

The Lord's Prayer Part 5

Our Daily Bread

It seems that most often as I pray, my prayers are requests that I make to God for His help in matters that are immediate to my needs. Sometimes, it's an emergency, perhaps I'm about to fall, or to have some other kind of accident, and I call out to God for His help. At other times, I need guidance as I think through a matter. At other times, I call out to God for His help in matters involving my children or other loved ones.

I pray those kinds of prayers often throughout my day. And I am so thankful that I have a loving, caring Father who is available to my every cry for help.

And yes, as the years pass and the intimacy of my relationship with the Lord continues to grow, more and more often, I find myself uttering words of thanks to Him all throughout my day, thanking Him for all of the many things He does for me and for my loved ones, some "big and important" things, but also, many, many small things, intimate things, things that might matter only to me.

And while some might not call it prayer, I find that often throughout my day, my mind wanders with just random thoughts about God, about how He is always so good and so trustworthy.

I especially often think about how He is Holy and righteous, and how I really, really don't want to disappoint Him by violating His holiness. How as we are exhorted in 1 Peter 1 to "Be holy as He is Holy", that I really do want to be as He wants me to be, Holy, especially meaning that I want to be "set apart" for His purposes and for His glory. And as I think those thoughts, I ask the Holy Spirit to be my constant reminder that I am to "Be holy" as I go about the many matters of my day.

And also, while the pattern of this prayer given here in the Book of Luke really does have a very specific order to it, especially in its beginning words of honor and praise to God, I'm comfortable in knowing that, as one of His beloved "adopted sons", my often meandering manner of prayer is exactly what my loving Father desires of me.

And I would like to encourage each one of us to know that this whole matter of "prayer" is simply one part of a very "big and all-encompassing" intimate

relationship with our loving Father. And our prayers are simply part of an ongoing conversation that we have with Him as we go throughout our day.

With all of this being said, turn with me and let's continue with our study of these precious words given to us here in Luke chapter 11. And here, we find ourselves moving ahead from prayers of honor and praise, on into the requests that He wants us to make to Him for all the many needs of our day. Listen, beginning in verse 1.

¹And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.

²And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. ³Give us day by day our daily bread. ⁴And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. (Luke 11:1-4)

First, may I take a brief moment to say that I love some of the “secret” meanings that are often hidden within some of the common words of these scriptures. Here, in verse 1, we are told that as Jesus “ceased” to pray, His disciples asked Him to teach them to pray. Curiously, this word “ceased”, though in some versions of our bible it is translated as “finished” or “stopped”. It really means, a simple “pause” in His praying. Here we are told that Jesus simply “paused” in His praying, meaning that He probably always remained within a condition of prayer to His Father. I love that thought and would like for that to be so for my own prayers!

Also too, we need always to remember that humility, a humble and contrite heart, is the first and most necessary attitude of heart that God desires for His children to have as we come to Him with our cries and petitions and requests. That was the way of the heart of the Lord Jesus and that should likewise always be the way of our own heart. Recall that He told us about His humility in Matthew chapter 11,

²⁸ “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” (Matthew 11:28-30)

As these words tell us, Jesus was the epitome of humility, humble beyond any measure we can imagine. And He wants us, you and me, to be as He is, "gentle and humble in heart".

And also, as we read back through the accounts in the Old Testament of the way that God provided for His beloved people, the Children of Israel, how so often Moses, a man described in those scriptures as being the humblest man on the face of the earth, would need to intercede for the people when they behaved in less than a humble manner.

You will recall that the Israelites could often be frustrating in their behavior towards God. We see that even during the earliest days as they traveled out from being freed from their bondage in Egypt. Instead of humble requests and petitions, asking God to provide food for them, they immediately chose to grumble and accuse Moses and God of wanting them to starve to death.

But God, in His great mercy, did not respond to their behavior with justice, but instead, showed them mercy and grace and gave them a very special kind of "Bread from heaven". He gave them "Manna" that would fall like dew upon the ground and provide them nourishing food for the day.

And in His gift of the Manna, He also promised to bring it fresh to them each day, their "daily bread". They didn't need to be concerned about tomorrow. He promised to provide it each day.

But as is often true within the human soul, some did not trust God's promise and they took more than they should, only to have it mold and ruin.

As a loving Father, God is continually in the business of training up His beloved children, especially in matters of faith and trust. And the daily provision of bread was a very intentional part of God's plan to train and to discipline His children to have a daily dependence upon Him, to train them to take no concern for tomorrow. Tomorrow would take care of itself.

But as we read further into the accounts of God's dealing with His Children, we find that unfortunately their faith and trust and satisfaction with God's provision for them would wane and descend again into grumbling and complaining.

As the Manna became common place to them, they wanted something tastier to their appetites. They wanted meat like they sometimes enjoyed back in the land of Egypt.

And again, instead of humbly crying out to God, they chose to be arrogant and to grumble. But on that occasion, as God showed them mercy and provided them with “quail” to eat, He also gave them a measure of suffering as a consequence for their complaining and lack of humility.

