

“Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread”: Learning How to Invite God to “Supply Me” Through Life

Matthew 6:11

As we open to Matthew 6:11 in the Lord’s Prayer, we arrive at the central element of these petitions. This fourth of seven petitions, is our shared confession of our need for God to sustain our lives. Simply put, asking God to give us the bread we need for today is us saying:

WE NEED TO BE SUPPLIED BY GOD

Everything is so fragile around us. As the winter recedes our roads are pitted and potholed. Highly engineered reinforced concrete and back-topped roads, are no match for the onslaught of cold weather, salt, and just the amazing power of water to penetrate, freeze, expand, and breakdown even the hardest surfaces. Roads need repairing.

All around us we see that our batteries run down, our tires wear out, our papers yellow and brittle, our printed pictures fade, and our bodies age, and wrinkle. Nothing lasts as everything around us wears out. Everything but God is temporary.

From the galaxies above us to the cells within us: everything is wearing down, running out, and fragile when faced with the eternal dimensions of our Universe.

Since only what is connected to God can last forever: Jesus said the best way to live is by inviting God to daily supply us. So, to get this simple truth planted into our hearts and minds, please join me by standing and reciting that middle petition:

“Give us this day our daily bread” (Mt. 6:11)

Pray

THE HEART OF THE PRAYER JESUS GAVE TO HIS DISCIPLES

As we look at this fourth petition, we see the heart of the Lord’s Prayer given to His disciples and us. Of all the petitions of this prayer, this one seems the simplest, clearest, and the most straightforward.

There are only 8 words in the original¹. That makes this the second shortest of the petitions, the only petition shorter is the third petition “Thy Kingdom Come” which is four words in Greek and three in English.

It seems to be an expression of gratitude for the provision of food, or an acknowledgement that food comes from God. But even in the brevity and simplicity there is an

¹ Focus Me has 10 Greek words; Control Me has 4; Lead Me has 10 Greek words; Supply Me has 8; Cleanse Me has 13 Greek words; Protect Me has 12; and Empty Me has 14 Greek words for a total of 71 Greek words and 65 words (KJV) or 66 words (other main versions) in English.

amazing complexity. For example the word “daily” that is here and in the parallel passage in Luke 11, is ONLY here in the New Testament and no where else in all of Greek literature. In fact, some early Bible commentators like Jerome (347-420 AD) commented that perhaps Matthew (or Christ) made up this word.

It was not until the last century, when archaeologists were sifting through the rubbish heaps of ancient Egypt, that this word showed up somewhere else, outside of Matthew & Luke. Of all places, it was on a tiny slip of papyrus in between items we would call a ‘woman’s grocery list’. It appeared to be a reminder to get “that day’s” supply of some food item she needed.

So, this simple, eight word petition may well be one of the most profound, most penetrating, and for us comfortable living Americans: *this may become the most unsettling part of this entire prayer.*

But before we look at the great and deep matters to which Christ was pointing us, join me in tracing and grasping the whole phrase.

GOD’S FOUR SIMPLE LESSONS FOR US

First, **God Invites Us To Pray for our Personal, Physical Needs.**

“Give us this day our daily bread” is addressed to our Father. We are asking God to provide bread for today is as personal, down to earth, everyday living as you can get. It speaks of the mundane, daily struggle of normal life for most people: hunger, thirst, shelter, and supply of necessities. That is exactly what is being spoken of. God invites us to pray for our personal, physical needs.

Second, **God Invites Us To Pray for Things that Seem Small & Insignificant.**

“Give us this day **our daily bread**” is a basic, simple request. God says I care. I want you to ask me for what may seem small, insignificant, and non-eternal. God cares. God listens. God invites us to pray for things that seem small and insignificant to everyone but to Him.

Third, **God Invites Us To Need Him to Get Along Each Day.**

This is a plea for “daily” provision. God wants us to learn to need Him. He wants us to have seeking His provisions as our habit of satisfying our hunger. God is asking us to habituate needing God. Though we must work, and think and plan to eat and live: it is really God that gives us wealth, life, strength, and even our food (Dt. 8:18).

God invites us to need Him to get along each day. In commanding us to pray this way:

“God is fostering in us a daily dependence upon himself. No other line in the Lord’s Prayer so sharply challenges the direction of today’s world. The man on the street wants to compound his security and his independence.

To be sure, there is nothing wrong with planning for future rainy days, but it is wrong to make

total independence your consuming goal. Whether we are rich or poor, God wants us to depend upon him “daily.” He wants us all to pray for our daily needs, and he wants us to daily thank Him”.²

Finally, **God invites us to live in community with other believers.**

This prayer is also partly, God asking us to stay connected to other believers. We are commanded to pray that He give “us”, not me. Each time we engage this petition with our heart and mind we are saying that we stand with other believers around us.

This prayer is a commitment on our part to help provide for needy members of Christ's Body around us. This prayer is to build compassion and to battle materialism every day. We not only ask God to provide for us personally, we ask Him to help us be givers to those around us in need.

So that is simple enough.

First, **God Invites Us To Pray for our Personal, Physical Needs.**

Second, **God Invites Us To Pray for Things that Seem Small & Insignificant.**

Third, **God Invites Us To Need Him to Get Along Each Day.**

Finally, **God invites us to live in community with other believers.**

We could distill down all those ideas into a prayer like this:

Father in Heaven: help me bring my personal needs to you, even if they sound so small and insignificant. Help me to get used to always needing You to provide for me, so that I can have Your love and compassionate desire to help others who are also in need.

