

January 27

Matthew 6:5-13 (ESV) [Jesus said,] ⁵“And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray ... that they may be seen by others.... ⁶But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret....⁷“And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases.... ⁸ ...for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. ⁹Pray then like this: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. ¹⁰Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. ¹¹Give us this day our daily bread, ¹²and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. ¹³And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

As I was reading this passage once again, the Holy Spirit reminded me that was how we are to pray. That reminder helped not to settle into a routine but into a conversation with My Father. Jesus’s example is an intimate relationship with the Father that does away with pretexts, formulas, and rote statements. As I worked through the prayer, I found that I was no longer using “empty phrases” or repetitions. When I got to the part where we are to pray for our daily bread, I had to stop. What do I need today?

Many thoughts crossed my mind: health issues, COVID concerns, family, the church, our nation, rising inflation, attacks on friends and family, etc. Yet, what did I need TODAY? When the LORD sent Israel out to gather manna, they were gathering their daily needs for survival, for sustenance, and for bolstering their faith. That “manna” would see them through the rest of that day. I discovered I had a difficult time trying to separate my daily needs from my daily wants and concerns. After moments of these thoughts, I remembered that Jesus told us to seek His Kingdom and His righteousness first, and all other things would be added to us. After all, He knows our needs. Jesus taught us to pray for His kingdom to come into our lives just as it is heaven. Therefore, I began to pray for a greater understanding of His Kingdom and of our roles in that kingdom. I needed more of Jesus. Why? That helped me focus on areas where we needed the kingdom to rule – in lives for healing and restoration; in this nation for forgiveness and cleansing; in my life for more willingness to serve, and more. What do you need today?