Examples and accounts like these of God's “daily” provision and care for His beloved Children of Israel are a very special intentional gift to you and me, if we will only have ears to hear and eyes to see.

These accounts remind us that we must not allow a complaining nature to develop within our souls, coveting the abundance that other people have, and grouching about how little we have. The underlying message to you and me is that if we will turn our hearts to God each day and with a broken and contrite heart humbly trust Him, He will generously provide all the “daily bread” that we and our families could possibly need.

And so, as we read this instruction in this prayer, “Give us this day our daily bread”, we can really know and trust that God has the most gracious of intentions for us.

He wants us to know and to trust that it is Him and Him alone who gives us our provision of “daily bread”. In John chapter 6, Jesus reminded his disciples saying,

³² . . . “Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. (John 6:32)

It was, and always is, God and God alone who makes all our daily provisions to us, not our own hands, not our employer, not welfare, not Social Security or our retirement plan, but God and God alone. He is the Giver. That is why we make our appeal to Him, “Give us this day our daily bread”.

And the appeal for the bread for only one day at a time bespeaks the essential nature of faith and trust. Just as the children of Israel were to only take one day's supply of the manna and then trust God for the next day's supply, so too are you and I to have that same daily trust.

Jesus told us in Matthew chapter 6,

²⁵“Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? ²⁶Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

³¹“Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ³²For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ³³But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. ³⁴Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. (Matthew 6:25-34)

God knows all of our daily needs, and He knows about all of the things we will need tomorrow. And He wants us to trust that He will meet all of those needs.

If we trust our own wisdom, and our own decisions, then yes, we might sometimes receive some good things, for a while. But the lesson of the molded Manna reminds us that in a short time, any gains we might have had will soon turn to losses, and we will then be left hungry and wanting.

Our prayers and our cries to God must have within them a humble, trusting faith, a faith that acknowledges that God is the one who really knows about those things that we truly need for the day we are in and that He will generously give us enough for our day. That kind of prayer does truly please God.

And also, why “bread”? “Bread” is the humblest form of food. Just like those Children of Israel in the wilderness, you and I do each love our tastier preferences of foods. I personally enjoy steak and baked potatoes. Some of you like catfish, others like Italian and Mexican foods.

But God is being intentional in His concern that we remain humble, that we not be as those dear Children of Israel and become grumblers and complainers, demanding the choicest of foods.

A phrase that one of my favorite writers, John Piper, has coined is, “God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him”. And Psalm 139 tells us that

God knows every thought that we think. We don't have to say them out loud for Him to know our deepest desires.

And beyond that, as we become more intimate and loving in our relationship with Him, He will reach to extraordinary lengths to satisfy our longings and desires.

And so it is with our asking for "bread", and being satisfied with it. If our hearts are truly satisfied with "bread" alone, then no doubt, He who searches our hearts will also provide an abundance of additional delights. That is the way of a loving Father.

Thankfully also, our loving Father does not stop at just providing for our fleshly needs. He also provides for our "spiritual needs", the "needs of our soul". Hidden within these words "Give us this day our daily bread" is a mysterious spiritual request, a request for God our Father to give us a far better "Bread" than we have ever known before, the very, very special "Bread" of Jesus Himself.

Listen again to the words that I read to you a moment ago from John Chapter 6.
³²Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. ³³For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." (John 6:32-33)

I love the way that God hides His mysteries within His words and then reveals them to us as we need them. Here, Jesus quickly turns the emphasis and meaning of the instruction from meeting the needs of the body to meeting the needs of the soul. Jesus said,

³² . . . My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. ³³For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."
(John 6:32-33)

Here in these words, Jesus was speaking of Himself. And He went on to say,

³⁵ . . . "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.

³⁷All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. ³⁸For I have come down from heaven, not

to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. ³⁹This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. ⁴⁰And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day." (John 6:35-40)

Jesus is the "True Bread", the "Bread of Life" who gives you and me eternal life. Yes, He will meet our daily physical needs for life while on this earth, but far better than that, He will give us eternal life, life that will have joy and satisfaction beyond anything we could ever hope or imagine.

And folks, remember that these words, "eternal life" begins now, in the present, in our living years. We do not have to wait until we die to enjoy the satisfaction of a sweet, enjoyable and comfortable life. As you and I draw near to Christ each day, asking for our "daily Bread", He gives us a fresh supply of Himself, the Spirit of Christ to live and abide in us, to be our "Vine" who will provide all of the fruits and gifts of the Spirit to bless not only us, but to bless everyone with whom we have to do.

That is the way of God our Father and the way of the true "Bread of Life" the Lord Jesus.

So then, in your prayer each day, come humbly to God the Father. Ask for a fresh supply of "daily bread". And God, who is able to examine your heart, will hear your prayer and surely answer your plea.

But far beyond giving you the "Bread" from this earth, He will give you the "Bread of Heaven", the Lord Jesus.

Listen again to these words of the Lord Jesus, and we'll close. Jesus said,
³⁵ . . . "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.

³⁷All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. ³⁸For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. ³⁹This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. ⁴⁰And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day." (John 6:32-40)

Let's pray.