

“Our Father in Heaven Gives Good Things to Those Who Ask”

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction:

A. Matt. 6:24-33, 7:7-11

1. Human beings have always been insecure and fearful about their material existence.
2. Enormous sums of money are spent learning how to prosper (College education, self-help books, investment guides).
3. Vast amounts have been spent on anxiety caused by poverty, wealth, and the loss of wealth.
4. Jesus teaches that anxiety can be greatly reduced, perhaps even eliminated, by keeping focus on drawing near to God and serving Him.

B. The Lord's argument:

1. We do not have the ability to dedicate our primary attention to our spiritual and physical needs simultaneously - Matt. 6:24
2. We need to believe and trust that God holds us as the most beloved of all of His creation - Matt. 6:25-26
3. We need to become convinced that worrying over the less important matters as if they were the most important things is utterly futile and robs us of our strength and resources - Matt. 6:27
4. We must constantly remind ourselves that with ease, God providentially cares for all of His creation, especially for humankind - Matt. 6:28-30.
5. We must embrace His instruction to redirect our focus and energy away from fear of lesser matters to single minded pursuit of the greatest of all matters - Matt. 6:31-33.
6. We need to trust God, Who as the first and greatest loving Father of children, gives good things to those who ask - Matt. 7:7-11

C. Our difficulty with this is two-fold:

1. We measure God's love based on what we get from Him; God measures love by who we are and what we can become.
 - a. We don't want God; we want what God gives us.
 - b. Want to test this? What if God didn't offer or give you anything; would you love and follow Him? - John 6:26, 66
 - 1) "That was the reaction of those Jews; I wouldn't do that to Jesus. I would follow Him just for His teaching."
 - 2) No you wouldn't; not if your present behavior is any indicator. A third of those present this morning won't be back tonight and did not attend the Gospel meeting.
 - 3) The Jews walked out into the desert for half a day to follow Him. And far too many of us won't inconvenience ourselves for two hours to come and worship Him.
 - c. In contrast, God doesn't want what we have to give; He wants us
 - d. Want to test this? What did God feel and do for us when we were in our most unlovable state? - Rom. 5:8

- e. Until we come to the place that we love God because He is God and not because of the things He gives us and does for us, we will never mature in the faith, we will never know the love of God, and we will not know God.
 - f. “Oh brother Blake, you don’t understand; you can’t distinguish between God and His gifts to us.”
 - g. No, brother Intellectual; a newborn does not distinguish between his mother and the milk she gives him. As he grows, he comes to learn that there is a difference between her and what she gives him. But it isn’t until she is aged and helpless and unable to do or to give him anything, and his heart and hands reach out for her, that he finally understands that he loves his mom for who she is apart from what she does and what she gives.
2. We measure the quality and security of our existence carnally and not spiritually.
- a. The breakdown in our reasoning is that we think that if the little things in our lives are in order, the big things will be okay, too. That is the carnal mind: majoring on minors
 - b. God’s reasoning is that if the most important things in our lives are in order, the less important things will be taken care of; and, if they are not, then that’s okay; they’re just little things
 - c. “That’s the worst!” (Tim Hawkins) Two men talking in hell...
 - d. Just as the fears and problems I had in high school mean nothing to me now; so my socio-economic condition in this world will mean nothing to me in hell, except to increase my regret if I allowed anxiety of those little things keep me from addressing my greatest need: seeking righteousness and a place in God’s kingdom in this life
- D. Therefore, we whittle on God’s end of the stick by telling Him how to provide for us, what we want Him to provide for us, and when we want Him to provide it. And if He doesn’t give us what we want, how we want it, and when we want it, we doubt Him, become angry with Him, and turn away from Him.
- 1. Like a demanding teen: “If you don’t buy that for me, you don’t love me. I will hate you if you don’t allow me to have it my way.”
 - 2. So, how does God provide for us?