

Lord Teach Us To Pray

"Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread"

Lesson 7

INTRODUCTION:

- I. In our culture, we like to think of ourselves in terms of FREEDOM and INDEPENDENCE. We actually ABHOR the thought of being DEPENDENT on anyone.
 - A. However, every person in this world faces a life of dependence from the moment we're conceived to the moment we die.
 1. At conception we depend on our mother for proper nourishment while we're developing in the womb.
 2. Once we're born, we're dependent on our parents or other adult caretakers for food, clothing, and shelter.
 - a. We can't provide any of these things for ourselves.
 - (1). Unlike other infant creatures in our world, we can't even come to our mother or caregiver, they have to come to us.
 - b. As an infant we're also incapable of caring for ourselves in terms of cleanliness.

- (1). We're dependent on others to give us baths, clip our nails, comb our hair, and otherwise make us presentable.
 3. As a toddler – the time when we become more mobile – we are incapable of determining what's safe and what's harmful.
 - a. Without the guidance of a parent or caregiver, we could easily fall down a flight of stairs, burn ourselves, eat something poisonous – any one of which could permanently disable us or even kill us.
 - b. No one would argue the necessity for round-the-clock care for infants and toddlers.
 4. As we grow, we're still dependent – we're dependent on:
 - a. Teachers to educate us.
 - b. Employers to give us a job, or customers to provide us with an income.
 - c. Police to keep us safe.
 - d. Doctors to keep us healthy, and when our health fails, doctors and hospitals to help prolong our life. And finally. . .
 - e. Family or other caregivers when we reach the time in our lives when we can no longer take care of ourselves.
- B. In much the same way, Christians are like infants when it comes to dependence on God.

1. Just like infants, we're ultimately dependent on God for food, clothing, and shelter.
 2. And just as infants get dirty and soiled throughout the day, we live in a world of sin that pollutes and soils our walk with Christ.
 - a. While the Lord has paid the penalty for our sins – whether in the past, present, or future – we still sin every day.
 - b. We need to come to God daily confessing our sins so He will cleanse them and restore us to fellowship with Him.
 3. And just as infants desperately need their parents or other caregivers to protect them from harmful things, we're dependent on God to guard us from the circumstances in our lives that can harm spiritually, and even physically and emotionally.
- II. Therefore, when we take a close look at the model prayer Jesus gave His disciples in Matthew 6, we find a second group of three petitions.
- A. After focusing our attention on our Heavenly Father, Jesus now shows us how to pray for OUR OWN special needs in this world: **Matthew 6:11-13** – *Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. (Matthew 6:11–13)*

1. Although this second section of the prayer deals with OUR needs, it certainly doesn't set God aside – God is exalted here as much as He was exalted in the first three petitions.
 - a. The fact that God is the One who gives us our daily bread, forgives our debts, and keeps us from temptation speaks of His power and grace.
 - b. In a way, God actually glorifies Himself by meeting those needs in our lives.
- B. But notice that, of these three petitions, the Lord surprisingly tells us to FIRST pray “give us this day our daily bread” – in other words we pray FIRST for our PHYSICAL needs, NOT our spiritual needs.
 1. I think there's a reason for this.
 2. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, in his book *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*, captures the essence of these three petitions:
 - a. “Clearly the first thing that is necessary is that we must be enabled to continue our existence in this world. We are alive and we must be kept alive. The very fact of my existence and being are involved, so the first petition deals with the needs of our physical frame, and our Lord starts with that. He then goes on to deal with the need of cleansing from the defilement and guilt of sin; and, lastly, with the need for being kept from sin and its power. That is the true way to look at

man's life. I am alive and I must be kept alive. But then I am conscious of guilt and unworthiness, and feel the need to be cleansed from that. Then I think of the future and realize that I need to be delivered from certain things that face me there. . . . The sum of it all is that ultimately there is nothing in the whole realm of Scripture which so plainly shows us our entire dependence upon God as does this prayer, and especially these three petitions. The only thing that really matters for us is that we know God as our Father. If we only knew God like this our problems would be solved already and we would realize our utter dependence upon Him and go to Him daily as children to their Father (*Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*, 2 vols. [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979], 2:68–69).

