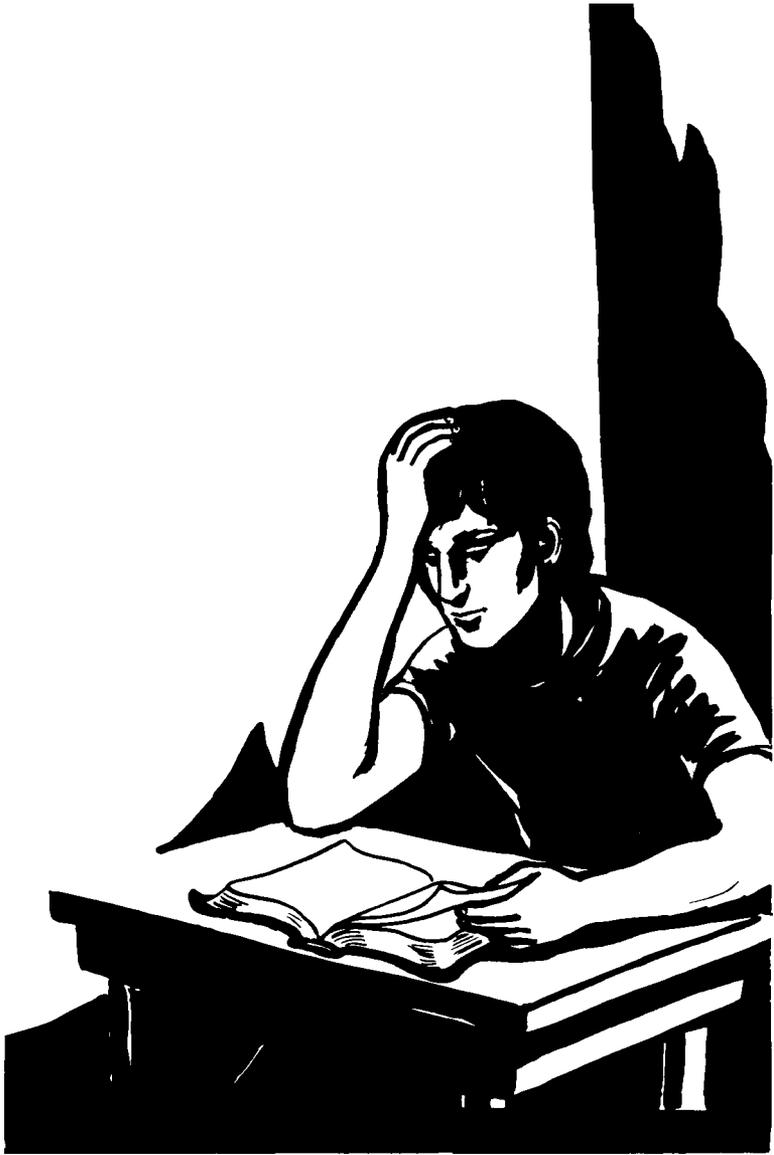


Unit Three

Needs Met Through Prayer



Lesson 7

Support Needs Supplied

“Give us today the food we need”

Matthew 6:11

“Give us.” Now, that sounds much more like the prayers we are used to praying! Give me food! Give me a house! Give me a job! Give me money! Give me, give me, give me! This is the only kind of prayer some people know how to pray. In fact, they do not pray at all until they need something, and then the only thing they say is, “Give me!”

What a shame! These people think that all God is good for is to give them the things they want. They see God as a storage house or grainery where supplies are kept. They go to Him only when they need something.

God has promised to supply all our needs. He has enough food for everybody. But, God wants us to seek Him because we love Him, and not because of what we want Him to give us.

