replied, "It would take a fortune to begin to do it!" Then Andrew spoke up. "There's a youngster here with five barley loaves and a couple of fish! But what good is that with all this mob?" "Tell everyone to sit down," Jesus ordered. And all of them—the approximate count of

the men only was five thousand—sat down on the grassy slopes. 11Then Jesus took the loaves and gave thanks to God and passed them out to the people. Afterwards He did the same with the fish. And everyone ate until full! "Now gather the scraps," Jesus told His disciples, "so that nothing is wasted." And twelve baskets were filled with the leftovers!

This is an amazing story. It is a story about a little that became much just because God was involved. When God gets involved there is always the possibility of a miracle and as a result, of circumstances dramatically changing.

WHO WAS INVOLVED?

There were three people involved with this miracle besides for Jesus. Each person had a different role and response to the situation. Jesus was watching each person's response and reaction to the unfolding situation. The three people were Philip, Andrew and the little boy. Perhaps you will see yourself in one of these characters?



Each person responded in a unique way and for each person there is a lesson to be learned. God also wants to move in our lives in wonderful ways, but what will our reaction be?

THE PROBLEM

There was a major problem at hand. Thousands of people were hungry and had not eaten for some time. Jesus was concerned about the fact that the people were hungry. Here is Jesus' question: Turning to Philip He asked, "Philip, where can we buy bread to feed all these people?" Jesus wanted to meet the people's need. They were hungry and He wanted to feed them. The same is true for you. God wants to meet your need. The question was just HOW? How could they possibly feed so many people when they had just about nothing? Jesus had a plan and He would perform a great miracle.

PHILIP'S ROLE

Philip was one of the players in this drama. He was a realist. He looked at things from a rational and analytical point of view. He knew when things were impossible. Here is the story: Turning to Philip He asked, "Philip, where can we buy bread to feed all these people?" (He was testing Philip, for He already knew what he was going to do.) Philip replied, "It would take a fortune to begin to do it!" Philip recognised the impossibility, but not the person who was asking him the question. Philip was completely negative. Sometimes when God wants to move in our lives we react in the same way. Are you like Philip? When you see a problem you work it out in your mind without including God in the equation. Perhaps you come the same conclusion as Philip: "It would take a fortune to begin to do it!" All Philip could see was the impossible even though God was standing right next to Him.



