

The Gospel of Matthew

Title: Instructions on Prayer - Part 2

Text: Matthew 6:9-13

Proposition: Three areas to pray in, for God's provision, for God's forgiveness and to forgive, and for God's protection.

Vs. 11 - A PRAYER FOR GOD'S DAILY PROVISION. God is a providential God. The prayer is for us to ask, to seek and trust God to provide. The Greek word for give is *didomee* and is a verb describing action. It's not demanding God to act as our cosmic bellhop, but trusting God to provide our needs each day. We aren't to be concerned with what tomorrow brings, but we are to be concerned with today.

In context, people of this day didn't often know where their meal or shelter would come from. In a very literal sense, each day was to be trusted with God's provisions. The word bread not only represents food, but is symbolic of all our physical needs. John Stott observed in his book *Christian Counterculture, The Sermon on the Mount*, that Martin Luther said "Everything necessary for the preservation of this life is bread, including food, a healthy body, good weather, house, home, wife, children, good environment, peace." It is an amazing thing, that an infinite, divine, holy, sovereign God would be concerned with my daily needs. **NOTE:** We should be praying for this. Do you pray for God to meet your daily needs? Or do you assume that it is there, without ever thanking Him for being a providential God. You need today, God's daily provision. Proverbs 27:1 "Do not boast about tomorrow, For you do not know what a day may bring forth."

God is a provider. Philippians 4:19 "And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus." Paul was confident, as he wrote this from a Philippine jail, that God would provide what he needed in the confines of chains.

After the wall was rebuilt in the days of Nehemiah, they gathered together for fasting, and the reading of the law. In Nehemiah 9:15a, 21 "You provided bread from heaven for them for their hunger, You brought forth water from a rock for them for their thirst, Indeed, forty years You provided for them in the wilderness and they were not in want; Their clothes did not wear out, nor did their feet swell." Even in a punishment state of rebellion, God provided. Many of you may know and recognize the providential hand of God in your life. He has been faithful to give you what you need at a time when it seemed difficult.

Elijah came to a widow woman in the midst of a drought while she was gathering sticks and said to her "Please get me a little water in a jar, that I may drink. As she was going to get it, he called to her and said, Please bring me a piece of bread in your hand" (1 Kings 17:10a,11). Her response to what Elijah said, "I have no bread, only a handful of flour in the bowl and a little oil in the jar; and behold, I am gathering a few sticks that I may go in and prepare for me and my son, that we may eat it and die." But our God is providential, He provides, daily, what we need. Furthermore, 1

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Kings 17:13-15 "Then Elijah said to her, "Do not fear; go, do as you have said, but make me a little bread cake from it first and bring *it* out to me, and afterward you may make *one* for yourself and for your son. For thus says the Lord God of Israel, 'The bowl of flour shall not be exhausted, nor shall the jar of oil be empty, until the day that the Lord sends rain on the face of the earth. So she went and did according to the word of Elijah, and she and he and her household ate for *many* days. The bowl of flour was not exhausted nor did the jar of oil become empty."

Abraham understood that God provided exactly what was needed. In the act of taking his own son to sacrifice him, he believed God would provide. Genesis 22:7-8 "Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering? Abraham said, God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son. So the two of them walked on together." Abraham's response was one of full faith. He didn't know nor foresee God's action, but he believed. And God once again provided, Genesis 22:13-14a, "Then Abraham raised his eyes and looked, and behold, behind *him* a ram caught in the thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram and offered him up for a burnt offering in the place of his son. Abraham called the name of that place The Lord Will Provide." The Hebrew name of the place is Jehovah Jireh. There's a NT application we see in 2 Corinthians 9:10 about God being a provider and supplier "Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness."

When we say "give" it's not a command but a recognition of what God has done both in the past and in the present. We pray for His daily provision for our needs to be met, shelter, house, financial, physical. Without being concerned for tomorrow, to accept the Lord's provision for the day and rejoice in that. We must pray for this each day for Him to provide.