You see, there is something God wants that only we can give Him. He wants our love and our worship. He rewards those who seek Him (Hebrews 11:6).



lesson outline

A Matter of Desire

Using God

Things That Unbelievers Seek

Things to Follow After

A Matter of Abundance

The Amount of Faith

A Channel of Blessing

A Matter of Asking

Motivation of Law

Motivation of Love

lesson objectives

When you finish this lesson you should be able to:

- Recognize the relationship of prayer and worship to our needs being supplied by God.
- Explain the “gift of sharing with others.”
- Recognize the responsibilities and the benefits for service this “gift of sharing with others” makes possible.
- Compare the motives men have for giving, and examine your own motives for giving.

learning activities

1. Draw the first two illustrations used in this lesson and explain them.
2. Read 1 Corinthians 9:14 and explain the “way” that Paul was referring to. Also read Numbers 18:21-24 and Leviticus 27:30.
3. If you desire the “gift of sharing with others” do not wait until you have an abundance, but begin by sharing the little you have with someone in need today.
4. Pray over your food at every meal and ask God to bless it.
5. Do the lesson development section by section. Write the answers to the study questions and self-test.

key words

channel
means

pagan
steward

stewardship
support

lesson development

A MATTER OF DESIRE

Objective 1. *Explain how seeking God’s kingdom assures us that our “support” needs will be met.*

The next four lessons speak of the needs of men. Jesus mentioned food, forgiveness, testing and deliverance. In this lesson we will study the need for food or, as we will call it, “support.” Support means all the things we need for living: food, clothes, education, homes, money, etc. We want to show that God will provide the things we need if we will be concerned above everything else with His kingdom.

1 What does the word *support* refer to in this lesson?

.....

God cares about our needs. When we pray, He listens. “We are sure that he hears us if we ask him for anything that is according to

his will” (1 John 5:14). So, we may pray for “anything” if we add the words, “If the Lord is willing” (James 4:15). It is not wrong to want “things.” It is only wrong to continue to want them when we know it is not God’s will that we have them.

2 When is it wrong to want “things”?

.....
When we pray for “things,” it is good to remember the following:

- We are not trying to make God care. God is love. He is more concerned about our needs than even we are. He wants to help us.
- We are not telling God something He does not know. Before we ask, He knows what things we have need of. He says we should not use “meaningless words” when we pray. (Matthew 6:7)
- We are not asking for something He cannot do. There is nothing impossible with God.

“But,” you may ask, “if God cares more than we do, and if He knows before we ask; and if He has the power to answer, then why is it necessary for us to pray? Why doesn’t God provide our needs without our asking?”

The answer is one of the great wonders of God’s plan. God has chosen to work with men in all that He does. It is not God’s will to help man unless man is willing to be helped. That is why it is necessary for us to pray and have faith. That is how we “untie” the hands of God. We put our will with His will, and God answers our prayer!

3 When we pray for “things” we should remember God

- a) is not interested in our praying about our needs.
- b) knows what we need before we ask.
- c) always provides for us without our asking.

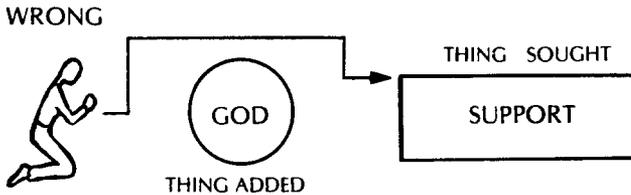
Asking for things is only a small part of praying. Praise, worship, and thanksgiving should come first. His name, His

kingdom, and His will must have priority. That is how Jesus prayed. He didn't spend much time asking for "things." When He asked, His prayers were short and simple. He didn't beg God for anything. He knew that, if He sought God's will above everything else, His needs would be supplied.

Using God

Let us now apply our teaching to "support" needs. They will be "added" if we are concerned about the kingdom of God above everything else. But we must be careful. We must not seek the kingdom of God as a "means" of getting "support."

Some people say, "If you will put God first, then you will get a good job." Or, "If you will pay your tithes, then you will be rich." Or, "If you pray much, you will succeed in school." Now, think! Is there anything wrong with that kind of talk? Yes, there is something wrong with that kind of talk. Don't you see? You are "using" God to get something you want. You are not seeking God—you are seeking a job, riches, or success. You are using God to get "support."



