

Talk to Me

LEARNING TO PRAY LIKE JESUS



vGROUP STUDY



Talk to Me: vGroup Study

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"GIVE US TODAY"

This past Sunday at Vintage Church, Pastor Dustin Turner opened his sermon with a reference to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. This is a well-established theory in the field of psychology. A basic premise of that theory is that humans have needs—both physical and spiritual. For humans to flourish, both categories must be met. The radical claim of the Bible, and its central figure, Jesus, is that only God can truly meet our every need. And if that's not grand enough, the Bible speaks to how God meets those needs for whole communities and entire nations of people simultaneously.

- Jesus teaches us to pray to God our Father. How does this parent-child imagery shape our view of God's provision?

¹¹Give us this day our daily bread,

Matthew 6:11

In the gospel accounts, as we read and study the teachings of Jesus, we would do well to remember how Jesus liked to teach. Jesus was not only well-versed in the Old Testament scriptures, but he saw himself as the one to whom the whole Old Testament story was pointing! (See Matthew 5:17) So when Jesus would bring forth a new teaching, it would almost always be steeped in Old Testament language, imagery, and symbolism. As is the case with the Lord's Prayer, we find that each line and every petition of this prayer is rooted in some Old Testament storyline.

- When we think of God providing daily bread for people in the O.T., what storyline(s) comes to mind?
- In this narrative, what did God provide for the people? For how long did he provide? And when did God cease providing this thing?

In the Exodus narrative, the Lord God provided the newly-liberated Israelites with manna from heaven. If we follow that story through the book of Numbers, we find that this heavenly provision was not just given once per week nor just on special occasions. Rather, the Lord God provided manna day-after-day for a total of 40 years to this nation of people. While this most certainly was the story Jesus had in mind, was he also simultaneously alluding to something more than just physical provision in Matthew 6:11?

The gospel author Matthew helps us work through this question. Earlier in Matthew's gospel (chapter 4) before the Sermon on the Mount (chapters 5–7), we are told of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness for forty days. This story is presented as a hyperlink back to the Exodus/wilderness narratives.

¹Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ²And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. ³And the tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." ⁴But he answered, "It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

Matthew 4:1–4

- Compare and contrast Matthew 4:1–4 to the Exodus/wilderness narratives in the O.T.
- In verse 4:4, how does Jesus connect the Father's physical 'bread' to his spiritual nourishment?

Lastly, Jesus himself makes the connection that the gift of the Father's provision is both physical and spiritual. All four gospel accounts of the life of Jesus include the story of Jesus feeding the 5000. John's gospel however offers us some unique insight into that story. After feeding the crowd (John 6:1–15), Jesus and his disciples travel to another town only to be tracked down the next day by the recently-fed crowd seeking out Jesus (John 6:16–25). The verses that follow are what is known as the 'Bread of Life' discourse (John 6:26–59).

²⁵When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, "Rabbi, when did you come here?" ²⁶Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. ²⁷Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal." ²⁸Then they said to him, "What must we do, to be doing the works of God?" ²⁹Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent." ³⁰So they said to him, "Then what sign do you do, that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform? ³¹Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" ³²Jesus then said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. ³³For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." ³⁴They said to him, "Sir, give us this bread always."

³⁵Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. ³⁶But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. ³⁷All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. ³⁸For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. ³⁹And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. ⁴⁰For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day."

⁴¹So the Jews grumbled about him, because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven."

⁴²They said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does he now say, 'I have come down from heaven'?" ⁴³Jesus answered them, "Do not grumble among yourselves. ⁴⁴No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day. ⁴⁵It is written in the Prophets, 'And they will all be taught by God.' Everyone who

has heard and learned from the Father comes to me—⁴⁶not that anyone has seen the Father except he who is from God; he has seen the Father. ⁴⁷Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. ⁴⁸I am the bread of life. ⁴⁹Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. ⁵⁰This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. ⁵¹I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."

John 6:25–51

- What unique claim(s) does Jesus make about himself?
- What does Jesus offer and how does one come to receive this offering?

Through the Lord's Prayer, Jesus is encouraging us as his disciples to cultivate a way of praying that both acknowledges and yields to our dependency on the Father. Like the Israelites during their wilderness wanderings, we have been rescued from slavery and are being led to our promised home. But along the way, we must daily depend—like Jesus—on the Father for sustenance. Jesus teaches us that the Father knows our needs and is committed to providing us with those things that sustain life.

- How can we take the lessons packed into Matthew 6:11 and apply them to our prayer life this week?

Spend some time reflecting on the needs you have seen in your community this week. We all know the physical and spiritual hunger of the greater New Orleans area. Pray for God to somehow use you and the local church to help meet those needs. Close your vGroup time by praying the Lord's Prayer together followed by praying for the request listed on the Anticipate Prayer Challenge for the day your group is meeting.