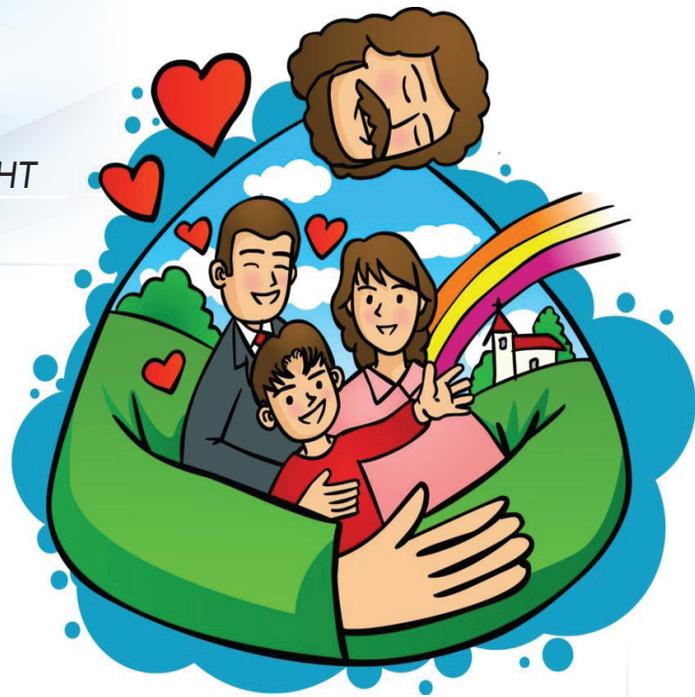




Rev. Dr. Raymond W. Boca  
**BISHOP'S DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT**

# Lifestyle Design: Wisdom for the Heart



*"Give us day by day our daily bread" (Luke 11:3).*

It is interesting that in the language of Western culture, we sometimes speak of one partner in a marriage (it used to be almost exclusively the husband, but not so much these days) as the wage earner of the home. But more colloquially, we call that partner "the breadwinner." Even in our slang, we use the word bread as a synonym for "money." Bread remains, at least in our language, as a powerful symbol of the rudimentary basis of provision for our needs.

In the Gospel of Luke, it is recorded that one of His disciples asked Jesus, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples" (Luke 11:1). Jesus then gave a pattern for prayer that has become known as the Lord's Prayer. The same is recorded in Matthew as part of the Sermon on the Mount (see Matthew 6:9-13). Included in the Lord's Prayer is the petition "Give us this day our daily bread" (Matthew 6:11) or "Give us day by day our daily bread" (Luke 11:3).

I believe that we would all readily acknowledge that we have needs each day that we want the help of our Heavenly Father. For some, on some days, it is quite literally bread – that is, the food needed to sustain life that day. It could also be spiritual and physical strength to deal with one more day of chronic illness or a painfully slow rehabilitation. In other cases, it may be fewer tangible needs, such as things related to one's obligations or activities in

that day –teaching a lesson or taking a test.

The Lord's invitation to seek our daily bread at our Heavenly Father's hand speaks of a loving God, aware of even the small, daily needs of His children and anxious to assist them, one by one. He is saying that we can ask in faith of that Being "that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given" (James 1:5). That is, of course, tremendously reassuring, but there is something at work here that is more significant than just help in getting by day to day. As we seek and receive divine bread daily, our faith and trust in God and His Son most grow.

As we ponder our text certain questions arise: What is this daily bread that we need? Why do we need to eat this bread? The answers to these questions express the deeper meditation for today. Bread stands for life, strength, power, ability, energy to name a few. When we are weak, we take physical bread to get strength/energy. We need physical food to meet physical needs, our spirit also needs food so it can generate energy for the soul to be able to do God's will.

If you were a construction contractor, you would not consider sending out a guy who had not eaten anything in one week to work on heights. If you were a commander in the Army, you would not send a person into battle who had not eaten in a month. Right? We need to feed ourselves to have the strength to accomplish the tasks ahead of us.

*"And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor*

*did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.” (Deuteronomy 8:3).*

It is a great matter when in any experience of life, we can discern the divine purpose in bringing us through that particular experience. The speaker in these verses unfolds the design and lessons of the wilderness discipline. Our Lord, in the temptation, found an application to himself (Matthew 4:4). Every believer will find the same in seasons of adversity.

Jesus quoted this verse when the devil tempted him to turn stones into bread (Matthew 4:4). Many people think that life is based on satisfying their appetites. If they can earn enough money to dress, eat, and play in high style, they think they are living “the good life.” But such things do not satisfy our deepest longings. In the end they leave us empty and dissatisfied. Real life comes from total commitment to God, the one who created life itself. It requires discipline, sacrifice, and hard work, and that is why most people never find it.

In God’s School of Wisdom all his education begins here – “so He humbled you.” Some never even make it past this first essential step. If we are not humble and not teachable, there is then no point to the rest of any of God’s education. The next grade of God’s education is total dependence on the LORD – “allowed to hunger, and fed with manna.” Israel had to rely on God beyond their own knowledge (which you did not know), and beyond

their own ability. “That He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone”. In the negative, this was the lesson God wanted them to learn. In the positive, they had to learn that man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD. Sadly, many still live by bread alone, living only for material things, for what can be bought or sold or earned or possessed materially.

The Core Truth is all of this: **Jesus did not come into the world mainly to give bread, but to be bread.** “I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will not hunger. He who believes in me will never thirst” (John 6:35; he repeats himself in verses 48 and 51). He came into the world not to give bread, but to be bread. Requires a daily relationship with Him! Now He is going to give physical bread and you can miss it by thinking that is the main thing he came to do. But that is not the main reason he came. Trust Him – The Bread of Life.

By providing a daily sustenance, one day at a time, The Lord was trying to teach faith to Israel and His disciples. He was teaching them to trust Him, to “look unto [Him] in every thought; doubt not, fear not”. He was providing enough for one day at a time. In essence, the children of Israel had to walk with Him today and trust that He would grant a sufficient amount of food for the next day on the next day, and so on. In that way **He could never be too far from their minds and hearts.** Give us this day our daily bread... means daily, not next week, not next month, bread today. It is a prayer of sufficiency – Pray and Say, “My sufficiency is of God!” SHALOM.

