



Research article

ISSN 2582-0214

Τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον δίδου ἡμῖν τὸ καθ' ἡμέραν (GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD): A THEOLOGICAL AND PRACTICAL EXPLORATION OF LUKE 11: 3

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Doi: <https://doi.org/10.54513/BSJ.2025.7106>

ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

Article history:

Received: 18-2-2025

Accepted: 22-3-2025

Available online 31-3-2025

Keywords:

ἐπιούσιον, ἡμῶν,

Provision, Dependence

and Community.

“Daily bread,” as articulated in Luke 11:3. It scrutinizes the historical and cultural backdrop surrounding this phrase, its pivotal role within the Lord's Prayer, and its relevance for modern Christian living. The analysis contends that this petition symbolizes a profound dependence on God's provision, inviting believers to cultivate a deeper faith in God's sustaining grace. It underscores the imperative of communal sharing and releases individuals from anxiety about scarcity, redirecting their attention to God as the ultimate source of all provision.



Introduction

As recorded in Luke 11:2-4, the Lord's Prayer is central to Christian liturgy and personal devotion. This prayer, taught by Jesus to His disciples, encompasses a series of petitions that touch upon various spiritual and physical well-being aspects. The request "Give us each day our daily bread" (Luke 11:3) stands out as a concise yet deeply meaningful plea. This phrase is more than a simple request for sustenance; it encapsulates themes of trust, dependence, and divine provision. This paper aims to delve into the multifaceted layers of meaning behind this particular petition. By exploring its historical, theological, and practical implications, we seek to uncover the depth of its significance. Moreover, we will examine how this request, rooted in ancient times, retains its relevance and importance for modern believers navigating the complexities of contemporary life.

Historical and Cultural Context

In first-century Palestine, daily bread was a fundamental necessity, reflecting the agrarian and subsistence nature of the society. Bread was a staple of the diet, essential for daily survival. Most people lived hand-to-mouth, relying on the daily provision of food. As John Bright notes, "Bread was the most important part of the diet, and the people depended on its daily availability."¹ The petition "Give us each day our daily bread" would therefore resonate deeply with Jesus' audience, who were acutely aware of the uncertainty surrounding daily sustenance. Seán Freyne emphasizes that "the daily struggle for food and survival was a reality for most people in Jesus' time."² This context underscores the significance of the prayer. It is not merely a request for physical sustenance but also an expression of trust in divine provision amidst the precariousness of life. Moreover, the communal aspect of this petition is notable. By asking for "our daily bread," the prayer emphasizes collective dependence and shared responsibility. It highlights the importance of community support and the ethical imperative to ensure everyone has enough. Jonathan L. Reed points out that "the early Christian communities were characterized by a profound sense of mutual care and sharing."³ This communal ethos is reflected in the prayer, urging believers to consider the needs of others and their own. Expanding on this, the phrase "our daily bread" challenges

¹John Bright, *A History of Israel* (Westminster John Knox Press, 2000), 223.

²Seán Freyne, *Galilee, Jesus, and the Gospels: Literary Approaches and Historical Investigations* (Fortress Press, 1988), 144.



modern believers to reflect on social justice and equity issues. In contemporary society, where disparities in wealth and access to resources are stark, this petition calls for a renewed commitment to addressing hunger and poverty. It encourages actions that foster economic justice and community solidarity, aligning with the broader biblical mandate to care for the marginalized.

Exegetical Analysis of Luke 11:3

The initial plea of the prayer, "Give us each day our daily bread," leads to a nuanced exploration of individual requests within the worshipers' supplications. A subtle variation arises between the Gospel accounts of Matthew and Luke, where Luke phrases it as "give us each day our daily bread," while Matthew opts for "give us this day our daily bread." This disparity sets the tone for diverse perspectives on the matter.

