



7:9 - 11). Jesus reminds us, “Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4). Our needs go beyond the material and physical into the realm of the spiritual. The Bible further informs us, “His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness” (2 Peter 1:3). It assures us “God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:19).

Today our daily. This request is slightly different in Luke - “each day our daily bread” (NIV, ESV, NAS) or “day by day our daily bread” (KJV, English Revised). Some take the meaning as praying for bread for the coming day or the next meal. Pray in the morning for bread for the coming day which would be the meals of that day. Pray at night about the meals for the next day. Pray about needs of the present.

Later in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus teaches about storing up for ourselves treasures in heaven and not on earth. He also said we shouldn’t worry about our lives, or what we’ll eat and drink, or about our bodies what we’ll wear. “Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own” (Matthew 6:19, 20, 25, 34). God has control of the past, present and the future.

God tried to teach this lesson to the people of Israel after they exited Egypt and were making their way to the Promised Land (Exodus 15, 16). The people had witnessed the destruction of Pharaoh’s army in the Red Sea. The Lord provided a miracle of turning bitter water into sweet so millions of people had plenty to drink. Then, one month into their journey, the whole community began grumbling because of the exotic food they had back in Egypt and didn’t have at that point. They complained that Moses and Aaron had led them out into the desert to starve everyone to death.

The Lord had a plan. He told 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” (Exodus 16:4). Gather enough for **one** day. On the sixth day they were to gather for that day and the day of rest. If people any other time kept manna over for the next day, it became full of maggots and began to smell. Some failed the test. Others listened to what the Lord said and didn’t have spoiled manna.

Manna was “the grain of heaven...the bread of angels” (Psalm 78:24, 25). It “tasted like wafers made with honey” (Exodus 16:31). Sounds pretty good and it was free and easily accessible. The Lord provided the angel food throughout the entire 40 year journey. The people grew tired of eating manna - boiled manna, cooked manna, fried manna, manna pancakes, manna cereal, manna burgers - and frequently complained about having nothing but manna. They wouldn't have had to have eaten it that long if they'd obeyed when God gave the first opportunity to get into the Promised Land 39 years earlier.

More from Grubbs, “Each day is to be lived as if it were our last on earth. Today is the only particle of time I can affect. I can cry about the past, but I can't change it. I can live in vision’s moment dreaming about the future, but I can't really touch it. Life is not lived by years and decades, only moments... Jesus also taught in that same passage not to make life's decisions on the basis of how food and clothing were to be provided. Where I live, and what I do with my time and life, must not be dictated by my needs for food, shelter and

clothing. Instead, I am to seek God's kingship, and he says, *Put your provision needs on my credit card*" (Francis W. Grubbs. *Lord, Teach Us to Pray*. pp. 52, 53).

God will provide for our temporal needs to maintain physical life for as long as he has for us. Our concern is to be how we live in the here and now. The prayer isn't anti-planning but is intended to display dependence upon God. Words of the song I Know Who Holds Tomorrow include: "I don't know about tomorrow. I just live from day to day...But I know who holds tomorrow, And I know who holds my hand."

We're warned against boasting about tomorrow and what we'll do. James, the brother of Jesus, was used by God to record these words for us: "Now listen, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.' Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, 'If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that.' As it is, you boast and brag. All such boasting is evil" (James 4:13 - 16).

I think James may have had running through the back of his mind the parable Jesus told of the rich fool (Luke 12:16 - 21). Listen to Jesus the master storyteller: "The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.'" And he said, "This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I'll say to myself, 'You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.'" But God said to him, "You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?" This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God." Jesus prefaced the parable with this warning: "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; A man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions" (Luke 12:15).

The man was greedy and selfish, measuring his life by his possessions. His life's goal was pleasure. It's the third time to insert something from Grubbs as I've found him particularly insightful. "Whenever we turn our prayer attention upon the temporal and physical, we must guard it carefully to make certain that the getting of the physical will have a spiritual purpose so that we will not be guilty of praying amiss to consume it upon our lusts. If we pray for health, it must be in order that we be a better instrument in the hand of our Father. If we pray for food, it must be not to fill our stomachs that we can squander life... If we pray for house and clothing, it must not be as an ornament to engrandize our ego or to satisfy the desire to possess. We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we shall carry nothing out. Hence...we labor to be and have, that we might serve our God by serving those who do not have" (Francis W. Grubbs. *Lord, Teach Us to Pray*. p. 54).

Our motivation for prayer isn't so we can acquire and possess. As we seek to fulfill God's purpose, we aren't to pray God would supply a warehouse full of our needs for the entire year. It's one day at a time. The following was spoken about the tribe of Asher before they entered the Promised Land, but I think it applies to people of our time as well - "your strength will equal your days" (Deuteronomy 33:25).

Give us. The prayer begins with the word “our.” This request uses the word “us.” The first-person plural is used throughout the rest of the prayer. It reminds us, you and me, that it's not about me, myself, and I. It's about us, we and ourselves. We aren't isolated individuals but are to be part of the family of God.