But wait, there is more. Jesus did not give the disciples this prayer in a vacuum. What is:

THE CONTEXT OF A LIFE IN STEP WITH GOD

This lesson on prayer was just a part of His larger context of teachings about the cares of life, fasting, and the stewardship of our riches.

Look onward at the very challenging verses that follow this prayer. Trace with your eyes down the page of your Bibles with me, just the key phrases at the start of each new paragraph of Christ's lessons. They are very challenging words:

14 “For if you **forgive men their trespasses**, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

16 “Moreover, **when you fast**, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance.

19 “**Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth**, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal;

² Hughes, R. K. (2001). *The sermon on the mount: the message of the kingdom* (p. 183). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.

22 “The **lamp of the body is the eye**. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light.

24 “**No one can serve two masters**; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

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?”

28 “**So why do you worry about clothing?** Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin;

31 “**Therefore do not worry**, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’

33 **But seek first the kingdom of God** and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

If we just quickly jotted down those paragraph themes we could get some ideas like:

PRAY, FAST, INVEST IN HEAVEN & DON'T WORRY

Those seem to be so unconnected, yet in the mind of God they are not. This middle petition about God supplying our needs on a daily basis, actually ties into perhaps one of the most neglected topics among all of the spiritual disciplines that believers have practiced over the centuries.

What spiritual discipline is connected with eating our daily bread? It is the neglected discipline. To understand what God wants us to think about as we go through life focused upon our Heavenly Father, turn back with me to Mark 2:18-22.

Mark 2 introduces a spiritual concept that is foreign to most believers in Christ's church today, called fasting. In a moment as we read these verses we will see that Jesus promotes Biblical Fasting as an ongoing, practiced discipline for all New Testament believers awaiting His return.

Just before we read these words, maybe we all should think about something. Here it is:

WHEN DID YOU LAST PRACTICE A BIBLICAL FAST?

Pause and think. When was the last time you fasted? Not for medical reasons, not for weight loss, not because you were too busy to make a meal, no, when was the last time you practiced the Biblical Discipline of Fasting. Jesus commended fasting as part of an amazing two-part set of tools: prayer & fasting. Those two go together. Jesus said some things won't happen without BOTH tools

So, before we jump into Mark 2:18-22 today, may I ask you some other questions?

Would you like to revitalize your spiritual life?

Would you like to heighten your awareness of God?

Would you like to experience God in such a deep and intimate way that you find yourself absolutely satisfied and contented in a way God's Word calls perfect peace?

Then, Christ's words this morning are for you.

CHRIST'S WORDS ARE THE VITAL KEY TO FASTING TODAY

This passage contains what may be **the single most important words in the Bible on fasting**. And these words can change your life if you understand them!

What was Christ teaching in our text? Let's go over these five verses and see. Mark 2:18-22. Let's read them as you follow along in your copy of God's Word.

Mark 2:18-22 **The disciples of John and of the Pharisees were fasting.**

(We know that the Pharisees did this on Mondays and Thursdays [market days in Biblical Israel] to be seen by the crowds. So this question was probably asked on a Monday or Thursday)

"Then they came and said to Him, "Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but Your disciples do not fast?" 19 And Jesus said to them, "Can the friends of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them they cannot fast.

(Wow, Jesus here calls Himself the promised Groom as in Matthew 25 coming to betroth His Bride and then returning later for the marriage. Biblical weddings were marked by an entire week of feasting. Brides and Grooms were treated like kings and queens and often given crowns to wear. For a poor country person, weddings were often the greatest days of their lives. And, in Christ's words, those were what the disciples were experiencing in His earthly ministry)

20 "But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, .

(Here is one of the many prophecies Jesus made pointing to the Cross, and His ascension to the Father's right hand for the period of time we call the Church Age. Jesus was away and we await Him.)

"and then they will fast in those days...

(Now comes the New Testament fast, it is for those who await the One they love, who is taken away to Heaven. While we wait for the Son we fast. Because we long for Him, we fast!)

21 "No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth...

(That's the Christianity of the New Covenant Church after the Cross)

on an old garment;

(That's the Old Testament Judaism)

“or else the new piece pulls away from the old, and the tear is made worse. 22 “And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; or else the new wine bursts the wineskins, the wine is spilled, and the wineskins are ruined. But new wine must be put into new wineskins.”

(In the context of Fasting, this means that there was a whole new attitude and action surrounding fasting on this side of the Cross. It surrounds our waiting and longing for Jesus.)

Fasting is hungering for God. We fast to cultivate a hunger that grows stronger and stronger, until we hunger the most for Our Great God.

Before we end this look into God's Word today, may I ask you again?

Would you like to revitalize your spiritual life?

Would you like to heighten your awareness of God?

Would you like to experience God in such a deep and intimate way that you find yourself absolutely satisfied and contented in a way God's Word calls perfect peace?

Then, Christ's words about fasting are for you.

CHRIST'S WORDS ARE THE VITAL KEY TO FASTING TODAY

Our text contains **the most important words in the Bible on fasting**. And these words can change your life if you understand and obey them!