THE LITTLE BOY'S ROLE

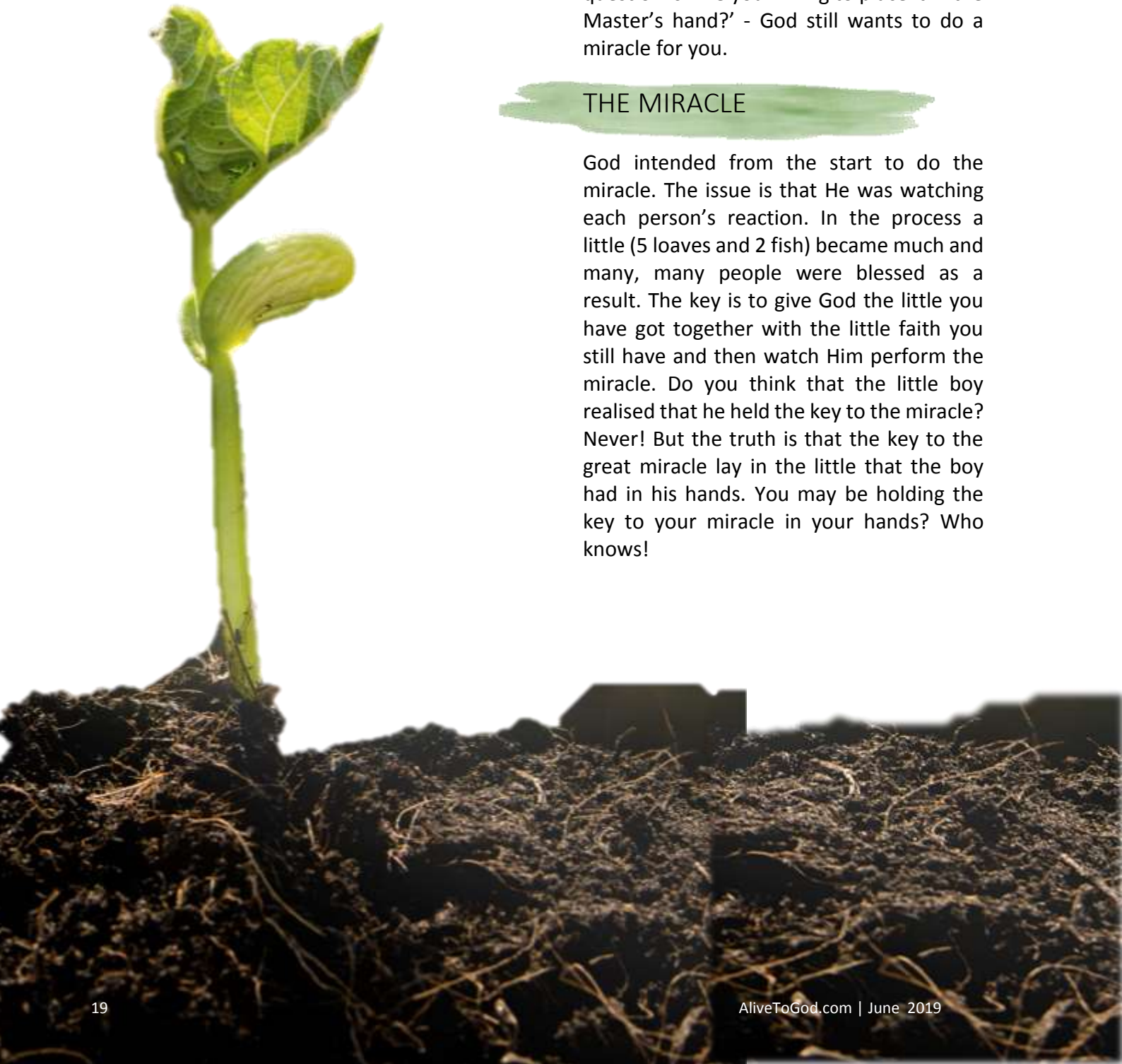
ANDREW'S ROLE

Andrew was the next player in this drama. Andrew played a slightly different role. He saw some hope and came up with a suggestion. Andrew looked for a solution. When we start looking for a solution we are getting a little closer to a miracle. Andrew recognized a little potential in a sea of impossibility. Here is Andrew's response: Then Andrew spoke up. "There's a youngster here with five barley loaves and a couple of fish! But what good is that with all this mob?" Andrew still had much doubt, but his response demonstrated at least a little faith and hopefulness. The interesting thing was Jesus' reaction to this little faith!

The little boy played a very important role but not much is said about him. Have you ever seen a little boy give up his food? The little boy was not part of the discussions between Jesus, Philip and Andrew. He had no way of knowing what the issue at hand was. But he was about to become part of a wonderful miracle. But firstly he had to give up his little bit of food. I am so glad that that little boy decided to part with his food because as a result a great miracle took place.

John 6:11 Then Jesus took the loaves and gave thanks to God and passed them out to the people. Afterwards He did the same with the fish. And everyone ate until full!



A small green seedling with two leaves growing out of dark, rich soil. The seedling is positioned on the left side of the page, with its roots visible in the soil. The soil is dark brown and appears to be a mix of dirt and organic matter. The background is a plain, light color.

WHO WILL YOU BE?

The real wonder is that in spite of Philip, God did a miracle. In response to Andrew's little hope, God did a miracle. As the little boy gave up the little he had, God did a miracle. Perhaps you are a 'Philip'. A person who can only see the impossibility – God still wants to do a miracle for you. Perhaps you are an Andrew. A person with a little faith and a lot of doubt – God still wants to do a miracle for you. Perhaps you are like the little boy. You don't have much, but the question is 'Are you willing to place it in the Master's hand?' - God still wants to do a miracle for you.

THE MIRACLE

God intended from the start to do the miracle. The issue is that He was watching each person's reaction. In the process a little (5 loaves and 2 fish) became much and many, many people were blessed as a result. The key is to give God the little you have got together with the little faith you still have and then watch Him perform the miracle. Do you think that the little boy realised that he held the key to the miracle? Never! But the truth is that the key to the great miracle lay in the little that the boy had in his hands. You may be holding the key to your miracle in your hands? Who knows!

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