Sharon H. Ringe argues that the word ἐπιούσιον modifying bread which, the NRSV translates in the traditionally as "daily," occurs only in this petition of the Lord's Prayer in both Luke and Mathew, so what it means is not clear.³ Kenneth E. Bailey argues that the trouble is that the word ἐπιούσιον appears nowhere else in the Greek language. Origen, a famous Greek scholar of the third century, wrote that he did not find this word in use among the Greeks, nor did private individuals use it. He concluded that the Evangelists must have created it.⁴ He notes that the four different meanings of ἐπιούσιον can be summarized as follows;

- The bread of today (time)
- The bread of tomorrow (time)
- Just enough bread to keep us alive (amount)
- The bread we need (amount)

One of the most basic human fears is the dread of economic deprivation. Will we have enough? We are managing now, but what about the future? What if I lose my job? What if the kids get sick? What if I am unable to work? How will we survive? One of the deepest and most crippling fears of the human spirit is the fear of not having enough to eat. In the Lord's

³Sharon H. Ringe, *Luke* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995),163

⁴Kenneth E.Bailey, *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes: Cultural studies in the Gospels*(Downers Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 2008),119.



prayer Jesus teaches his disciples to pray for release from that fear. This fear can destroy the human spirit. Jesus was, therefore, teaching his disciples to be delivered from this fear.⁵ I agree with Bailey's interpretation that Jesus teaches His disciples a prayer that conveys a profound message: "Deliver us, O Lord, from the fear of not having enough to eat. Provide us with today's bread, and assure us that we will have enough for tomorrow." This petition asks for bread, not cake, emphasizing simplicity and necessity. Furthermore, we ask for "ours," not "mine," highlighting the communal aspect of this request and our shared dependence on God's provision.

One of the key words to take note of in this prayer is ἡμῶν, which means "our." This indicates that the bread we are asking for is not just for oneself, but all of us, emphasizing a collective request and a communal concern. By using "our" instead of "my," Jesus teaches us to consider the needs of others and to care for our community as a whole. This small yet significant word, ἡμῶν, shifts the focus from individual desires to a shared, communal responsibility. In the context of the prayer, it highlights the importance of solidarity and mutual support within the Christian community. It encourages believers to think beyond their own needs and be mindful of their neighbors' well-being. Expanding on this concept, "our" bread suggests a vision of a society where resources are shared equitably and everyone's needs are met. This starkly contrasts to a world often dominated by individualism and competition. The prayer becomes a call for a more compassionate and just society where the abundance of God's provision is recognized and distributed among all people. Moreover, the communal nature of this request underscores the biblical principle that we are all part of one body in Christ. Just as the early Christian communities practiced sharing and caring for one another's needs, this petition reminds modern believers of their duty to support and uplift each other. It is a call to foster a spirit of generosity and to work towards alleviating the suffering and hunger of those around us.

In contemporary application, this part of the prayer challenges us to reflect on how we can contribute to the well-being of our community. It prompts us to ask ourselves whether we are doing enough to help those in need and to ensure everyone can have access to basic necessities. It encourages acts of charity, social justice, and community-building as expressions of our faith and love for one another.

⁵ Bailey, *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes*, 120-122.



Spencer argues that the socioeconomic dimension of this petition is prominently featured in the plea for daily bread and the pledge to remit others' debt. The importance of "the bread" (τὸν ἄρτον) in the first position in the line and center point in the prayer should not be minimized or spiritualized. This bread is not a metaphor for moral behavior or eternal life, this bread is a natural grain, the staff of physical life, necessary for human bodily survival and in short supply for many in Jesus' day. Luke's interest in actual bread for the hungry poor persists. The double "daily" emphasis (bread for this day's living, gives us each day) reinforces the focus on basic sustenance. The initial, unusual "daily" term (ἐπιούσιον) modifying "bread" appears only here and in parallel texts in ancient Greek literature and was coined by Jesus. With its precise meaning uncertain, major interpretive options include

- Necessary for the existence of individuals
- For the current day
- For the next day
- For the coming day
- Which comes upon us from the Father⁶

Spencer inclines toward the first two connotations concerning providing enough bread to sustain today's existence. The more future-oriented "next day" or coming time, including the time of the climactic messianic banquet, is less likely because when Luke refers to anticipated events on the next 'day/night,' Luke uses the feminine dative participle.⁷ Spencer's analysis expands our understanding of the Lord's Prayer by noting its socioeconomic context, the literal significance of its petitions, and the urgency of its plea for immediate sustenance. I propose that this interpretation of the text is a fair assessment, as, during the time of Jesus, bread held significant importance as a staple food and a symbol of sustenance and survival. This suggests that when the prayer mentions bread, it does not simply allude to symbolism but addresses the practical needs of individuals struggling to fulfill their necessities. This understanding emphasizes Jesus' concern for the physical well-being of Jesus' followers and Jesus' acknowledgment of the economic challenges prevalent

⁶Franklin Scott Spencer, *Luke: The Two Horizons New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Company, 2019), 296-297.

