

*Our Father, Who is in heaven; Hallowed be Your name;*

*Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.*

*Give us this day our daily bread.*

the *Lord's* prayer

*Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.*

*Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.*

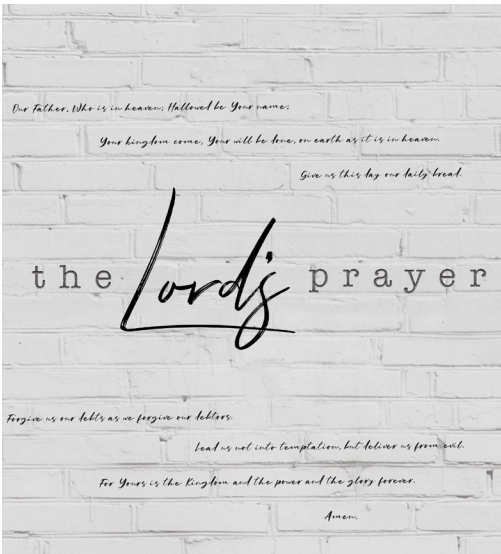
*For Yours is the Kingdom and the power and the glory forever.*

*Amen.*

# Sermon Growth Guide

**July 24, 2022**

**Providence**



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## The Lord's Prayer - Providence

### Matthew 6:9-13

**Key Verse:** Matthew 6:11 "Give us today our daily bread."

**Big Idea:** To pray, "Give us today our daily bread" means that God, the one who continues to sustain the whole world, will continue to bless us with the things we need to make it one more day as we continue to re-order our self-sufficiency toward dependency on Him."

## Foundations

This week, we continue our sermon series learning from Jesus how to pray in **The Lord's Prayer**.

Last week, we were taught to pray for the Lord's Kingdom and His will to be done here on earth. This week, we learned how it is God's will that is actively holding our world in His hands through His providence. Even when it is hard to see it, God's hand sustains every part of our lives.

Often, we get too confident in our own efforts to live a comfortable life that we forget about the blessing that dependency really is. Where the world likes to point fingers at us and tells us that we need to get everything ourselves, this prayer reminds us that we are completely dependent on God's will. And it is a gift. I thank the Lord every day that I do not have it all together!

To pray, "Give us today our daily bread" is an invitation of reorientation to humbly submit our needs to the Father, knowing ultimately our dependency is on Jesus, who is our bread of life.

## Understanding God's Word

Together, read Matthew 6:5-13.

Break apart this phrase in prayer with your group, pausing on each word to reflect on what that looks like for your life to pray, "Give...give us...give us today...give us today our...give us today our daily...give us today our daily bread."

## Applying God's Word

What kinds of things can be our "daily bread"?

In what areas of your life do you struggle with dependency on God? Is there anything/any person/any place that you struggle trusting that the Lord will provide?

## Witnessing God's Word

On a daily basis, note the ways you have seen the Lord's providence at work in your life.

How can you encourage others to be reminded that, "every good and perfect gift is from above"?

It's vacation season. A lot of us are coming back from summer vacations or time away here or there. Isn't that fun? In the parenting stage of life, vacation is when you just say "yes." Maybe you saved up some money for the vacation, or maybe you just think, "You know, this experience and the memories it will make...maybe it's worth losing our retirement and entering a lifetime of crippling debt to the credit card company. Let's say, 'yes.'" So you say yes, yes, yes, and the kids are so happy, happy, happy! Then you get home, and they hear a word they haven't heard in days: "No!" "Are you kidding? You can't have that. We can't afford that. Forget it!" Resources have their limits. You can't always say yes. But you can do what you can to provide, in wisdom and good stewardship, to provide what is needed. Today in our series on **The Lord's Prayer** we talk about God's **Providence**. God's providing. "Give us today our daily bread" (Matthew 6:11). Do we pray in dependence on God for our daily subsistence? Or do we take it for granted?

