

The Lord's Prayer

Our Daily Bread

Part 7 – November 23, 2008

We are working our way through the Lord's model prayer, given to His disciples when they asked Him to teach them *how* to pray.

Having focused on our Father/child relationship: "Our Father"; His Heavenly throne of authority: "who art in Heaven"; magnifying God's holiness: "hallowed be Thy name"; the spread of His kingdom: "Thy kingdom come"; and submitting *my* will to *Thy* will: "Thy will be done"; we now turn our attention to *lunch*: "Give us this day our daily bread"

This is a rational progression; once we've reconnected with the Father, and recommitted ourselves to *His* plans and purposes, we should request the provisions to sustain us in that endeavor.



Problem is, *our* grocery stores offer us white bread, wheat bread, raisin bread, potato bread, buttermilk, multigrain, sourdough, rye, French, pita, and Hawaiian! Not to mention bagels, croissants, and English muffins! In this culture: We take our "daily bread" for granted

Want to know just how out of touch we are with this statement? We're *far* more likely to pray: "Give us this day the will power to *stay away* from the bread!"

In Jesus' day, there were no preservatives added. Bread was baked (and consumed) on a daily basis. And there was no such thing as O.S.H.A. or Worker's Comp. or unemployment benefits. So for many, at some point, this was a very *literal* prayer.



This is a 2000 year old baker's oven that was probably in use during Jesus' life. Volcanic ash buried it, in Pompeii, in 79 AD.

And when it was unearthed, it still contained 81 loaves of carbonized bread!



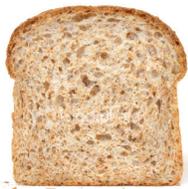
This is a loaf of bread that was baked about *ten years* after the Gospel of Matthew recorded Jesus saying, "Give us this day our daily bread". We even know who baked it! That stamp on the left side is called a "baker's mark"; and it advertises the type of wheat that was used to bake the bread, and the name of the baker: "Ranius".



It was made with a bread stamp like these.

So, just how is *this* part of the prayer supposed to affect believers who have a month's worth of food in their pantries? Well first, we're not limited to *only* praying for bread. When Jesus says "bread" He doesn't mean *just* bread. The term symbolizes necessities: food, clothing, shelter, employment, and health. Remember when *money* was referred to as "bread" and "dough"?

The term "daily bread" is a reference to "manna" the daily bread that God miraculously provided for the Israelites when they wandered through the wilderness for forty years. (Exodus 16:1-36) So the emphasis *isn't* on "bread" but on God's provision.



But still, as American believers living in the 21st century, our "bread boxes" are very blessed. So, when it comes to praying about *our* "daily bread" there are three things that we need to keep in mind:

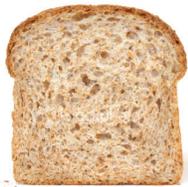
1. Give us this day our daily: **Gratitude**



You ever walked into Costco and thought, "Wow! Look how much I can take You for granted, God." When is the best time to thank the Lord for our daily bread? When we're eating it, or buying it. So this week, you should make a *deliberate* choice to thank the Lord before at least one meal every day.



And maybe even when you go to the grocery store! It doesn't have to be formal or long or weird or out loud ... but also, it shouldn't be *memorized*! If my bread box is full I should be grateful. It's a great prayer to just authentically say, "Thanks", and remind yourself who really supplied it.



2. Give us this day our daily: **Dependence**

When the Israelites were about to enter the Promised Land, Moses reminded them of the manna; and warned them not to forget God:

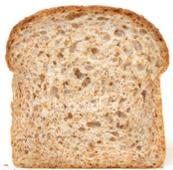
Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase ... You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me." But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth ... - Deuteronomy 8:12-18a NIV condensed

We're faced with this same temptation. The ability to get out of bed and go to work, energy, health, intelligence, creativity ... our very *existence* is a gift; and to not recognize that is the most *basic* of sins.

Moses mentions fine houses, large flocks, and silver and gold. So, just how much “bread” can we justify asking for? That’s *so* relative. A *basic need* for the average American would be considered a *luxury* in most third-world countries. But, Proverbs thirty gives us a good principle to follow:

Give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, “Who is the Lord?” - *Proverbs 30:8b-9a NIV*

So, how much is *too much*? *You* get to decide that one for yourself. How much does it take to distract and disrupt your priorities? Could you pray that Proverb’s prayer? (Be honest now.) Would you be willing to ask the Lord to protect you from any prosperity that would displace your devotion to Him? And this brings us to the third thing that we should keep in mind when our “bread box” is full.



3. Give us this day our daily: Compassion

Did you know the Israelites couldn’t stockpile their manna?

Then Moses said to them, “No one is to keep any of it until morning.” However, some of them paid no attention to Moses; they kept part of it until morning, but it was full of maggots and began to smell. - *Exodus 16:19-20 NIV*

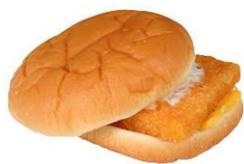


The lesson: Our bread is not ours to hoard.

When I pray: “Give us this day our daily bread”, and I *know* that I have *mine* ... it should really cause me to consider those who are not as fortunate.

One time, when Jesus was preaching to 5,000 men (plus women and children), His disciples informed Him that the people were very hungry; and Jesus said something that really shook ‘em up:

But he answered, “You give them something to eat.” They said to him, “That would take eight months of a man’s wages! Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?” - *Mark 6:37 NIV*



Jesus said, “Calm your horses” (or something like that). Then He told them that what He expected was that they would simply offer what they had to help out. And then He used it in a miraculous manner. We must use whatever we have to bless others.



So when the “bread box” is full, it’s all about gratitude, dependence, and compassion for others. But when the “bread box” is low, there are a couple other things we need to keep in mind.

1. Give us this day our daily: Trust

Almost immediately after the Lord's Prayer, Jesus said:

Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? - *Matthew 6:25-26 NIV*

Jesus refers to *anxiety five times* right after the Lord's Prayer. And when He says, "do not worry about your life" that's a command!

Do you pray prayers of *trust* or prayers of *worry*? Some people pray *anxiously* (even incantationally), in order to feel relieved by sensing a false sort of *control over* God. They think, "If I pray it over and over, if I say just the right words, if I fast, or pray for an hour, or claim it in His name, then I'm sure to get the answer I want." They're more anxious when they're praying than when they're not!

A prayer of trust is when you give your need to God and then trust that He's watching over the outcome whatever it is. He doesn't promise to meet our immediate needs as *we* understand them, but to meet our eternal needs as *He* alone knows them!



However, there's a big difference between *worrying* about tomorrow and *planning* for tomorrow.

2. Give us this day our daily: Plan

Jesus point wasn't that those birds don't have to *work* their food, just that they don't *worry* about it! The Bible calls the ant extremely wise, because ...

Ants are creatures of little strength, yet they store up their food in the summer ...
- *Proverbs 30:25 NIV*



There's a great little lesson here for us: Ants don't worry, they prepare. God told Adam how it would be: "By the sweat of your brow you'll eat your bread." (*Genesis 3:19*) And Paul reinforced this view with the Thessalonians: "If a man will not work, neither shall he eat." (*2 Thessalonians 3:10*)



- I must participate in the production of my bread.

When we pray for more bread, the Lord will tend to send a job! So, praying for "daily bread" will sometimes mean praying for plans and wisdom.

And finally, how often should we pray? Jesus said, "Give us *this day* our *daily* bread". Like manna, yesterday's prayer supply just won't carry over.