⁷Spencer, *Luke*, 297.



in society. Spencer's perspective enhances our comprehension of the Lord's Prayer by emphasizing its relevance to the socioeconomic conditions of Jesus' era and its lasting significance in addressing people's material needs in any setting. It encourages readers to view the prayer as a spiritual ritual and a call to actively address issues such as poverty and inequality.

Spencer added that the poor and the needy pray this prayer authentically. The emphasis on daily dependence on basic bread appears unnecessary for the rich and powerful with their storehouses of grain stocked. For them, the Lord's Prayer becomes less a personal petition than a moral mandate to share their abundance with those in daily need; they become the means of answered prayer as stewards of God's blessings. The Lord's Prayer thus effectively advances the communal agenda of equitably distributed resources on a daily rhythm that precludes hoarding and widening gaps between haves and have-nots.⁸ Clark agrees with Spencer that in the Lord's Prayer, Jesus instructed followers to request only the amount of bread needed each day. This was to be an affirmation of trust in God. It was a way of saying: "Our security in life will not be found in an abundance of food, nor any material thing but God alone."⁹ Marshall concurs with Spencer, suggesting a broader interpretation of ἄρτος (Luke 4: 3), extending beyond mere bread to encompass food in general.¹⁰ He added that in its Lukan formulation, the prayer is that God will go on providing food day by day. Whereas in Mathew, the use of the aorist imperative was employed, Luke uses the present imperative.¹¹

Marshall's insights contribute significantly to understanding this complex term within its textual context. Marshall pointed out that in Matthew's prayer, the term used is ἡμερον, conveying a sense of immediacy and emphasizing the present need. In contrast, in Luke's account, the phrase καθ' ἡμέραν is employed, suggesting a recurring or ongoing requirement, thereby indicating the disciples' continual dependence on God's provision. Marshall notes that τὸ καθ' ἡμέραν is a phrase found in Luke (9; 23; 19:47, Acts 17:11), suggesting that the

⁸Spencer, *Luke*, 297.

⁹David Clark, *The Lord's Prayer: Origins and Early Interpretations* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers, 2016), 74.

¹⁰Ian Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Exeter: The Paternoster Press, 1978), 458.

¹¹Marshall, *Luke*, 459.



generalized form might be attributed to Luke. This formulation could be an effort to clarify the ambiguous term ἐπιούσιον.¹² It is fascinating to see the depth of analysis Marshall offers regarding the meaning of the word ἐπιούσιον. His exploration of various Greek roots and connections sheds light on the possible nuances of interpretation. I appreciate how Marshall brings attention to Matthew's use of ἡμερον to emphasize the present need and contrasts it with Luke's καθ' ἡμέραν, stressing the disciples' continual reliance on God's provision. Marshall's observation about the potential influence of Luke on the generalized form of the phrase adds another layer to the discussion.

John Dominic Crossan argues that the meaning signifies both enough for today and the assurance of the same tomorrow. It is a request that our 'daily bread' be never again exceptional or conditional as in the past, but always normal and unconditional in the present and the future.¹³

While scholars may hold differing views on whether the reference to "daily bread" in the Lord's Prayer pertains to immediate sustenance or future provision, there is a consensus among them that this "bread" is associated with physical sustenance. I share the perspective that the term signifies physical bread. However, I agree with scholars such as Marshall, Clark, and Spencer, who propose that "daily bread" conveys the idea of daily sustenance and underscores the believer's ongoing dependence on God daily. In this interpretation, "daily bread" is not solely about securing immediate needs but extends to a broader acknowledgment of the believer's continual reliance on God for sustenance in our daily lives. This aligns with the notion that prayer emphasizes a consistent and enduring dependence on God. To Spencer, the Lord's prayer becomes less a personal petition than a moral mandate to share their abundance with those in daily need; they become the means of answered prayer as stewards of God's blessings. The Lord's Prayer thus effectively advances the communal agenda of equitably distributed resources on a daily rhythm that precludes hoarding and widening gaps between haves and have-nots.¹⁴ Reid and Mathew support this notion by highlighting that the petition for daily bread affirms the need for food as a basic necessity. As

¹²Marshall, *Luke*, 459.