4 What is wrong with the prayer of the seeker in the above illustration?

.....

When Jesus fed the people, they followed Him. He said, "You are looking for me because you ate the bread and had all you wanted" (John 6:26). Later He said, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never be hungry" (John 6:35). Finally, in John 6:66, it says, "many of Jesus' followers turned back and would not go with Him any more." Jesus wanted the people to seek Him. The people were only seeking bread!

5 Read John 6:26-66. Why did the people leave Jesus?

.....

Things That Unbelievers Seek

Children of God should not be like unbelievers in their seeking. Jesus said, “Man cannot live on bread alone” (Matthew 4:4). He said this to the devil who was tempting Him to use the power of God to get food for Himself.

Life is more than a job. It is more than eating. That is why Jesus taught us to pray for the things that are more important.

He said, “Do not store up riches for yourselves here on earth” (Matthew 6:19).

Jesus said, “You cannot serve both God and money” (Matthew 6:24).

He said, “I tell you: do not be worried about the food and drink you need” (Matthew 6:25).

Then, in Matthew 6:31-34, Jesus said words that showed the difference between the believer and the unbeliever—between the child of God and the child of the devil. He said, “So do not worry about tomorrow; it will have enough worries of its own. There is no need to add to the troubles each day brings.”

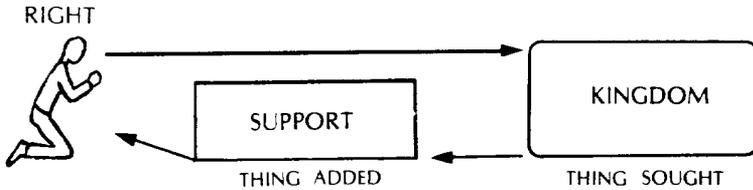
6 Circle the letter to the left of each TRUE statement.

- a A man cannot serve both God and money.
- b A man should first of all store up riches for himself on earth.
- c A man should not be worried about food and drink.
- d A man is a pagan if he is concerned about food.

Things to Follow After

Jesus continued His talk by saying, “Instead, be concerned above everything else with the Kingdom of God and with what he requires of you, and he will provide you with all these other things” (Matthew 6:33).

Note! The believer seeks the kingdom of God. The food, drink, and clothes are the things that are added! Like this:



Now all this sounds very good. But will it work? Will the man who is concerned about the kingdom of God above everything else really be provided for? Shouldn't he be concerned about his living? Surely God knows we have to support our families and eat! Is it wrong to earn money? Is it wrong to save money? Are we to be unconcerned about our wives and our children?

Friend, let me assure you. God is concerned about your needs. He cares. God is love, and He cares more than any human being can care. So, He wants you to care also. He wants you to support your family. He wants you to love and look after your wife and children. In fact, it is because He cares that He has taught us to pray in the right manner. It is by following His way of praying that all these things that we need are provided for us.

Romans 14:17-19 helps us understand more of what Jesus was teaching. Paul says, "God's Kingdom is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of the righteousness, peace, and joy which the Holy Spirit gives. And when someone serves Christ in this way, he pleases God and is approved by others. So then, we must always aim at those things that bring peace and that help to strengthen one another."

7 Circle the letter to the left of each TRUE statement. Romans 14:17-19 says:

- a** God's Kingdom is not a matter of eating and drinking.
- b** the kingdom of God is love.
- c** aim at those things that bring peace.

What both Jesus and Paul were teaching is that we should "aim for" or "be concerned above everything else about" the more important "things." If we do, God will take care of the

other “things.” If we follow the kingdom, the food will follow us! God will make sure that it does! Does that sound foolish and simple? It is not foolish, but it is simple . . . if you have faith!

