

Meeting Your Needs through Prayer

Read [Matthew 6:9-13](#)

Have you ever wondered how much it costs to raise a child? There are various estimates out there, but all of the estimates agree that it's going to cost a whole lot. On his radio show in 2004, Paul Harvey cited research that estimates it costs about **\$160,000** to raise a child. **Parenthood.com** puts the estimate a little higher than that, calculating that it costs **\$170,000** to raise a child to age 18 (for a family with a yearly income of about **\$50,000**).

It's expensive to raise a child. Perhaps this is one reason why, when asked in one survey what they would like if their wildest dreams were to come true, more Americans chose winning the lottery (**38 percent**) than world peace (**1 percent**).

Financial needs are just one kind of need we have in life. We also have physical needs, relationship needs, and career needs. We have a need for a happy family. We need good health. We need protection. We need help with various problems we face from day to day.

Having needs is a part of life in this world—it is a part of what makes us human.

The good news is, God wants to meet our needs. The Bible says: *“And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus”* ([Philippians 4:19](#)).

God has various ways of meeting our needs. One way is by giving us the ability to work. Another way is by His sovereign providence: he gives us blessings that we in no way earned, such as good parents or talents or opportunities, and so forth. He also meets our needs by rewarding us for being obedient to him. For example, he said that when we give to him, he will give to us in return, and *more* than we gave him: *Give, and it will be given to you. They will pour into your lap a good measure—pressed down, shaken together, and running over. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return”* ([Luke 6:38](#)). These are all ways that God meets our needs.

But there's another way God meets our needs: through prayer.

In [verse 11](#) of the **Model Prayer**, Jesus told us to pray:

[v.11](#) *“Give us this day our daily bread.”*

Here Jesus is telling us that we can pray and ask God to meet our needs. That's what *daily bread* is, right? Its food and food is definitely a need. Jesus told us to pray and ask God to meet our needs.

And, as we've learned, Jesus would not have told us to pray a prayer that didn't work. So, according to the Model Prayer, we can ask that our needs be met through prayer, and expect that prayer to be answered!

But what kind of a prayer results in a need being met? Have you ever prayed a prayer that didn't result in a need being met? I have. Millions of other people have, too. It's obvious that not all prayer results in needs being met. So what kind of prayer was Jesus referring to?

Let's look at **three characteristics** of the kind of prayer that meets needs.

A PRAYER THAT MEETS NEEDS ASKS

"Give us this day our daily bread" is a request. It is asking God to meet a need.

It may seem obvious that a prayer that meets needs asks, but as a veteran of many prayer meetings I can tell you that it is not to a lot of people. The prayer meeting may have been called to pray about a specific need in the church—blessing on a certain ministry, money for a new building—but it is surprising how many people will ***"pray around"*** ***the need without ever asking that it be met***; or they may ***"preach a sermon"*** to the Lord (and the other listeners) about some topic on their heart; or they may pray about all kinds of other things without ever asking for the need to be met.

But not really asking for what you need is nothing new. When the Book of Genesis (the first book in the Bible) comes to an end, Israel is in Egypt. When the Book of Exodus (the next book in the Bible) opens, they are still there—being mistreated as slaves. They're in Egypt for about four hundred years. Here's what's amazing: there is no record in that four hundred year period of them ever asking God to deliver them from slavery.

There's no record of them asking for what they needed until we read in **Exodus 2:23**: ***"...And the sons of Israel sighed because of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry for help because of their bondage rose up to God."*** What happens next? In the very next chapter (just three verses later) God appears to Moses in the burning bush and says, ***"...I have surely seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt, and have given heed to their cry because of their taskmasters, for I am aware of their sufferings. So I have come down to deliver them from the power of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey..."*** (**Exodus 3:7-8**, **emphasis added**). Why is God sending Moses to deliver them? They finally asked!

So it's not so obvious—to a lot of people today and to people in Bible times—that a prayer that meets needs *asks*. Perhaps that is why God tells us directly in **James 4:2**: ***"... You do not have, because you do not ask God."*** (The King James Version is even more succinct: ***"... ye have not, because ye ask not."***) For some reason, many people are extremely slow about actually asking God to meet a need. They will wander around hurting and lacking for years without really asking for help.

I think one reason for this is that some people just don't know how good God is, and how willing He is to help them. Perhaps they've never witnessed generosity without strings attached, or perhaps all they've known is working hard for what they get. The idea that God will give them something, just for asking, is hard for them to grasp.

But God really is that kind of God. I noticed this when I was studying the creation story recently. It dawned on me that Adam's first day on the job was a day off. The Bible says that God made Adam on the sixth day, and gave him a job to do: tend the Garden of Eden, and rule over the earth. But what was the next day? The seventh day. And what was the seventh day? The day of rest, of course. So Adam's first day on the job was a day off!

God basically said to him, "Here's your job. But don't come in tomorrow. Take a day off first."

What kind of a boss starts you off with a paid vacation? But that is the nature of God. The Bible says that He is love ([1 John 4:8, 16](#)), and it is His nature to give. He *does* want to meet our needs just because we ask.

But we have to ask. That's one characteristic of the kind of prayer that meets needs.