¹³John Dominic Crossan, *The Greatest Prayer: Rediscovering the Revolutionary Message of the Lord's Prayer* (New York: Harper One, 2010), 138.

¹⁴Spencer, *Luke*, 297.



far as the petition is for an allotment of food sufficient for the day, it also challenges hoarding practices leading to imbalances in food distribution. Such drastic imbalances in the food supply attained in the case of the ancient Roman empire, as they also do in our current global economic system, where the wealthy amass food stores so abundant that vast quantities of it go to waste, while the poor suffer from malnourishment and starvation.¹⁵

Theological Significance

1. Dependence on God: The petition emphasizes human dependence on God for daily needs. This confirms the wilderness provision of manna that God showered upon Israel each morning- sufficient for all for that day but useless to stockpile because of its current expiration date. An exceptional double portion but no more was provided on the sixth day, so they would not have to gather on the Sabbath (Exodus 16: 14 -30). This reinforced the people's dependence on God and their shared responsibility to one another. The importance of this prayer suggests that, as humans, we are always in constant need, so we need to ask God to continue to supply us daily. Believers are not to worry about the unknown future but to live a day at a time. This dependence is a recurring biblical theme, reminding believers that God is the ultimate provider.

2. Trust in God's Provision: By asking for daily bread, believers trust in God's ongoing provision. It is a humble acknowledgment that all sustenance comes from God, fostering a relationship of trust and reliance rather than self-sufficiency. Clark notes that in the Lord's Prayer, Jesus instructed the followers to request only the bread needed daily. This was to be an affirmation of trust in God. It was a way of saying: "Our security in life will not be found in an abundance of food, nor any material thing but God alone."¹⁶ I agree with Clark, Green, and Spencer that this prayer clearly explains an affirmation of complete trust in God alone for security in life, detaching from an overreliance on material abundance. Jesus, through this prayer, teaches the value of dependence on God, urging Jesus' followers to seek what is needed each day without worrying about an uncertain future. This nuanced understanding reflects a holistic perspective that acknowledges the multifaceted nature of our reliance on God's providence in physical needs.

¹⁵Barbara E. Reid and Shelly Matthews, *Wisdom Commentary, Volume 43B: Luke 10-24* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press), 365.

¹⁶ David Clark, *The Lord's Prayer*, 74.



3. Simplicity and Contentment: The request for "daily bread" rather than excess signifies a desire to meet basic needs. This simple yet profound petition encourages a lifestyle of simplicity and contentment, directly countering the culture of excess and consumerism prevalent in many societies today. By asking for "daily bread," Jesus teaches His followers to seek sufficiency rather than abundance. This reflects a fundamental principle of reliance on God's provision for each day, promoting a sense of trust and gratitude for what is provided. As Craig L. Blomberg observes, "The prayer for daily bread is a model of moderation and simplicity, reminding believers to trust in God's daily provision and to avoid the excesses of materialism."¹⁷ In contemporary society, where consumerism often drives the pursuit of more than what is necessary, this prayer serves as a counter-cultural statement. It challenges individuals to reassess their values and priorities, fostering a mindset that values contentment over accumulation. This aligns with the biblical teachings on stewardship and the responsible use of resources. Richard Foster notes that "the discipline of simplicity is a spiritual practice that helps believers focus on the essentials and cultivate a heart of gratitude and trust in God's provision."¹⁸ Furthermore, the emphasis on "daily" bread highlights the importance of living in the present and trusting God for tomorrow. This daily dependence encourages believers to let go of anxiety about the future and to focus on the present moment, as Jesus taught in Matthew 6:34: "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own." The concept of "daily bread" also extends to a communal dimension. It invites believers to consider not only their own needs but also the needs of others. This petition fosters a sense of solidarity and shared responsibility within the community. Walter Brueggemann states, "The prayer for daily bread is inherently communal, reminding us that our well-being is interconnected with the well-being of our neighbors."¹⁹ In practical terms, believers are called to act in ways that ensure everyone has access to their basic needs. This can manifest in various forms, such as supporting food banks, advocating for fair economic policies, or simply sharing resources with those in need. The prayer thus catalyzes for social justice and communal care, urging believers to work towards a more equitable society.