It has been said that the chief sin of our era...what do you think it is? Not lust. Not greed. Although those are doing fine. It's been said that the chief sin, the root thinking that keeps us from obedience to God, is autonomy, exaggerated independence, self-sufficiency. I'm not talking about confidence, working hard and enjoying the products of hard work and perseverance. These are good things. But autonomy to the point of believing that you depend on no one and nothing. You are an island. You are entirely self-sufficient, self-reliant, the center of your own universe. In fact, it is the temptation to believe you are your own god. It stretches all the way back to Genesis 3 and the Garden of Eden. The temptation from Satan the serpent was, "He's just afraid because he knows if you eat the fruit you will be as gods." Being your own god, refusing to believe that you depend. It is the root of our disobedience, our waywardness, and therefore the root

of our discontent and unhappiness, and is the root cause of our prayerlessness. Pastor Kevin DeYoung says, "Prayerlessness is an expression of our meager confidence in God's ability to provide and of our strong confidence in our ability to take care of ourselves without God's help... The heart that never talks to God is the heart that trusts in itself and not in the power of God. Prayerlessness is unbelief. And the opposite of this attitude? 'Give us this day our daily bread.'" Think about it, you don't pray when you think you already have everything, or else can provide what you want for yourself. Really, what do you have that you do not have by the hand of God? "Give us today our daily bread."

We are tempted to think we run this world. God made this world to be comfortable for us, and sometimes we get a little too comfortable. Here's what I mean. Theologians talk about this world as a "divine and contingent order." It is a divine order; it has been designed by a supernatural intelligence. It is a divine order. I was away with my family on a vacation (thank you church) out on the Chesapeake Bay. We were watching the tides. The tide came in, the tide came out. The bay lives on these turns of tide. One night I looked up at a gorgeous, stunning moon and I thought about how that moon is actually pulling the waters of the earth to and fro, day by day. Just enough. Just the right amount. Now, that system alone, the earth covered in water in its rotation and orbit, with this moon in its orbit, beautifying the night and pulling the waters in their tides. Are you kidding me? What a design! It is a divine order. But it is also a contingent order. What does that mean? It means the continuation of the very order of creation in which we live is dependent, contingent upon God's continuous will to hold things together. God actively holds this world together by His will. That's why it says of Jesus, "He is before all things, and in him all things hold together" (Colossians 1:17). This is providence.

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*Amen.*

One instant of God not willing, not desiring, to actively hold this universe together—and it is gone baby gone.

So, maybe we forget that. Maybe we are overconfident in our self-sufficiency. We think we live solid lives on solid ground, we count on everything being just as it is and at our disposal. You confidently sleep and rise and work and sleep again thinking everything is fully in your understanding and control, and you don't need anything, much less God, to get along your way. You fool yourself, my friend. You don't know how the earth and moon make their way. You don't know how your own body holds together. It all depends on God. We think we have this world on a string, then, all of a sudden, there's no toilet paper. Remember that? Or all of a sudden, there's no baby formula. No chicken patties. No way to pay for a tank of gas. Or worse. Things fall apart. These things all remind us, in our comfortable, superabundant, modern, western lives—nothing is guaranteed.

You are not independent. You are utterly dependent! Every second. Psalm 104 says: "All creatures look to you to give them their food at the proper time. When you give it to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are satisfied with good things. When you hide your face, they are terrified; when you take away their breath, they die and return to the dust. When you send your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the ground. May the glory of the Lord endure forever; may the Lord rejoice in his works" (Psalms 104:27-31). That's providence. That's dependence. We are no different from the rest of creation. All creatures look to God. I love living under the shadow of Pikes Peak for a lot of reasons, but I love how it sits as a visible demonstration of our dependence on God. When it has snow, I'm reassured—there will be water! When it is brown like it is now, I'm reminded—at any minute God can close the storehouses of heaven. Or he can roast us all like hot peppers,

like yesterday! We live by His grace and providence. "Give us today our daily bread" (Matthew 6:11). Jesus says, when you pray, recognize your dependence on God. Recognize from Whose Hand your every morsel of bread drops. Don't forget that. You live by the Providence, by the provision and good graces of God. Let's dig a little deeper.

