

## Manna for Today

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Jesus taught his disciples to pray: "Give us this day our daily bread."

*Bread?* On many Sunday afternoons our *bread* is served with butter and jelly and there is much more than a meager serving. Our *bread* also comes with a table full of food: beef roast with vegetables, mashed potatoes and gravy, and more. We all leave the table satisfied, often with leftovers. What a feast! What a blessing!

*Daily Bread?* I am certain that Jesus' audience remembered the *daily bread* that Israel ate while in the wilderness. Only two and a half months after their deliverance from Egypt the people grumbled about their provisions. They accused God of bringing them into the wilderness to die. They remembered how they had had enough food to make them full...when they were in Egypt. So, God responded through Moses:

"I have heard the grumbings 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 literally walk out and 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 know what it was and called it *manna*. The Hebrew term "Manna" was actually a question meaning: "What is it?" (For today's English-speaking teen, *manna* might be translated as: "What is this stuff?")

God did not provide "just enough," but rather, an 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. God was testing them to see if they would follow

His instruction. He wanted the people to recognize Him and revere Him for the 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.

As Americans we have a proud heritage defined by hard work, perseverance and independence. It is easy to forget that, even with **our** effort and ingenuity, it is still God who provides the sunshine and rain that makes plants grow. It is God who provides the natural resources to produce all of our modern "stuff." It is God who gives us the ability to make a living. So ultimately it is God who gives us our Sunday dinner, whether at home or in a restaurant.

We can be thankful to God whether we enjoy a Sunday dinner feast or meager leftovers; whether our clothing follows the latest fashion trend or is drab and outdated; whether we live in a three-story 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 rental 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.*

If we should pray, "Give us today our daily bread," then at the end of the day would it not be worthwhile to pause for a brief moment and with contentment thank God for the daily bread and other provisions 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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