¹⁷ Craig L. Blomberg, *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2009), 292

¹⁸ Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth* (San Francisco, CA: Harper One, 1998), 67.

¹⁹ Walter Brueggemann, *Prayers for a Privileged People* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2008), 34



4. Community and Sharing: The use of the plural pronoun "ἡμῶν" in the Lord's Prayer underscores its communal aspect. This wording transforms the prayer from an individual request into a collective one, highlighting the importance of community and our shared responsibility to ensure that all members meet their daily needs. This communal dimension is central to the prayer's meaning. It aligns with the early Christian practices of sharing and communal living described in Acts 2:44-47, where believers "had everything in common" and distributed resources "to anyone who had need." By incorporating "ἡμῶν," Jesus emphasizes that the well-being of the community is intertwined with that of the individual. This collective plea for "our daily bread" reminds us that our needs are not isolated; they are part of a broader social fabric where mutual care and support are paramount. As Beverly Roberts Gaventa notes, "The communal language in the Lord's Prayer calls believers to a shared concern for the well-being of others, reflecting the interconnectedness of the body of Christ."²⁰ This communal aspect of the prayer challenges the individualistic tendencies prevalent in many modern societies. It calls believers to move beyond focusing on personal needs and to embrace a broader perspective that includes the entire community's needs. This shift from "mine" to "ours" fosters a sense of solidarity and collective responsibility, urging believers to take practical steps to support one another. The early Christian communities exemplified this principle of communal care. Acts 2:44-47 provides a vivid picture of believers living in harmony, sharing their possessions, and ensuring that no one was in need. This model of communal living is a direct manifestation of the prayer's ethos, demonstrating how believers can live out the principles of mutual support and generosity in tangible ways. John Dominic Crossan highlights that "the early Christians' communal practices were a radical expression of their faith, emphasizing the importance of economic sharing and social justice."²¹ This communal perspective calls for a renewed focus on social justice and equity in contemporary application. It challenges modern believers to consider how their actions and lifestyles impact others and engage in practices promoting the common good. This might include advocating for fair economic policies, participating in community service, or supporting initiatives that address hunger and poverty. Moreover, the collective plea for daily

²⁰Beverly Roberts Gaventa, *Our Mother Saint Paul* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007), 89

²¹ John Dominic Crossan, *The Birth of Christianity: Discovering What Happened in the Years Immediately After the Execution of Jesus* (San Francisco, CA: Harper One, 1999), 382.



bread encourages believers to cultivate a spirit of generosity and compassion. It reminds us that we are stewards of God's resources, entrusted with the responsibility to use them for the benefit of all. This perspective fosters a community where resources are shared equitably, and everyone's needs are met, reflecting the kingdom values Jesus proclaimed.

Practical Application

1. Daily Prayer and Gratitude: The petition for "daily bread" in the Lord's Prayer holds a special place in Christian spirituality as a reminder of God's continual provision and nurturing daily gratitude habit. Christians are encouraged to integrate this prayer into their daily spiritual practice, recognizing it as a powerful tool for cultivating a deep gratitude for God's provision. By making "give us this day our daily bread" a regular part of their prayer life, believers develop a heightened awareness of God's ongoing care and sustenance. This daily ritual fosters a mindset of gratitude, prompting individuals to acknowledge and appreciate the blessings that come from God's hand. As Henri Nouwen eloquently expresses, "Daily bread is the gift of God's presence, through which all that is dark, destructive, and dead in you are taken away, and all that is bright, beautiful, and alive in you are given."²² Incorporating this petition into daily prayer helps believers maintain a sense of dependence on God. In a world marked by self-sufficiency and individualism, the act of asking for daily bread acknowledges our reliance on God for our basic needs. This humility before God fosters a deeper trust in His providence and a willingness to surrender our anxieties about the future. Furthermore, prayer for "daily bread" nurtures a spirit of generosity and sharing. As believers express gratitude for God's provision in their lives, they are inspired to extend it to others. This prompts acts of compassion and service towards those in need, reflecting the selfless love exemplified by Jesus Christ. In practical terms, integrating this petition into daily prayer can take various forms. It may involve setting aside dedicated time each day for prayer and reflection, incorporating the Lord's Prayer into personal devotions, or joining with others in communal prayer. Whatever the method, the goal remains the same: to cultivate a habit of daily gratitude and dependence on God's provision. Christians are encouraged to make this petition a part of their daily prayer life, fostering a habit of daily gratitude for God's