3. So, as we examine these three petitions, I hope you'll not only be INSTRUCTED but also MOTIVATED to go to God on a daily basis and seek His provision for your needs.

BODY:

- I. Some believers don't see any pressing need to pray for God to give them their daily bread because, for the most part, none of us have to worry about where our next meal is coming from.

- A. Why should we pray for something we already have in great abundance?
1. We might understand why Christians in THIRD-WORLD countries may need to pray this prayer, but in all honesty, it seems irrelevant to us well-fed Americans.
 2. So how do Christians who have abundance make an application of this request in their lives?
- II. When we take a closer look at this petition, we discover that there are actually FIVE KEY REASONS why WE NEED to make this request of God.
- A. The first reason is summed up in the words – THE NECESSITY. We need to make this request of God because we ALL have physical needs that are ESSENTIAL and NECESSARY to sustaining life.
1. The Greek word translated “*bread*” in this verse not only represents FOOD, but is also symbolic of all our PHYSICAL NEEDS.
 - a. In Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, the word BREAD is defined: “*food in general,*” but incorporated in this definition is: “*the necessities for the sustenance of life. . .*”
 2. Everything that is ESSENTIAL or NECESSARY to preserve our life can be described as bread.

- a. This certainly INCLUDES food, but it can ALSO include the need for a healthy body, shelter, family and all the other necessities of life.
 - b. Please understand that the Lord is referring to physical NECESSITIES, not luxuries.
 - c. If God chooses to bless any of us with LUXURIES, it's purely by His good grace.
3. All of us should be THRILLED to know that the God Who created the universe – Who is infinitely holy and completely self-sufficient – CARES about supplying our physical needs.
- a. Just as a loving HUMAN father wants to provide for the needs of his children, so God is ALSO concerned that we receive enough food to eat, clothes to wear, and a place to rest.
4. However, this petition is MORE than just a request for physical needs.
- a. The most important aspect of this petition is that it RECOGNIZES and AFFIRMS that EVERY GOOD THING WE HAVE comes from the hand of God.
- (1). **James 1:17** – *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights...*

- b. That's why this petition is appropriate to pray regardless of whether we have NEED or have ABUNDANCE.
 - c. Although we may not always be on the edge of hunger, we need to always be thankful for everything God provides.
 - 5. And so, the first thing we see about this petition is that it helps us focus on the essential and NECESSARY needs we have to sustain life.
- B. The second reason is summed up in the words – THE SOURCE. We need to pray this petition because it helps us to recognize the SOURCE that provides for our physical needs.
- 1. When everything is going WELL in our lives, WE tend to take the credit for what we have. We tend to measure the quality of life in terms of our OWN successes and accomplishments.
 - a. We work hard to earn the money we need to buy food and clothes, pay our rent or mortgage.
 - 2. But even the hardest-working individual should realize ALL HE EARNS is the result of God's provision.
 - a. Moses reminded the children of Israel that God, "*gives you power to GET wealth.*" (**Deuteronomy 8:18**)
 - b. Our life, breath, health, possessions, talents and abilities either come directly FROM God, or indirectly from the

RESOURCES God has created and made available for our use.

- c. EVERYTHING WE HAVE is from God: He is the One who brings the rain to make things grow, causes the seasons to change, produces the minerals that make the soil fertile and productive, provides the animals and plants from which we make our clothing and food, and even provides the natural resources we use to make our homes and cars, and the fuel to warm and drive them.
3. Our daily bread – the necessities of physical life -- ALL come from God.
 - a. In fact, God provided man with everything he would need BEFORE He even created him.
 - b. **Genesis 1:29-31** – *God said, "See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food. Also, to every beast of the earth, to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which there is life, I have given every green herb for food"; and it was so. Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good.*

- c. And, since that time He has CONTINUED to provide an abundance of food for mankind.
 - d. Yet the Apostle Paul tells us: **1 Timothy 4:1-5** – *Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.*
4. Do you have that attitude? Are you TRULY THANKFUL to God for your food when you bow your head and say a prayer before a meal?
5. Incidentally, you're not BIBLICALLY required to pray a prayer of thanksgiving each time you set down to a meal.
- a. You can pray prayers of thanksgiving ANY time during the day – including prayers of thanksgiving for our food – before a meal, during a meal, after a meal, at the beginning of the day, or even at the end of the day.