The petition is directed to the Lord God. One of his names is Jehovah-Jireh, the Lord provides. He's the Father of heavenly lights from whom every good and perfect gift from above comes down (James 1:17).

God gives out of his love because he's a good, good Father. We heard this earlier, but it bears repeating - our Father knows what we need before we ask him (Matthew 6:8). If earthly fathers know how to give good gifts, in spite of being intrinsically evil, then the Heavenly Father most assuredly does and will (Matthew 7:11).

We need to understand that here are times when God gives out of disappointment and anger. He will give people what they ask for even though it isn't the best for them. The people of Israel wanted meat to eat (Numbers 11). They were persistent and complained bitterly saying they'd lost their appetite from eating manna and had been better off in Egypt. The Lord said, “You want meat? I'll give you meat. You will not eat it for just one day, or two days, or five, 10 or 20 days, but for a whole month - until it comes out of your nostrils and you loathe it - because you have rejected the Lord, who is among you and have wailed before him, saying, *Why did we ever leave Egypt?*”

The Lord, surprisingly, used a miracle to provide for disobedient people. A wind brought quail into and around where the people camped. No one gathered less than 60 bushels. That's a lot of quail. Estimates are about 1900 birds or 475 pounds for each person. People eagerly started preparing and eating. The incident ends with this note, “While the meat was still between their teeth and before it could be consumed, the anger of the Lord burned against the people, and he struck them with a severe plague...they buried the people who had craved other food.” They had rejected God's merciful provision of manna from heaven and suffered the consequences of physical emaciation and death but also spiritual leanness of their souls (Psalm 106:15).

Attitudes to complement this prayer. We've already seen selfishness like that of the rich fool is improper. The Bible further warns us, “People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs” (1 Timothy 6:9, 10). Second, the people of Israel provided a lesson about not complaining about God's goodness and that he doesn't know what he's doing (cf. 1 Corinthians 10:1 - 13). Third, don't worry as God will provide (Matthew 6:19 - 34). Fourth, we shouldn't approach God with improper motives, whether it be covetousness or to spend what we get on our pleasures (James 4:2, 3). Fifth, we shouldn't adopt a lazy approach in which we think God will drop a chicken in our lap and he doesn't expect us to do anything. While only God has the ability to make a seed with life in it and make it grow, people need to plant the seed. God has a part and we have a part.

We are to have humble dependence upon God. “Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be

content with that” (1 Timothy 6:6 - 8). Debbie read earlier how Paul credited the Lord with giving him the ability to face life's circumstances, whether he had little to nothing or was well provisioned.

Ray Stedman: “Obviously, prayer is not something by which we inform God of our needs or influence him. But prayer is designed to influence us. It is we who are in need of this kind of prayer, not God. Of course, he knows what we have need of, for he knows everything about us. But prayer is something we need. God does not need to be told, but we need to tell him, that is the point. If you want to see why, ask yourself the question, "What happens to me when I neglect this area of prayer?" If you are honest and look at your life over an extended period of time, you will see that, inevitably, a slow and subtle change occurs in the heart of a Christian who does not pray about material things, who does not take time to thank God for his daily supply of food, shelter and raiment -- the necessities and the luxuries of life.

“What happens is that we take these things for granted, and gradually we succumb to the quite foolish delusion that we actually can provide these necessities ourselves. We become possessed with the incredible vanity that our wisdom and our abilities have really made these things possible, that we can supply these things quite apart from God. And when we begin to think that way, we find pride swells within us and a kind of blindness settles upon us, a blindness which darkens our spiritual insight, and we become moody, restless and depressed” (sermon on Luke 11:3, 4. When Prayer Becomes Personal).

Shortly after World War II, a woman entered a grocery store and asked for enough food for a Christmas dinner for her children. When the owner inquired how much she could afford, she answered, “My husband was killed in the war. Truthfully, I have nothing to offer but a little prayer.” The man, an unbeliever, was unmoved by the woman’s need, and said sarcastically, “Write your prayer on a piece of paper and you can have its weight in groceries.”

To his surprise, she plucked a folded note out of her pocket and handed it to him. “I already did that during the night while I was watching over my sick child,” was her immediate reply.

Without even reading it, he put it on one side of his old-fashioned scales. “We’ll see how much food this is worth,” he muttered. To his dismay, nothing happened when he put a loaf of bread on the other side. But he was even more upset when he added other items and still nothing happened. Finally he blurted out, “Well, that’s all it will hold anyway. Here’s a bag. You’ll have to put these things in yourself. I’m busy!”

With a tearful “Thank you,” the lady went happily on her way.

The grocer later discovered that the scale was out of order.

As the years passed, he often wondered if that was just a coincidence. Why did the woman have the prayer already written before he asked for it? Why did she come at exactly the time the mechanism was broken? Whenever he looks at the slip of paper that bears her petition, he is amazed, for it reads, “Please, dear Lord, give us this day our daily bread!” (Our Daily Bread, November 21, 1993).

>>>Benediction: “Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need” (Hebrews 4:16).