²² Henri Nouwen, *Bread for the Journey: A Daybook of Wisdom and Faith* (San Francisco, CA: HarperOne, 1997), 23



provision. This practice helps believers remain mindful of God's role in providing for their needs.

2. Combating Anxiety: In a world where anxiety about the future is pervasive, the petition for "daily bread" is a powerful antidote, offering believers a tangible way to combat worry and fear. This petition reminds individuals to focus on the present moment and trust God's provision for their daily needs rather than succumbing to apprehension about an uncertain tomorrow. It echoes the wisdom of Jesus' teaching in Matthew 6:34, where He counsels His followers, "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself." At its core, this petition encourages believers to adopt a mindset of mindfulness and trust. By acknowledging God's role as the ultimate provider, individuals are reminded of His faithfulness and care in every moment. Instead of dwelling on hypothetical future scenarios, they are invited to embrace the reality of God's presence and provision in the here and now. As Corrie ten Boom beautifully expresses, "Worry does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow, it empties today of its strength."²³

Furthermore, the focus on "daily bread" invites believers to cultivate a spirit of gratitude and contentment. Rather than striving for accumulation or security in material possessions, individuals are encouraged to find satisfaction in the simple blessings of each day. This shift in perspective enables believers to experience a deeper sense of peace and fulfillment rooted in recognizing God's goodness and provision. As St. Augustine reflects, "Thou hast made us for thyself, O Lord and our heart is restless until it finds its rest in thee."²⁴ Moreover, by entrusting their daily needs to God, believers are liberated from the burden of self-reliance and control. The prayer for "daily bread" acknowledges human limitations and affirms God's sovereignty over all aspects of life. This surrender of control fosters a sense of freedom and release from anxiety as individuals place their trust in the loving care of their Heavenly Father. As Charles Spurgeon aptly remarks, "Anxiety does not empty tomorrow of its sorrows, but only empties today of its strength."²⁵ In practical terms, combating anxiety through this petition involves a deliberate practice of surrender and trust. It may entail

²³ Corrie ten Boom, *Clippings from My Notebook* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1974), 46

²⁴ St. Augustine, *Confessions* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2002), 123

²⁵ Charles Spurgeon, *Morning and Evening: Daily Readings* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991), 367.



prayerful reflection on God's faithfulness in past provisions, intentional efforts to live in the present moment, and seeking support from fellow believers in times of distress. Ultimately, it is a journey of faith, where individuals learn to release their worries and rest in the assurance of God's unwavering love and care.

3. Social Responsibility: The communal nature of the petition for "daily bread" extends a profound call to Christians to be mindful of those around them who lack daily necessities. Beyond a mere individual request, this prayer underscores the interconnectedness of humanity and the shared responsibility of believers to care for one another. It challenges Christians to transcend self-interest and engage in acts of charity and social justice, ensuring that the needs of the poor and hungry are met. At its essence, this communal aspect of the prayer emphasizes the importance of solidarity and compassion within the Christian community. By praying for "our daily bread," believers are reminded of their interconnectedness with others and called to extend care and support to those in need. Pope Francis eloquently says, "The world tells us to seek success, power, and money; God tells us to seek humility, service, and love."²⁶ Moreover, the petition for "daily bread" serves as a catalyst for action, prompting believers to translate their prayers into tangible acts of mercy and justice. It calls Christians to advocate for the marginalized, work towards equitable economic policies, and alleviate the suffering of those experiencing poverty and hunger. This commitment to social responsibility is rooted in the biblical mandate to seek justice and mercy for the oppressed and vulnerable. As Micah 6:8 admonishes, "He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with your God." Furthermore, the communal dimension of the prayer challenges believers to examine their privilege and consumption patterns. It invites reflection on how personal choices impact the well-being of others and calls for a commitment to live and share generously. This entails a willingness to prioritize the needs of others over individual comfort and convenience, embodying the selfless love exemplified by Jesus Christ. As Dietrich Bonhoeffer affirms, "The church is the church only when it exists for others."²⁷ In practical terms, fulfilling the social responsibility inherent in the petition for "daily bread" involves a range of actions, from volunteering at local food banks to advocating