Pray "Give." It is a very strong command the way Jesus teaches it. "Give." Reveal your needs and wants to God in prayer. What's on your heart? What do you want? What do you believe you need to live today? God may or may not provide an answer to your wants. After all, this prayer is for your needs, not your greeds. But He wants to be in open communication with you about them. See, prayer is about communion with God, open relationship with God. He wants to hear what you want. Paul tells the church to "pray continuously," in 1 Thessalonians. Jesus told a parable on prayer, Luke says, to teach us to never give up asking for what we need from Him. "Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up" (Luke 18:1). It's a story about a widow in need who keeps knocking on the door of an unjust judge. Keep knocking. Persist in your petitions. Bother God with your prayers. That's the heart of it. It's Jesus who said, ask: "And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son" (John 14:13). Or in this same sermon, the Sermon on the Mount: "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you" (Matthew 7:7). Pray "give."

God may or may not answer. He is a good Father, not a genie in a bottle. But no matter the response, you will find yourself closer to Jesus when you show Him what is in your heart. I know many people, and I'm sure you do too, people of unanswered prayers. People who have prayed long and hard to see something good—healing, reconciled relationships, the return of a wayward

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child back to God—and they haven't seen it. But they say, "I wouldn't change a thing." I know a man whose career was taken from him by untrue allegations he had no way to answer. He says, "I wouldn't change a thing." Why? "It brought me closer to Jesus than I've ever been." I know people of unhealed illnesses who say, "I wouldn't change a thing." I don't believe you. But I must. "I have never been closer to Jesus, and that is all I need." Pray "give" and grow closer to God, no matter the response.

Pray "Today." God in the present. Now. This is where we live and where God lives with us. Now. Today. God gives us what we need for today, not for a six-month store or a 25-year plan. Ask for God's providence and care for today. Corrie Ten Boom asked her father why God didn't give her the strength and courage she needed to face possible death at the hands of the Nazis. She shared in her autobiography, "Father sat down on the edge of the narrow bed. 'Corrie,' he began gently, 'when you and I go to Amsterdam—when do I give you your ticket?' I sniffed a few times, considering this. 'Why, just before we get on the train.' 'Exactly. And our wise Father in heaven knows when we're going to need things, too. Don't run out ahead of Him, Corrie. When the time comes that some of us will have to die, you will look into your heart and find the strength you need—just in time.'" God walks with us in the present, today. That's just how He wants it, actually. That we might walk together.

Pray for "Daily Bread." "Daily" translates a kind of mysterious word from the Greek language. It means something along the lines of substance, or subsistence, or sustaining. Bread of necessity, bread of subsistence—you can think of it in philosophical terms. Give today what I need to continue to exist, to be, to make it in the world one more day. God holds you together when you feel like you are about to fall apart. But the

reminder of daily, and today, it reminds us that God wants to be present as our Provider and Sustainer. If we had storehouses full, we would be tempted to forget God.

Daily bread also reminds us of another moment in the history of God's people. The Exodus. In fact, if you do some study, you might see the Lord's Prayer itself as a recapitulation of the story of the Exodus. "Our Father." Most references to God as Father in the Old Testament refer to the way God rescued His people from slavery. "Hallowed be your name." God made His name great by rescuing His people from Egypt. "Daily bread." In the wilderness, God provided daily bread, manna, to sustain His people day to day. If you tried to keep it a day, it would spoil. God was training them. He trains us still. Wake up each morning to new blessings. Wake up each morning to find the faithfulness of the Lord. His mercies are new every morning. Great is his faithfulness. "Give us today our daily bread" (Matthew 6:11).

Pray give. Pray today. Pray daily. Ultimately, what is the bread we need? It turns us toward Jesus. Our dependence is on Jesus. Jesus is the bread. Jesus is our daily need. Jesus is our daily providence. "Then Jesus declared, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your ancestors ate manna and died, but whoever feeds on this bread will live forever'" (John 6:35, 57-58). Come to Jesus, the living bread, and you will find life.

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