Vs. 12 - THE DEBT WE OWE, FORGIVENESS OF THAT DEBT, AND FORGIVENESS TO OTHERS. The prayer to forgive us of our debts is a daily prayer we all must pray. The Greek word for debt is one of five NT words used for sin. The most common usage is one that refers to sin as "*missing the mark.*" The noun usage of the word here is generally for "*moral and spiritual debt.*" Sin has left a debt that cannot be paid. We are all born spiritually bankrupt. No man is born good and goes bad.

The problem we all have is sin. We see it all around us. Sin dominates the mind of man. Jeremiah 13:23 "Can the Ethiopian change his skin? Or the leopard his spots? *Then you also can do good Who are accustomed to doing evil.*" You can't change your nature. You can't decide to do good. It takes a regeneration of God to do so. God has paid the debt for us through His Son Jesus. Matthew 20:28 "to give His life a ransom for many."

Sin is a frequent problem for us today. However, we aren't condemned by sin because of God's atonement of Christ. Romans 8:1 "Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." God's forgiveness for our sinful ways does not mean we abuse God's grace by using this as a license to sin. We should see God's forgiveness as a means of spiritual growth and

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holiness towards Him. It produces in us the ability to forgive, to understand that we were in such deep sin He rescued us. Forgiveness is a trait of the Christian. Matthew 5:7 **“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.”** Chapter 5 of Matthew taught us how to respond to those that hate us and use us. Knowing the depth of what God has forgiven us from, leads us to forgive those who have wronged us. **NOTE:** The Holy Spirit cannot work freely among those who carry grudges and harbor resentment.

Vs. 13 - KEEP US FROM BEING TEMPTED, DELIVER US FROM EVIL. The prayer here should be that God would keep us from even being tempted. The word lead means *“to bring in, to lead in”* therefore, God keep us from even being tempted to sin. We often say God will deliver us from temptation as if we are some kind of spiritual giant. Yes, it’s true, God will provide a way of escape, **“No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it”** (1 Corinthians 10:13).

In the Greek it’s basically a neutral word. Our English word refers to an enticement to sin. The root meaning of the word has to do with a *“testing or proving.”* A classic example of the usage of the word is found in Genesis 22:1 **“that God tested Abraham”** but the KJV rendered it **“tempted.”** Obviously God does not tempt man with evil or sin. But in this case, it was God who *“tested”* and *“proved”* not tempted to sin. But in our text today, the word is a referral to an enticement to sin.

The early church father Chrysostome, said the solution to this is not a theological or logical debate, but one of the heart. It’s a desire and inclination that causes the believer to want to avoid sin, the temptation to sin and the trouble that sin will bring. **NOTE:** It should be our prayer that we avoid all prospects of falling into sin, choosing to avoid it, rather than having to defeat temptation.

When we all honestly look at the power of sin, and our own weakness, our sinful propensities, we should shudder at the danger of temptation. This is why we should pray for to not even be tempted. As John MacArthur notes, *“It’s an appeal for God to place a watch over our eyes, ears, mouth, feet, and hands. That in whatever we see, hear or say, and in any place we go and in anything we do, He will protect us from sin.”* Our Lord Jesus prayed this too for us, **“I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one”** (John 17:15). James 4:7 **“Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.”**

The believers prayer is to be kept from the overall solicitation to sin, but if he falls into it, to be rescued from sin. We live in a cursed world full of evil both for eye to see and ear to hear. We can take steps to walk in obedience and purity. We can pray for God to lead us not into places or situations to sin. But you must want that. The problem for many professing Christians is they like their sin. They have in some way, justified their behavior and actions.

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Conclusion: The main question is today, if you're not praying for holiness living in your life, seeking to bring glory to His name, desiring to be kept from sin, then are you truly a Christian? It's a fair question. The Bible isn't silent on the subject of holy living, a transformed life by the power of Christ. Our prayer should be God's name is hallowed, that His kingdom come, His will be done in our lives, and that He provides, forgives and keeps us from sinful ways. A man who is redeemed will not want to live as he used to.