

Manna for Today

As I have reflected on the "Weekly Meditation" passage, The Lord's Prayer, I have stopped several times at the simple statement, "Give us this day our daily bread." I have considered the abundance I have in my own family. I was reminded again last Sunday of our abundance and the importance of a thankful heart.

Bread?

Our bread was served with butter and jelly and there was much more than a meager serving. Our bread also came with a table full of food: pot roast with vegetables, mashed potatoes and gravy. Even with four children and my parents at the table we still had leftovers. What a feast! What a blessing!

Daily Bread?

I feel certain that Jesus' audience remembered the *daily bread* that Israel ate while in the wilderness.

The Israelites had escaped Egypt but after only two and a half months they grumbled about their provisions. They accused God of bringing them into the wilderness to die. They remembered the pots of meat and how they had had enough bread to make them full . . . when they were in Egypt. So, God responded.

God spoke to Israel through Moses, "I have heard the grumblings of the sons of Israel; speak to them, saying, 'At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread; and you shall know that I am the LORD your God.'" (Exodus 16:12)

That very evening God caused quail to cover the ground so the people could simply gather their meat. The next morning they found a "fine flake-like thing, fine as frost on the ground" for bread. The people did not see this new food and recognize it as manna. "Manna" was actually a question. The Hebrew word *manna* literally means, "that which," or, as a question, "What is it?" The term *manna* became the name for the daily food that they could not identify. (For today's English-speaking teen, *manna* might be translated as: "What is this stuff?")

God did not provide "just enough" meat and manna, the food was given in abundance. However, God instructed the people to gather only what they needed for that day. On the sixth day they were to gather a double portion since there would be no manna on the Sabbath day. God said that he was testing them to see if they would follow his instruction. He wanted the people to recognize him

and revere him for his provision of their daily bread. He wanted them to know "I Am Who I Am, your God." As they received their daily bread they were reminded of God and his care for his people; and they were taught a lesson in contentment.

A lesson for today

As Americans we have a proud heritage defined by hard work, making our own way, and not having to depend on others. In our arrogance and wealth it is easy to forget that even with all of **our** effort; it is still God who provides sunshine and rain, and makes the plants grow. It is God who provides the natural resources to produce all of our modern "stuff." It is God who gives us the means to make a living and purchase the things that we need in life. It is God who gives us our Sunday dinner, whether at home or in a restaurant. We can be thankful to God whether it is a Sunday dinner feast, a bowl of "cocoa bombs" for breakfast, or a popcorn snack; whether it is clothing that follow the latest fashion trends or a drab pair of unmatched socks; whether we have a three-storey mansion on ten acres with a lake and a pool and an entertainment room and a guest house, heated garage and, and, and; or a small broken-down cottage in a crowded part of town. You see, daily bread is not just about being content with the food we receive each day. It extends to all that God provides.

He provides for us each day so that we will know that He is our LORD and our God.

At the beginning of every day let us ask God for the necessary provisions for the day. Then with contentment, at the end of each day, would it not be worthwhile to pause for a brief moment to thank God for the daily bread he has so freely given?

Rejoice always, pray constantly, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.
(Ephesians 5:16-18)

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