6. But, if you're praying simply because it's become customary – a ritual you go through before you eat – then you may need to reexamine why you're praying in the first place.
 - a. For many, the prayer we offer to God before we eat is usually quick and indifferent – we're just making sure we do our duty.
 - b. Praying before a meal simply as a matter of RITUAL makes that prayer as empty and meaningless as the prayers of the Pharisees, and it ACTUALLY reveals the sin of indifference and ingratitude toward God's gifts.
 7. Don't misunderstand. A day should NEVER go by during which we fail to thank God for his gracious provisions – thanking Him for fulfilling our most basic physical need, "...our daily bread."
 8. And so, we pray this petition because it helps us to focus on the SOURCE of all our blessings – God!
- C. The third reason is summed up in the words – THE PROMISE. We need to pray this petition because at the HEART of this petition is the word "give" – which helps us remember the PROMISES God has made to the faithful to PROVIDE for their needs.
1. Even though God may have already provided for our necessities in the PAST, and is CURRENTLY meeting our basic needs, we need to CONTINUE asking Him to "give" in the FUTURE because it shows our TRUST in future blessings.

2. But never forget – the only reason we can pray for God to “give us this day our daily bread,” is because He has promised to provide for His people.
 - a. We certainly wouldn’t expect God to give us what He has NOT promised – that would be rather presumptuous.
 - b. But we can pray with confidence because God HAS promised to supply us abundantly.
3. In **Psalm 37** David says we need to trust in God’s promise to provide for our needs.
 - a. **Psalm 37:3-4** – *Trust in the LORD, and do good; dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness. Delight yourself also in the LORD, and He shall give you the desires of your heart.*
 - b. **Psalm 37:25-26** – *I have been young, and now am old; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his descendants begging bread. He is ever merciful, and lends; and his descendants are blessed.*
 - c. His descendants are not only blessed with bread, we are blessed in every other way as well – physically AND spiritually.
4. A passage that refers to both the spiritual and physical aspects of our lives is ALSO found in **2 Corinthians 9**.

- a. The CONTEXT of this passage concerns our need to be GENEROUS when we give to help our brothers and sisters in Christ who are in need: We are to give *“not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.” (v. 7)*
 - b. As we provide for the needs of others by sowing bountifully (v. 6), Paul says God, *“who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness.” (v. 10)*
5. I firmly believe that when you invest in the kingdom of God, He will not only provide for all your SPIRITUAL needs, but for your MATERIAL and PHYSICAL needs as well.
- a. Those material needs may come DIRECTLY by God blessing you with the ability to earn a productive living, or INDIRECTLY through the gracious giving of your brothers and sisters in Christ.
6. Therefore, we pray this petition because it helps is trust in the PROMISE God made to provide for our needs – a provision that may come DIRECTLY from God or INDIRECTLY through our brothers and sisters in Christ who have been blessed by God.
- D. The fourth reason is summed up in the words – THE RIGHTEOUS. We need to pray this petition because this petition is designed for “US.”

1. God's PROMISE to provide for physical needs is a Biblical promise, but it is given ONLY to those who belong to Him – the "US" of **Matthew 6:11**.
2. When we go back to **Psalm 37**, notice that David is speaking to BELIEVERS: They "*trust in the Lord*" (**v. 3**); they "*delight . . . in the Lord*" (**v. 4**); they "*commit [their] way to the Lord*" (**v. 5**); and they "*rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him.*" (**v. 7**)
3. Some may be tempted to point to Matthew 5 where Jesus says God, "*makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.*" (**Matthew 5:45**)
 - a. And that's certainly true!
 - b. God's provisions of sun and rain for the good and just, have always been a PROMISE. God's provisions of sun and rain for the evil and unjust, have always been a BENEFIT because they LIVE in the same world with the good and just.
 - b. While God promises BLESSINGS to the good and just, He assures the evil and unjust that judgment is all that remains for them.
 - c. **Psalm 37:18-20** – *The LORD knows the days of the upright, and their inheritance shall be forever. They shall not be ashamed in the evil time, and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied. But the wicked shall perish; and the enemies of*

*the LORD, like the splendor of the meadows, shall vanish.
Into smoke they shall vanish away.*

4. Jesus Himself assures us that God PROVIDES FOR HIS OWN.
 - a. **Matthew 6:25-34** – *"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? Look 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? Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry*

about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things.

Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

5. Therefore, we need to pray this petition because God's blessings are PROMISED to US – those who TRUST in God!
- E. And finally, the fifth reason is summed up in the words – THIS DAY. We need to pray this petition because it is “THIS DAY” in which we need God's merciful and gracious provisions.
1. The Lord asks us to rely on Him DAY BY DAY, because He only GIVES US one day at a time.
 2. When we accept the Lord's provisions for TODAY, without any worry about our needs or welfare TOMORROW, we demonstrate our complete faith in God's goodness and faithfulness.
 - a. This is why the Lord told us, *Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things.*
Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. (Matthew 6:34)
 3. However, the only way we can truly keep from worrying about TOMORROW is to pray TODAY to the One who supplies all our NEEDS tomorrow.
 - a. In **Philippians 4:6-7** the apostle Paul wrote, *Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and*

the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

4. And so, when we put all our trust and confidence in the God of heaven, we can pray “give us *THIS* day our daily bread” and NOT WORRY AT ALL about tomorrow.

CONCLUSION:

- I. In a greedy, materialistic, profit-driven society like our own, CONTENTMENT and being SATISFIED with our place in life is seen as a sign of WEAKNESS and UNDER-ACHIEVEMENT.
 - A. And yet the message to the believer has ALWAYS BEEN to learn CONTENTMENT.
 1. **Proverbs 30:8-9** – Give me neither poverty nor riches – Feed me with the food allotted to me; lest I be full and deny You, and say, “Who is the LORD?” Or lest I be poor and steal, and profane the name of my God.
 2. **Philippians 4:11-13** – Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

3. **1 Timothy 6:6-10** – *Now godliness with contentment is great gain.*

For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

2. And to all these verses we could even add the petition “Give us this day our daily bread” because it’s ALSO an expression of contentment – we are simply asking for those things that are necessary to get us through THIS day.

B. But how can we ACHIEVE this kind of contentment – how we truly pray for the Lord to give us neither poverty nor riches, but to simply feed us with the food allotted to us?

1. The ANSWER is found in where we place our trust. In the Hebrew letter, the apostle Paul (the Hebrew writer) not only COMMANDED contentment, but also tells us how to ACHIEVE it.

a. **Hebrews 13:5-6** – *Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have.*

[There’s the COMMAND! But in the next verse He shows us

HOW we can be content with such things as we have.] *For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." So we may boldly say: "The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?"*

- b. A lack of covetousness and learning to be content comes by trusting in the God Who said, *"I will never leave you nor forsake you"* – the LORD Who *"is my helper."*

- 2. By having a proper relationship with GOD – a relationship built on TRUST and OBEDIENCE – Jesus promised that God WILL provide for our needs.

- a. Jesus put it this way: *"Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time – houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions – and in the age to come, eternal life."* **(Mark 10:29-30)**

- II. Do YOU have this kind of contentment – a life that is FREE from covetousness – where we're able to simply pray "give us this day our DAILY bread"?

- A. The only way we can live that kind of life is to COMPLETELY trust in the grace of God.
1. But the only way we can completely trust in God's GRACE is to have been SAVED by it.
 - a. The apostle Paul explained it this way: *For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.*
(Ephesians 2:8-9)
 - b. Remember in the beginning of this lesson when we said we are ultimately dependent on others from the day of conception to the day we die?
 - c. The apostle Paul reminds us that we are even dependent on God's GRACE for our SALVATION! We certainly can't EARN it through works – it's a gift of God.
 2. When we've been saved by God's grace and live every day with the assurance of heaven, we view this world different than most.
 - a. We're like those faithful men and women in Old Testament times, whom Paul described as *"strangers and pilgrims on the earth,"* because their eyes were set on a home in HEAVEN. **(Hebrews 11:13-16)**
 - b. When we have been saved by God's grace, and trust in God to supply all our needs, and when, by our faithful obedience,

we have the assurance of heaven, it's easy to live a life of contentment.

3. Are you content to simply pray, "give us this day our DAILY bread."