



Give us today our daily bread.

Matthew 6:11

Best. Prayer. Ever. – Daily gifts

Martin Luther explained in the Small Catechism that daily bread is more than just the food we eat. He said, “Daily bread includes everything needed for this life, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, home, fields, cattle, money, goods, God-fearing spouse and children, faithful servants and rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, order, honor, true friends, good neighbors, and the like.”

In the past when I’ve read this, it seemed long. I thought, “Yeah, I get it. God gives me a lot. In fact, I got the idea before I was halfway through the list. And was there really a need for me to memorize this list in catechism class?” Maybe you’ve thought it too, especially when memory work came along.

But the list isn’t really about the things we have. It is about the Giver of every good gift that exists in our life. All of it. All of those things that Luther mentions in his list are from our Father in heaven who is the Giver of every good thing. This list is about God and his love. He does more than promise us life in heaven with him through forgiveness won by Jesus. He gives us all our bodies need today as well! In mercy, he provides so many things that are included in daily bread even though I don’t deserve any of them.

When Jesus teaches us to pray for daily bread he wants us to recognize that all the things on this list (and more!) come from God. “Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows” (James 1:17).

That’s why the list is so long. Luther couldn’t help but make the list long. In fact, he probably had to work hard to keep his list short—and Luther’s life was full of poverty and hardship. There is so much that God has given us as a gift of grace. There is much in our lives—even life itself, our bodies and souls—that are purely a gift of God’s grace to us.

Try this and you’ll see all that God has given you. Get out a piece of paper and a pen or pencil. Open up a note app on your phone. And jot down your own list, a list of the things that God has given *you* in *your* life. Take the time to list all of the things that God has given you today. List at least one gift from God for every letter of the alphabet. (*You have permission to use zucchini for the letter ‘Z’.*) And then, take that list and say “Thank you” to the Giver.

Prayer: O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. His mercy endures forever. Amen.