

The first part of the Lord's Prayer is not about us but about honoring God and promoting his Name and kingdom. God knows what is best for us. If we put him first, we can be assured that he will take care of our needs. We saw the involvement of each member of the Trinity in meeting those needs. Jesus told us to pray to Our Father in heaven and to say

'Give us this day our daily bread.'

Bread in Bible times was superior to much of the bread that we eat today. One could actually live by it if necessary. I remember back in the early 1980's when I attended a short term Bible School in Florida, one lady started making Ezekiel Bread based on this scripture.

'Take wheat and barley, bean and lentils, millet and spelt; put them in a storage jar and use them to make bread for yourself. You are to eat it during the 390 days you are to lie on your side.' Ezekiel 4:9

I remember one of my classmates who decided to live on that bread only for a couple of months. I held some of that bread in my hand. Unlike our light fluffy bread, the Ezekiel bread was very heavy in weight, but very nutritious. When we ask God for our daily bread, we are asking God for that which sustains us for the present day. Food gives us the energy that we need. However, we know that Jesus was referring to more than bread in this prayer. We see this after the story of his encounter with the woman at the well. His disciples came to him and urged him to eat something. However, Jesus replied to them.....

'I have food to eat that you know nothing about.... my food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.' - John 4:32,34

One of the most popular devotional books in the world is called: Our Daily Bread. It provides daily spiritual bread to people around the world. Jesus reminds us of our need for the Word of God in his encounter with Satan in the desert.

'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God'.
- Matthew 4:4

God wants to meet every need that we have, whether it be physical, spiritual, financial etc. Our idea of 'needs' may be different from God's. In the year 1900, Americans wanted 72 things and needed 18 things for happiness. In the year 1950, Americans wanted 496 things and needed 96 things for happiness. One can only imagine how those figures have moved even higher in our day.

One of my main roles while working as a missionary in London was visiting hundreds of homes in proximity to the church I was working with. Patricia was a Catholic lady we occasionally went to visit. Her faith inspired me. She was raising over 10 children but never seemed to be anxious about her needs being met. One time when we went to see her and she told us that her utilities were soon to be cut off because of lack of payment, but she was not worried as she knew that

God would provide. We joined her in prayer and God was faithful to honor her child-like faith. Her need was met soon thereafter. Jesus demonstrated a life of faith. He went around living and demonstrating the kingdom of God, and his heavenly Father always met his needs even though he had 70 disciples traveling with him at times. He reminded us of how God takes care of the birds and adorns the flowers so beautifully. He says that we are **much more valuable** than they are! He will take care of us! - Matthew 6:25-34..

We trust God for an invisible thing, our salvation and eternal dwelling with him. Should we not trust him for visible things of this life now? Jesus is Lord over all aspects of life in the present time and in the age to come. His resurrection proved that he is truthful and can be trusted at all times in every situation. As we seek first the kingdom of God, we can boldly say that God will supply our needs. The Christians at Philippi remembered to bless Paul financially. He in turn gave them a wonderful promise from God.

THE SUPPLIER

In a broad sense, bread can mean whatever we may need for today in order to live. However, we serve a God who wants us to do more than just survive but to actually thrive! I have reminded God of that most of this year as I was facing a personal struggle with my health and feeling weak for several months. Jesus said that he came to give us life....superabundant life according to the Greek language of John 10:10. Some of you knew my situation and prayed. I thank you from the bottom of my heart. I remember a prayer walk I had this spring in Florida at a college field when I was feeling so desperate. God seemed say: **'There is no testimony without a test.'**

I did have a couple of stress tests a month ago to determine what might be wrong with my heart. Recently a cardiologist informed me that he could see nothing wrong with my heart! God has restored my energy the past two months and I am beginning to thrive once again! God has also opened a door of ministry opportunity for me as a part time visitation and discipleship pastor with the church I grew up in. My time in Florida will be cut back a bit but I will remain a snowbird. I now quote from the Heidelberg Catechism in regards to the Lord's Prayer. It gives questions and then provides Biblical answers.

1. Why has Christ commanded us to address God: 'Our Father'?

That at the very beginning of our prayer he may awaken in us the childlike reverence and trust toward God which should be the motivation of our prayer, which is that God has become our Father through Christ and will much less deny us what we ask him in faith than our human fathers will refuse us earthly things / Matthew 7:9-11, Luke 11:11-13.

2. Why is there added: 'Who art in heaven'?

That we may have no earthly conception of the heavenly majesty of God, but that we may expect from his almighty power all things that are needed for body and soul.

