

APPS SERIES BY DAVID H. MCKINLEY

THANKS

The Bible is a book of promises, precepts, principles, people, prophesy, and yes, proverbs! But the Bible is also a book of prayer. It not only teaches us to pray and calls us to prayer, but it provides examples of specific prayers for us to learn from and to follow.

The Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13) is probably the best known prayer in the Bible, but there are also the prayers of the Apostle Paul in Ephesians and Colossians that provide us with examples of spiritual growth. Then there is the prayer of Jabez found in 1 Chronicles 4:10. Bruce Wilkinson topped the New York Times best-seller list with his book, *The Prayer of Jabez*. Nine million copies sold and, sadly, many people embraced this book, not for its spiritual quality, but in hopes of finding a path to material prosperity.

We can read and study the prayers of Jesus, Moses, David, Mary and many more, but have you read the prayer of Agur?

"Two things I ask of you; deny them not to me before I die: remove far from me falsehood and lying; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is needful for me, lest I be full and deny you and say, 'Who is the LORD?' or lest I be poor and steal and profane the name of my God" (Proverbs 30:7-9 ESV).

What an interesting prayer!

It is personal; he uses the pronoun, I.

It is specific: "Two things...."

It is unusual: enough.

I would suggest that relatively few of us pray such a prayer. All Agur asked of God was for enough ("food that is needful"). For Agur, a life of thanks was based on knowing God provided just enough to meet his needs.

There are many who pray for more and less, but I would guess there are few who know the value of praying for enough. *Enough* is a perspective. How do you see life? Do you choose to see life with grace, gratitude and generosity because of the nature of our good and glorious God?

The word that captures the opening request of this prayer is...

>>Integrity

In order to be a person of integrity, deceit or falsehood have no place in your life. Nothing matters more in life than personal integrity. Are you who you say you are?

The opposite of integrity is hypocrisy.

"No man can for any considerable time wear one face to himself and another to the multitude without finally getting bewildered as to which is the true one." —Nathaniel Hawthorne

Definition of integrity: "1 : an unimpaired condition : SOUNDNESS 2 : firm adherence to a code of esp. moral or artistic values : INCORRUPTIBILITY 3 : the quality or state of being complete or undivided : COMPLETENESS, WHOLENESS." —Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary

Integrity brings continuity to your life. "The integrity of the upright guides them, but the crookedness of the treacherous destroys them" (Proverbs 11:3 ESV).

Integrity builds trust in your relationships. Truth and trust are vital in all human relationships. Truth and trust are like pedals on a bike; they are both needed for relationships to run smoothly.

Integrity creates legacy. "The righteous who walks in his integrity—blessed are his children after him!" (Proverbs 20:7 ESV).

Integrity reduces stress. Image is what people think you are; integrity is what you really are.

"People with integrity walk safely, but those who follow crooked paths will slip and fall" (Proverbs 10:9 NLT).

"When I lay down the reins of this administration, I want to have one friend left. And that friend is inside myself." —Abraham Lincoln

The prayer of integrity is a vital, personal prayer. It should be prayed with the recognition of...



Thanks!

Proverbs 30:7-9

Thanks

Apps Series, Part Thirteen

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Scripture: Proverbs 30:7-9

+ Remove far from me falsehood and lying; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is needful for me.

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WARREN
a way of life!

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THANKS >>> CONTINUED

>>Vulnerability

Vulnerability in prayer means you confess to God your own awareness of your tendency toward error and injury.

Vulnerability is:

- > carrying a cell phone to a funeral service.
- > taking an active two-year-old to a shop filled with glass and valuables.
- > working at Dairy Queen when lactose intolerant.
- > visiting a bakery while on a low-carb diet.
- > cheering the Florida Gators if you live in Augusta, Georgia!

The prayer of vulnerability is one of protection from temptations that are inherent in poverty *and* prosperity.

You dishonor God when you have a fear of poverty. God is your Provider and He can be trusted to provide for you. Do you have a tendency to take matters into your own hands? There is a phrase in the hymn, *Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing*, that often comes to mind:

Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
Prone to leave the God I love;
Here's my heart, O take and seal it,
Seal it for Thy courts above.

—Robert Robinson, 1758

You could say in current vernacular, “Keep me out of the ditches!” There are ditches of poverty and riches, and Agur saw the danger of both sides.

Poverty causes many to dishonor God. You may think, “Agur is my kind of guy,” and follow his example in prayer: “Don’t let me be poor!” This is a request that is easy to pray for most people. However, most people don’t know real poverty.

There was one student at a school in Beverly Hills who was asked to write a composition on poverty. The little girl wrote, “Once upon a time there was a poor little girl. Her daddy was poor, her mommy was poor, her nanny was poor, her chauffeur was poor and her butler was poor!”

However, real poverty has become an increasing reality for some. Hunger and homelessness are becoming more and more widespread. Poverty can cause us to distrust and dishonor God.

Money is not the answer to poverty, though. The answer is Christ! Government may try to redistribute wealth as an answer to the problems in the lives of people. It is easier to redistribute what is taxed rather than what is earned. Is there a place, a need, a role for government in a civil society? Yes. But money is not the basis; morality is. In America, we have spurned morality and squandered money.

Prosperity causes many to disown God. How many have prayed, “God, don’t make me rich”? Life is more than what you have and own. In the New Testament, Jesus began the Parable of the Rich Fool with these words: “Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions” (Luke 12:15 esv).

Money can buy a bed, but not sleep...
Books but not brains; food but not appetite;
Finery but not beauty; a house but not a home;
Companions but not friends; medicine but not health;
Luxuries but not culture; amusements but not happiness;
Religion but not salvation; a crucifix, but not a Savior;
The good life; but not eternal life;
A passport to anywhere but heaven.
—Author Unknown

Don’t waste your life. Prosperity is a seductive sedative that inflates your sense of security and denies your need for God.

>>Dependency

Lord, give me just enough for today and wisdom to see Your hand in the good, the bad, the much and the little of my life tomorrow.

“Give us this day our daily bread...” (Matthew 6:11 esv).

Do you think of God as being like a Sam’s Club membership? Enough for today, tomorrow and a whole lot more? At Sam’s Club, we can get flats of supplies: 100 chicken breasts, 30 cans of beans,

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THANKS >>> CONTINUED

50 rolls of toilet paper! However, this is not God's way. He provides all you need for today. He provides the manna of the Old Testament. It is a daily dependency on Him.

Dependency is living with a God-centered focus in life. God is the God of enough! It is not about all the good for which we are thankful; it is seeing God's grace and goodness in every part of life. Would you rather have personal security or a personal testimony of God's gracious provision?

The driving issue for your heart this Thanksgiving should not be what makes your life most comfortable, but what brings you close to God. Don't some of God's richest blessings come out of life's deepest hurts?

God sometimes allows us to travel pathways we would never choose to experience blessings we could have never comprehended.

We thank Him for sun,
Do we thank Him for rain?
We thank Him for joy,
Do we thank Him for pain?
We thank Him for gains,
Do we thank Him for losses?
We thank Him for blessings,
Do we thank Him for crosses?

—Author Unknown

"... give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (1 Thessalonians 5:18 ESV).

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