Sometimes it’s hard not to be riveted and disturbed by the news of the day. The news is absorbed with the threat of the Corona virus. The world is facing economic uncertainty, intolerance of your religious beliefs and personal freedoms. You may have been laid off as a result of the fear that has gripped the nation. Your local church has made the decision to temporarily end the practice of gathering for comfort and exhortation. And that’s not even talking about the political strife here at home, which is increasingly belligerent and ultimately dangerous. You may be someone who is very concerned about everything that is going on around you and trying to understand what it’s all about. You may be feeling like this all seems like a dream and these things can’t really be happening to you. Well, you’re not alone. The question is, what are you doing about the concerns in your life? We find an example in scripture where the Israelites had a concern during their exodus from Egypt under the leadership of Moses (God’s appointed man). And it’s found in chapter 17:

"And all the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of Sin, ACCORDING TO THE COMMANDMENT OF THE LORD, and they pitched camp in Rephidim: and THERE WAS NO WATER FOR THE PEOPLE TO DRINK. So the people contended with Moses, and they said, "Give us water to drink!" Moses said to them, "Why do you contend with me? Why do you test the LORD?" But the people were very thirsty there for water, and they murmured against Moses” Exodus 17:1-3

Notice that their journey was "according to the commandment of the LORD." In other words, God led Moses as Moses led the people. They were there according to God's instruction, and yet the Bible says that upon finding no water, "the people contended with Moses."

They sought out Moses. Their complaint was directed at Moses. No doubt, they wanted Moses to solve the problem. They apparently viewed Moses as a potential deliverer from their troubles.

However, Moses responds: "Why contend with me?" As if saying, "Why take it up with me? I'm not the one who brought you here!" Now, whether Moses actually meant that or not, his response brings up an important question: Why didn't the Israelites seek out God as the deliverer of their problems? Nowhere in Exodus do you find an explicit command from God prohibiting any Israelite from seeking His face DIRECTLY. So why didn't they cry out to the Lord? Why didn't they "contend" with Him?

By contrast, Moses had the right perspective.

Moses knew that their wandering was according to God's command and that God was the true "supplier" of their needs; it was the Lord Himself they needed to seek in times of trouble. Moses did just that--in Exodus 17:4, he goes straight to God: "And Moses CRIED OUT TO THE LORD, saying, What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me."

So on the one hand you see someone who, upon encountering a problem, turns straight to God.

The Bible says: "Be careful [worrisome] for nothing; but IN EVERYTHING by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving LET YOUR REQUESTS BE MADE KNOWN TO GOD" (Phil. 4:6). The Psalmist said it best: "TO YOU WILL I CRY, O LORD my rock....Hear the voice of my supplications..." Psalm 28:1-2

"In the day of my trouble I WILL CALL UPON YOU: for you wilt answer me." Psalm 86:7

On the other hand, the Israelites are a picture of people who rarely, if ever, turn directly to God; and instead, normally turn to someone or something else for everything! The fact is, God knew exactly what He was doing by leading the Israelites to a place with no visible signs of water.

He was training them to turn to Him. The widow who is really in need and left all alone puts her hope in God and continues night and day to pray and to ask God for help. (1Ti 5:5) The Bible says: "The widow who is really in need and left all alone , puts her HOPE IN GOD, and continues NIGHT AND DAY to pray and to ask God for help.” But she that lives in pleasure is dead while she lives." 1 Tim. 5:5-6

The Israelites found themselves in a desolate spot, a time of need. They should have "trusted in God, and continued in prayers asking Him to supply their needs" Had their wandering been a pleasurable experience, they would have been dead even while they lived.

Now ask yourself:

■ Which type best describes you?

■ Are you eagerly turning to God in these times of trouble? Or are you exclusively turning to someone or something visible, the bank, the government, a friend, Dr. Phil or Dear Abby?

■ Who do you normally "contend" with?

■ Who is the real problem-solver in your life, man or God? With this example in mind, take the time to examine where you stand in your relationship with the Lord.

Which type are you?