

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

“Our Daily Bread”

By Dan Richardson

In the Bible, “*bread*” is used in a general sense to refer to our physical sustenance in this life. As Jesus teaches His disciples how to pray (Matt. 6:9-15), a part included instruction concerning their “*daily bread*” (vs. 11). From this scripture, we’d like to suggest several lessons for your consideration as it regards “*our daily bread.*”

WE MUST PRAY FOR IT DAILY. Jesus taught we should pray, “*Give us this day our daily bread.*” First, what does this say about prayer? An examination of Jesus’ teachings in Matthew 6:9-15 reveal that His disciples should pray for things material in nature as well as spiritual, recognizing God as the source of both (Acts 14:17; Jas. 1:17), and always praying with a thankful heart (Col. 3:17; Eph. 5:20).

Second, when we pray for our “*daily*” bread, suggests the importance and regularity of our prayers. In other words, we have to pray “*daily*” for our daily bread. Scripture admonishes the Christian to “*pray without ceasing*” (1 Thess. 5:17), that is, never stop praying!

Third, this spiritual exercise is with the knowledge that prayer is a blessing and privilege for God’s children; it is an expression of faith that we trust in God and depend on Him for our every need. We are confident He hears and will answer according to His will and by His gracious providence. Paul defined prayer as “*my heart’s desire and supplication*” expressed to God (Rom. 10:1). In faithful prayer there is no doubt (Jas. 1:6-7).

WE MUST WORK FOR IT DAILY. Work is a “four-letter word” for too many in our time. However, the Bible considers man’s labor noble and God commands that we work for our living (Eph. 4:28; 2 Thess. 3:12). The divine injunction is given that “*if any will not work, neither let him eat*” (2 Thess. 3:10). We ask, however, is there a contradiction here to our previous point? If I acknowledge God as the source of all my blessings and pray for my “*daily bread,*” why should I not expect God to lay it on my table without me having to work for it? Because one requirement God stipulates for acceptable prayer is that it proceed from a heart which says, “*thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven*” (Matt. 6:10). Our confidence that God will hear and answer the prayers of His children is grounded in the truth that we must pray “*according to His will*” (1 Jn. 5:14). Simply put, if we pray for our “*daily bread*” but are not willing to work for it, we disobey God and our prayers are made in vain.

WE MUST BE WARNED BY IT DAILY. With God’s blessings, because of man’s adversary, the devil (1 Pet. 5:8), come also temptations to develop the wrong attitudes toward them. For example, while God teaches us to pray for temporal things, we must not lose sight of the fact that spiritual blessings should be of primary importance. Jesus teaches, “*Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God*” (Matt. 4:4). If we count “*daily bread*” of greater value than the teachings of God’s word for salvation from sin (Eph. 2:8-10), the church Jesus purchased with His blood (Acts 20:28), overcoming temptation with God’s strength (Eph. 6:10), steadfastness of faith (1 Cor. 15:58), etc., then for certain, our priorities are in need of adjustment. Later He commands, “*But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things*” (the material things, DR) *shall be added unto you*” (Matt. 6:33).

Remember, we are instructed to pray, “*Give us this day our daily bread*” (emphasis mine, DR). In stead of a desire to hoard material things, the prayer of faith comes from a heart filled with thanksgiving and contentment for those things we receive “*this day.*” In 1 Timothy 6:6-8, the virtue of contentment is contrasted with the sinful desire to be materially rich. The apostle Paul warns, “*the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil*” (vss. 9-10). As we contemplate our “*daily bread,*” may we heed God’s warnings associated with it.

WE MUST GLORIFY GOD WITH IT DAILY. Almost immediately after Jesus' teaching on prayer, He commands: *"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth...but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven"* (Matt. 6:19-20). Throughout history, God's people have faced temptations regarding how we faithfully use our material blessings. Before Israel entered the promise land of Canaan, Moses warned concerning the dangerous influence their wealth would have, causing their hearts to be *"lifted up"* and saying in their hearts, *"My power and the might of my hand hath gotten me this wealth"* (Deut. 8:11-14, esp. vs. 17). Likewise, the danger remains today, when we, because of our prosperity, yield to the temptation of pride and ascribe our wealth to the strength of our own hands instead of a gift from God. As Christians, we must recognize ourselves as faithful *"stewards"* appointed over the things of God for a little while (1 Cor. 4:2). Our very lives are not our own, but a gift from God to be used to glorify Him (Acts 17:25; 1 Cor. 6:19-20). Let us hear God's truth and be careful. – *Search*, January 2021. ■

Does This Appeal To You?

By Keith Greer

If you were looking for a church, would a church that meets the following criteria appeal to you?

- A church that is not a denomination (Jn. 17:20, 21).
- A church whose only head is Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:22, 23).
- A church that has no creed other than the Bible (Col. 3:17).
- A church that follows simple New Testament worship (Jn. 4:24).
- A church that uses only God's word to draw men to Christ (Rom. 1:16).
- A church that is organized according to the New Testament pattern (Phil. 1:1).
- A church that does not raise money by having car washes, bake sales, rummage sales, or religious-product sales. Rather, it is financed solely by its members' free-will offerings (1 Cor. 16:1, 2).
- A church that has only one type of worship service, and it's neither contemporary nor traditional (Heb. 8:5)?
- A church that expects its members to be present each and every time the saints assemble (Heb. 10:24).
- A church that has no earthly headquarters (Phil. 3:20).
- A church that wears only a Bible name (Rom. 16:16; 1 Cor. 1:2).
- A church whose members are simply called Christians (Acts 11:26).
- A church that takes a stand on the moral issues of the day (adultery, abortion, homosexuality, fornication) and is not afraid to speak out on any subject found in the Scriptures (Acts 20:26, 27).
- A church that disciplines those who become unfaithful (2 Thess. 3:14, 15).
- A church that understands loving God means not compromising the truth (Prov. 23:23).
- A church that seeks to teach its members to live above the world (1 Jn. 2:15-17).
- A church that is willing, in light of the Scriptures, to defend and examine any teaching, answer any question, and discuss any spiritual matter (Acts 17:11).
- A church that believes the Bible is inspired and is God's last will and revelation to mankind (2 Tim. 3:16, 17).
- A church that believes the kingdom is now here and that Christ is ruling on His spiritual throne in heaven (Acts 2:29-36; Col. 1:13, 14).
- A church that teaches that, to be part of God's family, man must hear (Rom. 10:17); believe (Heb. 11:6); repent (Acts 17:30); confess (Rom. 10:9, 10); and be baptized (Mk. 16:16).
- A church that teaches that, after obeying the gospel, we can fall from grace and become lost (2 Pet. 2:20-22).
- A church that teaches the Lord will return in judgment and mete out to each person, one of two sentences—Heaven or Hell (Matt. 25:31-46)!
- A church that believes unity can be achieved only by adhering to the seven platforms of unity (Eph. 4:1-7).

If this kind of a church appeals to you, please consider worshipping with us. If not, please study with us to show us why it doesn't appeal to you. God permits us to choose. ■

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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