



Wants or Needs? Bible Study

[**Please provide:** musical accompaniment; Bibles, hymnals, and copies of Bible study for attendees.]

Opening

Sing: "Praise and Thanksgiving" LSB 789, LW 403, or "Praise to God Immortal Praise" TLH 572, LW 496

What Do We Really Need?

In one scene of the Veggie Tales cartoon video "Madame Blueberry," Bob the Tomato asks his friend Larry the Cucumber, "How much stuff do you need, Larry?" To this Larry replies, "I don't know Bob. How much stuff is there?"

We live in a country full of riches. Advertising and our consumer society tell us that we need more and more, and that this will make life better and better. But that is not what God tells us.

What do we really need? And what should we consider in praying the fourth petition of the Lord's Prayer, "Give us This Day our Daily Bread"?

Reflecting on the Words of the Fourth Petition

Give - Our Heavenly Father wants us to come to Him and ask for what we need. He wants us to trust that He will provide for us and that we will have enough. It is through God's will that all things are given, preserved, and increased.

Read, reflect, and share your thoughts:

- Psalm 91:15-16
- James 1:17

Us - We are not alone. We are not only to be thinking of our own needs, but those of our neighbors as well. Perhaps we can be better stewards of our extras. As emphasized by St. Basil and St. Ambrose, "It is the bread of the hungry that you withhold; it is the clothes of the naked that you lock up; that money you bury underground is the redemption, the freedom of the wretched." In His loving kindness, God also provides for the unbeliever.

Read, reflect, and share your thoughts:

- Matthew 5:44-45

- 1 Timothy 5:8
- Hebrews 13:16
- 1 John 3: 17-18

This Day - We need God each day. We cannot make it without His daily care. This phrase places us in a posture of searching what is needed for today – not for tomorrow or the next year or next decade – just today. We are to trust that God will give us what we need and not be filled with worry.

Read, reflect, and share your thoughts:

- 1 Timothy 6:7-8
- Matthew 6:25-34
- 1 Peter 5:7

Our - We do not say "our" in the sense that we are able to secure our needs apart from God; rather, God makes the earth fruitful and blesses us with the ability to work for the things we need. We call it our daily bread as we are to work for things justly and honestly and not acquire things through unjust or unlawful means.

Read, reflect, and share your thoughts:

- Psalm 104:14-15

Daily - There is a rhythm to our needs – nutrition and sleep are needed at various points in a 24-hour cycle. We don't do well without them for the short term, and we can't do without them at all for the long term. Notice that God tells us to ask for our daily bread, not our weekly, monthly, or yearly bread. The concept of daily is opposed to the pursuit of material goods in order to feel better about ourselves. It helps us steer clear of the trap of money becoming our idol. The word "daily" is our reminder of the need to love, pray to and be in service to God each day of our lives.

Read, reflect, and share your thoughts:

- Proverbs 30:8-9
- John 6:12
- I Timothy 6:6-10

Bread - While we may think of physical food, the meaning of the word "bread" is much broader. Luther explains that daily bread includes everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, home, land, animals, money, goods, a devout husband or wife, devout children, devout workers, devout and faithful leaders, good government, good weather, peace, health, self-control, good reputation, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like. It is not the luxuries of life that are meant by the word "bread" but those things that are necessary and simple.

Read, reflect, and share your thoughts:

- Psalm 145:15-16
- Psalm 136:23-26

Application

Spend some time now taking a mental tour of your material possessions. Are there any areas of your home that need a good cleaning? A closet or an attic perhaps? Could things be given to someone else in need? Do you have collections that take up more time, energy or money than you'd like? What do you really need? Is God calling you to live more simply and think more "daily"? Share your thoughts with the group.

Closing Prayer

Help me, Lord, to be continually mindful of Your gracious hand and how You provide for me each day. Help me to be content with the simple and not seek to acquire beyond my daily bread. Thank You for loving me and giving me eternal life through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Optional Closing Hymn: "Seek Ye First" LSB 712

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