

“Lord, Teach Us To Pray” VI (Matt 6:11)

Introduction – Food is central to our physical lives, and this is no accident. Bread is central to having dominion over the earth, and was one of the first things to be affected by the fall. Obviously, bread is representative of all of our physical needs to sustain our lives. These are things we should pray for God to provide. It is disobedience not to ask for what we need, and it is disobedience to forget that God has provided.

Two Parts of the Lord’s Prayer – Man, reconciled to God in Jesus Christ, is called upon to pray that God’s name be hallowed, that God’s kingdom be manifest upon this earth, and that God’s will be exclusively done. This is in direct contrast to what a man of the flesh yearns for (his own name exalted, his own rule established, and his own will done). The second part of the prayer does not set this God-centered approach to life aside, but rather petitions God for the means that we might be participants in God answering those prayers. We are praying for daily provision (bread – strength), daily reconciliation (forgiveness – boldness), and daily protection (deliverance – freedom), and all for the kingdom and power and glory of God.

Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread – What is the Lord teaching us in teaching us to pray these words?

Dependence On God For... (Deut 8:3) – Human independence is our vanity, a stinking sin before the living God. We are needful for everything from Him, and it is so important that a rich society like ours never forget this. We think we do not need God for bread because we can simply go to the store and use our checkbook (Deut 8:11-17). But all of our efforts are dependent upon the providence of God. Your next breath, your next business deal, your next sentence, your next sleep, everything depends upon the one in whom “*we live and move and have our being.*” We are Baal-worshippers when we think that all we have to do is learn how to manipulate nature. We are servants of Jehovah when we think that every good and perfect gift is from our God in heaven.

What We Merit (Gen 2:15-17, 3:17) – We have no rights from God. If He treats us according to justice or fairness, we deserve nothing but misery and death. What we are asking for is a gift, a mercy.

What God Cares About – Jesus fed hungry people, and so we know He cares about our everyday needs. Jesus healed the sick, and so we know He cares about our comfort and abilities on this earth. Jesus calls us to work and so we know He cares about our employment and dominion on the earth for His glory. He cares about your big decisions and little trite needs. He cares about your future and He cares about your specific meal today. His promises are there for us (Psalm 132:15, 34:10), and His character shows us how much He delights in these mercies to us (Psalm 81:10, Mic 7:18). He is our heavenly *Father*.

Covenant Community (Eph 6:18) – “Give us...”, not “Give me...” We must learn to pray for others according to the law of God and the law of love. This is a part of how we love our neighbors as ourselves. Your petition to the heavenly throne is often the first and best gift that you can give someone in a particular trial or need.

Resting, Working, Trusting – Our requests come in the context of resting in His sovereign care and seeking Him first (Matt 6:33). Our requests come in the context of hard labor, also the gift of God, to provide according to His normal providence answers to many of these requests (Eph 4:28, 2 Thess 3:10-12). Having sought Him and having put our hands to the plough in faith, we wait upon the Lord for His provision, trusting His perfect timing (Rom 8:28).

Living Like the Secularists – Here is the challenge. If we are not praying for every need, what are we often acknowledging? In whom are we ultimately trusting?

Asking – Why ask if we already have today’s bread? We must have that bread seasoned with God’s blessing or it will do us no good but heap up greater judgment upon us (Psalm 106:15). Our barns may be full today, but there is no promise for this evening (Luke 12:13-21).

Giving Thanks (Deut 8:10, Phil 4:6) – In asking for everything, we are to do so with great thankfulness towards God for His provision, His love, His tender mercies, and His promise of future grace.

Motivation – We are praying with the final clause in mind – “for Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.” And God is most glorified when He is providing for us in His great wisdom to walk most satisfied in Him. True joy and God’s glory do not have to be at odds.

Contentment (Prov 30:7-9) – Our requests must be made without covetousness, and with a desire that the provisions would always put us in a position where we might best serve the Lord and not fall into sins.

Lord, Teach Us To Pray: Putting it into Practice – As we continue through our study of the Lord’s Prayer, the goal is not simply greater understanding. Our goal is faithful saints who faithfully pray. The lengthy prayers of saints mentioned at the beginning of this series should begin to make more sense. The command to pray without ceasing should begin to make more sense. The motivation to pray more should become sweeter and more irresistible. The Word of Christ is not simply to land in your ears, but down in your hearts, where, by God’s Spirit, you find yourself imitating Christ and His faithful servants who gave themselves to prayer – for everything, and for His glory.