²⁶Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium: The Joy of the Gospel* (New York: Paulist Press, 2013), 34

²⁷Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison* (New York: Touchstone, 1997), 84



for systemic change. It requires an ongoing commitment to address the root causes of poverty and hunger, and a willingness to stand in solidarity with the marginalized and oppressed. Through these collective efforts, Christians can witness to the transformative power of love and compassion in building a more just and equitable society.

4. Sustainability and Stewardship: The “daily bread” petition addresses immediate needs and carries profound implications for sustainable living and responsible stewardship of resources. By asking for daily sustenance, believers are reminded of their role as stewards of God's creation and called to use resources wisely, promoting a lifestyle that respects the environment and honors God's provision. At its core, this petition challenges believers to adopt stewardship mindset rather than ownership. It reminds individuals that the earth and its resources ultimately belong to God, and humans are responsible for caring for and nurturing the world around them. Genesis 2:15 declares, "The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it." Moreover, the emphasis on "daily bread" underscores the importance of simplicity and moderation in consumption. It encourages believers to avoid excess and waste, recognizing that every resource is a gift from God to be used judiciously and with gratitude. This aligns with the biblical principle of contentment and rejecting greed and materialism. As Paul writes in Philippians 4:11-12, "I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty." Furthermore, the call for "daily bread" invites believers to consider the broader implications of their lifestyle choices on the environment and future generations. It prompts reflection on the interconnectedness of all living beings and the impact of human activities on ecological balance. This awareness fosters a commitment to sustainable practices that preserve biodiversity, mitigate climate change, and ensure the well-being of future generations. In practical terms, embracing sustainability and stewardship involves adopting eco-friendly habits and supporting initiatives that promote environmental conservation and social justice. This may include reducing energy consumption, minimizing waste, supporting local and organic agriculture, and advocating for policies that protect the environment and vulnerable communities. By integrating these principles into daily life, believers can bear witness to their faith and contribute to the flourishing of God's creation.



Conclusion

The petition "Give us each day our daily bread" encapsulates profound truths about reliance on God, trust in His provision, contentment with simplicity, and a call to community and social responsibility. As believers integrate this prayer into their daily lives, they are invited into a deeper relationship with God and a more intentional and compassionate way of living. This petition serves as a poignant reminder of our dependence on God for our basic needs. It prompts believers to acknowledge God as the ultimate sustenance source and trust in His faithful provision each day. By asking for "daily bread," individuals can release their anxieties about the future and find security in God's steadfast love and care. This reliance on divine provision fosters a more profound intimacy with God and cultivates a spirit of gratitude and trust. Moreover, the prayer for "daily bread" challenges believers to embrace a lifestyle marked by simplicity and contentment. It calls for rejecting materialism and consumerism in favor of prioritizing what is essential for life. This emphasis on simplicity opens the door to a deeper appreciation for the blessings of each day and fosters a sense of freedom from the pursuit of worldly possessions. Additionally, this petition's communal aspect highlights humanity's interconnectedness and the importance of caring for one another. By praying for "our daily bread," believers are reminded of their shared responsibility to ensure that all community members meet their basic needs. This call to community and social responsibility challenges individuals to actively engage in acts of charity, advocacy, and justice, reflecting the selfless love exemplified by Jesus Christ. Integrating the petition for "daily bread" into daily life involves a commitment to prayerful reflection, intentional action, and ongoing transformation. It requires believers to examine their attitudes towards material possessions, cultivate a spirit of generosity and compassion, and actively seek opportunities to serve others. Through this journey of faith, individuals can experience a more profound sense of purpose and fulfillment as they align their lives with the values of the kingdom of God. By examining "Give us each day our daily bread" within its biblical and cultural context, we gain a richer understanding of its theological depth and practical implications, offering a pathway to a more faithful and compassionate Christian life. It liberates us from the fear of scarcity and redirects our focus towards God, the ultimate provider of all things.



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