



Connecting With God For a Strong Finish

So we'll be Ready when the Time Comes

PART 2

How to Connect with God for Strength

CHAPTER 11

Eat for Strength Pray the Lord's Prayer

Jesus taught His disciples to pray using an inspired script. With concise talking points, He reveals a cluster of weaknesses dating back to the Garden of Eden.

Adam and Eve consumed a food that God had not provided.¹ They ate banned fruit in a fatal quest for independence and self-determination. This defiant food-grab infected our gene pool with sin and death; it corrupted our judgement with a bent for evil.

Jesus taught His disciples to ask their Heavenly Father for daily bread, for forgiveness, for temptation-free guidance, and for deliverance. Each request counters a toxic vice inherited from Adam and Eve. As we pray the Lord's Prayer, He activates a liberating do-over, which emancipates us from bondage.



¹ Genesis 2:16-17

Adam and Eve	As Jesus' Disciples
Took forbidden fruit	We ask for daily bread
Acquired a debt in sin	We ask for forgiveness
Yielded to temptation	We ask for temptation-free guidance
Acquired bondage to evil	We ask for deliverance from evil

On a foundation fortified by the Kingdom of God and the will of God, Jesus introduced four priority petitions. He urged His disciples saying, *“This, then, is how you should pray”*:

*“Our Father in heaven, hallowed [from hagiozo, which means to sanctify or consecrate] be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. [1] **Give us this day our daily bread**, and [2] **forgive us our debts** [or “sins” in Luke 11:4], as we also have forgiven our debtors. And [3] **lead us not into temptation**, but [4] **deliver us from evil** [or “the evil one” in the NIV; or more literally, “the evil”].” (Matthew 6:9-13 ESV)*

Spiritual Warfare and Food

The Lord’s Prayer promotes reliance on our Heavenly Father. It emphasizes ‘asking’ for help rather than ‘taking’ from an inferior substitute. Paul reinforced the notion of receiving God’s daily provision with gratitude. In a prophetic warning, which involves spiritual warfare and food, Paul wrote:

*“the Spirit expressly says that in later times **some will fall away from the faith**, paying attention [devoting themselves (ESV)] to **deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons...** men who forbid marriage and **advocate** [require (ESV)] **abstaining from foods which God has created to be gratefully shared in** by those who believe and know the truth.” (1 Timothy 4:1-3 NAS)*

In the Garden of Eden, Satan advocated taking food that God had not provided. In later times, deceitful spirits will advocate abstinence

from food that God has provided. Each tactic usurps God’s authority as menu maker. Paul prophesied that paying attention to a demonic teaching concerning food (as Eve did) may result in a falling away from the faith.

In the Garden of Eden	In Later Times
God restricted the menu	God expanded the menu
Satan advocated food that God had not provided	Deceitful Spirits will restrict food that God has provided
Attending to Satan’s advice resulted in death	Attending to a demonic teaching may result in a falling away from the faith

Following this high stakes prophetic warning concerning food, Paul asserts confidence in God’s menu selection:

*“for everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is **received with gratitude**; for it is **sanctified** [from Greek, ‘hagiazō’, used in the Lord’s Prayer as **“hallowed be your name”**] by means of the word of God and **prayer** [from Greek, ‘enteukhis’]”.* (1 Timothy 4:4-5 NAS)

By invoking the word of God and prayer, we sanctify, consecrate, or hallow food for consumption.

Paul’s use of the word prayer comes from the Greek word *enteukhis* (ent'-yook-sis). It means coming together for a cause through conversation, supplication, petition, conference, or interview.² Such prayer conveys mutual understanding between God and us. The root of this word literally means, ‘hitting the mark’, in contrast to sin, which literally means, ‘missing the mark’.³ By connecting with God in prayer at the intersection of His will and our need, we intercede for and we receive *“daily bread”* consecrated for our welfare.

² <http://www.biblestudytools.com/lexicons/greek/nas/enteukhis.html> (accessed 3-29-2016)

³ HELPS Word Studies, <http://biblehub.com/greek/1783.htm>

Gratitude and Faith

Our Heavenly Father provides food fortified with vitamins, minerals, and calories. He designed His family to enjoy meals together, sharing them with informed gratitude and sincere faith. Delicious flavors and appetizing aromas are “*to be **gratefully shared in** by those who **believe and know the truth**”.*⁴

Without taking God’s provision for granted, we feed our body and enrich our soul, similar to the way Christ strengthens his church. Paul restates what should be obvious:

*After all, no one ever hated his **own body**, but he **feeds and cares for it**, just **as Christ does the church**—for we are members of his body. (Ephesians 5:29-30 NIV)*

Blessed by a Curse

When Adam and Eve indulged in a forbidden meal, God cursed the ground they were commissioned to cultivate. This curse provided Adam and Eve with an incentive to rely on their Heavenly Father for food. More than ever, they needed help growing crops in a cursed environment. God said:

*“**Cursed is the ground** because of you; in toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall grow **for you**; and you will eat the plants of the field; By the sweat of your face you will eat bread, till you return to the ground, because from it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” (Genesis 3:17-19 NAS)*

Eating and Drinking for God’s Glory

Jesus reminded His disciples to ask for daily bread—not using a memorized script but through an ongoing conversation. We are following the Spirit of Truth into an everlasting relationship. He leads us with wisdom from above—a wisdom that refines our spiritual disposition.

⁴ 1 Timothy 4:3 NAS

From the beginning, our Heavenly Father issued menu limits with consequences attached—His dietary laws revealed our attitudes and motives. As the menu changed, guidance by His Spirit replaced legalistic rules commanded by The Law. Receiving God’s provision with gratitude reflects an attitude of collaboration and cooperation. Paul wrote,

Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. (1 Cor 10:31 NAS)

We exist for God’s pleasure; He created us for an eternal purpose. Eating and drinking generates strength—so we can glorify God in living, loving, and influencing. Once motivated to glorify our Heavenly Father, we are poised to consider other questions, such as what should we eat, with whom should we eat it, and how should we prepare it.

Jesus emphasized the importance of food by listing it prominently in the Lord’s Prayer. Asking for “*daily bread*” rivets our attention on the source of our supply. It reminds us that we rely on our Heavenly Father for both material sustenance and spiritual support.