Jeremiah 23:23-24, Acts 17:24-25, Romans 8:32, 10:12

The Apostle Paul had a deep revelation of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He encountered many needs as a great pioneer in spreading the good news of Jesus throughout the Roman Empire. He also knew that God was his great supplier though his many persecutions and battles. While in

prison, he wrote these words.... "My God shall supply all of your needs according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus" / Philippians 4:19

MY GOD Paul's experience was not a second hand faith with God. He had a direct encounter on the road to Damascus when he was a proud and pernicious persecutor of Christians. He was temporarily blinded so he could more fully see the God who would be the supplier of all his needs. After three days Paul received his sight back in the name of Jesus through Ananias. Proud Paul was emptied of himself and then received the fullness of the Holy Spirit. He spent his missionary life depending fully on God to meet his needs. When we are born again, we become God's children and can have a very personal relationship with God too.

SHALL This is a definite promise from God.

SUPPLY Paul knew about Abraham who had revelation of God as Jehovah Jireh (God who Provides) when he was instructed to sacrifice his only son Isaac on the altar. At just the right moment, God supplied a ram for the sacrifice. God saw before and sent the supply when needed. Pro = before / video = to see. God sees before.

FIRST HOME FOR THE FIRST COUPLE

When people buy a house, some like to buy it unfurnished so that they can decorate it to their own taste. Others like to buy a home that is totally ready to move into. When God made this earth, he fully furnished it so that it would be totally suitable and enjoyable for Adam and Eve. It was a paradise in every way. The temperature was fully climate controlled with just the right temperature and humidity (remember...they were naked). Eve did not have to cook food for Adam. God was the originator of 'fast food'. All they had to do was go over by a fruit tree and pick a fruit and eat. They did not need to wash it off because there were no pesticides on the fruit as there were no pests. The water was pure too. No need to chlorinate it. They did not need a house to live in for the whole garden was their home. No need to do laundry as they had no clothes. They could sleep outside on the soft thick green grass. No need for a roof over their heads as there was no rain and no wild animals or criminals roaming about. They could lay there at night and enjoy the fresh air and the spectacular light show of stars every evening for there were no street lights to hinder the experience. God had abundantly provided but another need would later arise.

The first couple disobeyed God and a curse came upon all mankind and the earth. **Adam and Eve could not blame their fall on their environment, for they lived in a perfect paradise.** They failed to guard their hearts by ignoring God's command. God was not caught off guard. He had provided a lamb, his only Son, who was chosen before the creation of the world. 1 Peter 1:19-20. As we journey through the stories of the Bible, we read of a God who has met every kind of possible need. **God is a father who sees, who cares, who provides**

NEEDS Jesus said: Look at the birds, the sparrow and the flowers / Matthew 6:25-34

When I lived in London as a full time missionary, I learned how to trust God for my needs. Many mornings at breakfast I would see a sparrow outside and remember his words. I lived on a few hundred dollars a month and never owned a car, but people gave me bikes to ride. I rode my bike the two miles to the church where I was working. One day on the way home my bike flipped over and my face smashed into the pavement and I smashed up my nose pretty bad

which later required two different surgeries. The guy at the bike shop said it looked like my bike had hit a wall. The cause remains a mystery, although the pastor felt it may have been a demonic attack. An optician at church was kind enough to provide me with a new set of glasses. I have seen some fulfillment of Jesus' promise to those who leave everything to follow him. He promises them homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields with persecution in this life / Mark 10:29-30.

I have never owned a home and yet I have many homes. While writing this letter, I am spending the day in a historic home on Chautauqua Lake here in western NY. The owner from Massachusetts says I can stay here any time that I want except during July and August. I also have another home in Findley Lake, NY where I can stay all summer except for a couple of weeks. God knows I have a need to 'get away' at time to rest, read, write, and pray. God has given me many wonderful friends in various places. Let us all take time to thank God for the times where we have seen him meet our needs, whether they be great or small.

ACCORDING TO HIS RICHES

God meets our needs not out of his riches but according to his riches. When we get something from God we have not depleted his supply one bit. God never runs low on supplies, whether it be something material or spiritual. Some people pray as if they do not want to overtax God's supply or ability. God is able to do much more than we could ever ask, think or imagine!!!! Ephesians 3:20 God is a multiplier.

IN CHRIST JESUS

All the riches of the universe belong to him. He is perfect, powerful and ever present to meet our needs. Paul knew Jesus as well as any man who walked this earth. At the end of his life, he was still aware of the one that met him on the road to Damascus. The one who had called him and sent him on a divine but dangerous mission to spread the gospel. Near the end of his earthly life, Paul wrote these words to Timothy his disciple.

"At my first defense, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them. But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength, so that through me, the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. And I was delivered from the lion's mouth. The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen." 2 Timothy 4:16-18

In Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge / Colossians 2:3

2022 update: I no longer have access to the two summer homes mentioned, but God has provided something even better. It is a small cabin on 8 acres of land that was part of our family farm. I have chosen to keep it 'off the grid'. It is the first home I can call my own, but I really should say it is God's cabin. It will be a place for me to be in the 'secret place' with God.

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