

Give Us Our Daily Bread

[also see excerpt, "Our Daily Bread"]

*Give us today our daily bread.
Lord, give me the wisdom I need
for that problem.
Help my son with his test today.
Be with my wife in her situation at work.
Be especially near those believers
who are suffering today.
Encourage them,
and give them boldness.*

Context

Remember, the Lord's Prayer answers this question: How do we interact with a loving God who is always with us? He already knows all our needs, so we don't have to explain or beg or bury Him in words. We can talk to Him simply and directly, as children to our Father.

The Lord's Prayer has only six short petitions. The first three focus on God alone. We seek His glory, His control, His will. The last three petitions concern our needs. Of these three, two focus on sin, specifically its forgiveness and its avoidance.

Only one petition addresses the needs that usually consume most of our concern and our prayer. It is this: Give us today our daily bread.

Daily

The original word translated here as "daily" was found on a papyrus that turned out to be an ancient shopping list. The word "daily" marked those items the shopper needed to buy day by day (since there was no refrigeration).

Both scripture and personal experience teach us that God gives us what we need just one day at a time. One Bible story especially helps us understand and remember this. It's in Exodus 16:11-31. The people of Israel had left Egypt and were traveling through the desert on their way to Canaan. When they complained of being hungry, God gave them "daily bread." It was a flake-like substance called manna. Each morning it appeared on the ground after the dew evaporated.

Each morning they had to gather a supply for that one day. If they tried to keep enough for the next day, it rotted. But on the day before the Sabbath, they were to gather enough for two days. God didn't want them to have to work on the Sabbath. In this case, the manna kept overnight and didn't rot.

The result: he who gathered much did not have too much, and he who gathered little did

not have too little. Each one gathered as much as he needed (v. 18, NIV). It was a daily provision, sufficient for any need but impossible to hoard.

God could have provided for their hunger any way He chose. Why would He choose this way? He was teaching them to depend on Him every day, one day at a time (see Deuteronomy 8:3).

Building a Relationship

Give us today our daily bread. Since the Lord's Prayer gives us only one petition to cover all of our normal wants and needs, doesn't this one seem small and unsatisfying? Most of us aren't worried about starving, at least not today. Why waste our one "wish" on such an unambitious request?

We want more. We want enough to feel secure. We want enough to relax a little in what we have. God wants the opposite. He works to keep us resting in Him alone.

Why? Because He enjoys flexing His power and His control? No. He loves us, and with a perfect wisdom. He knows that a constant, close relationship with Him is the key to our happiness and well-being. Daily dependence teaches and forms that relationship.

He is our Creator. He himself is the only source of all that is. We are weak and limited creatures, totally dependent on Him. We spend our entire lives, from birth to death, cradled in His care. In him we live and move and have our being (Acts 17:28, NIV).

The essence of well-being, of having a right and true relationship with God, is realizing our utter dependence on Him and living in that dependence. Do you want complete peace and deep-down rest? Learn to trust your Creator's abundant wealth, not what you can grasp in your small little hands.

The School of Dependence

Our loving Father longs for that close, constant relationship with you. Because of His love, He will work throughout your life to teach you daily trust. You will never graduate from His school of dependence. He will not let you hoard everything you need, and you cannot see the future. Any security you think you've grasped is only an illusion. He will always and forever be your only security and your only supply. Even in the wealth and abundance of heaven, He himself will be the only source of every blessing.

The Freedom of Dependence

But daily dependence on God is not a burden. It is wonderful freedom! Give us today our daily bread lifts the weight of a futile concern for the future. It frees us to fully enjoy today. What a pleasure to accept each and every day from the loving hand of our Heavenly Father! Each need draws us closer to Him. Each provision reminds us of His presence and His love. Each meal becomes Thanksgiving.

Jesus taught us in Matthew 6:25-34 to look around at God's creation. The Father abundantly provides food and clothing for all His creatures, for all He has made.

We spend too much of our lives fretting about material things. We want, want, want, worry, worry, worry. But Jesus' prayer sweeps all our physical concerns into one simple prayer that asks only for today. No hoarding. No grasping for a security that will always elude us.

The rest of the Lord's Prayer is spent on God and our relationship with Him. This underlines what Jesus emphasizes later in the same chapter: "Seek first His kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things [the necessities of life] will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself." (Matthew 6:33-34, NIV)

What do you and your loved ones need today? Wisdom? Financial help? Physical or emotional strength? Bring your concerns to your loving Heavenly Father and begin to trust Him one day at a time.

Hymn: [Our Daily Bread](#)

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