Those who follow “all these other things” are never satisfied. They are like the woman at the well, who had to come back day after day to satisfy her thirst. Jesus said, “Whoever drinks the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again” (John 4:14). He spoke of a better way to live than following after food and drink.



Those who follow after the kingdom of God have the promise that God will provide their needs “day by day.” Kingdom-of-God faith is a “day by day” faith! We pray, “Give us today the food we need” (Matthew 6:11).

A MATTER OF ABUNDANCE

Objective 2. *State the meaning of the “gift of sharing.”*

Objective 3. *Describe the kind of people to whom God gives the “gift of sharing with others.”*

The Amount of Faith

Romans 12:3 says for each of us to judge ourselves according to the “amount of faith” that God has given us. All believers have been given faith by God to help them do their part in the plan of God. Some are given more faith than others. Some gifts require greater faith than others.

8 Circle the letter to the left of each TRUE statement.

- a** God gives the same faith to all men.
- b** Every believer has faith given to him by God.
- c** Some gifts require greater faith than others.

God has told us to “Set our hearts, then, on the more important gifts” (1 Corinthians 12:31). Important gifts require much prayer

if we are to use them properly. Some gifts make men proud. That is why God allowed Paul to have a painful physical ailment, “To keep me from being puffed up with pride because of the many wonderful things I saw” (2 Corinthians 12:7).

There is a gift that God has given which causes many temptations that we now want to talk about. It is the gift of sharing with others (Romans 12:8), and it is given to only a few. Why? Let us talk about it.

9 Why do gifts require much prayer?

A Channel of Blessing

The Lord had some strong words to say about rich men. He said that, “It is much harder for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of God than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle” (Matthew 19:24). Those are strong words, indeed!

In James 5:1-6 we are told of rich men who have gotten their riches by not paying their laborers. Then, after having gotten their riches by cheating the workers, they piled up their money and did not use it for any good purpose! “Your gold and silver are covered with rust, and this rust will be a witness against you and will eat up your flesh like fire. You have piled up riches in these last days” (v. 3).

The sin of these rich men was not that they were rich. It was the sin of getting their riches by cheating other people. It was the sin of using their riches selfishly, and not using them to do good.

10 Is it a sin to be rich? Explain.

Not many people can resist the selfish living that riches bring. “But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and are caught in the trap of many foolish and harmful desires” (1 Timothy 6:9). So, for most people, God supplies only what they need. Because, if they get too much, they get an appetite for “things” and often forget to be concerned about the kingdom of God.

There are a few believers that God can trust to use riches properly for His kingdom. To them, He gives the gift of “sharing with others.” What a gift this is, but how much praying it requires to use it properly.

There are godly men who know how to make money. If they are concerned above everything else with the kingdom of God, God will bless their businesses. These godly men do not make the mistake of the rich men in James 5:1-6. They do not cheat to get their riches. They do not pile them up and use them selfishly. They consider themselves servants of God who are entrusted by Him to use the riches for His Kingdom. Men with this gift provide the money that is required to do God’s work. They are like a pipe with water running through it. They are a channel of blessing.

11 How should a rich man feel about his money?

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People with the “gift of sharing with others” do not keep the riches for themselves, but they let the riches flow through their hands to the work of the kingdom.

It is important to know that the same rule applies to poor men as to rich men. A “poor” man who gets his money by cheating is as bad as a rich man who gets his money by cheating. A “poor” man who uses his pennies selfishly is as bad as a rich man who uses his riches selfishly. The important thing is not the amount of money that you give. It is the heart with which you give it and your willingness to part with it. For example, the poor widow who gave only a penny gave all she had (Mark 12:42-44). Jesus said that her “gift of sharing” was greater than that of the rich men. Why? Because they gave of their riches. They had plenty left for themselves! The widow gave of her poverty. She gave all she had!

The widow gave all she had! That is the secret of the “gift of sharing.” It becomes easy to give when we make Christ the master over all. We then give at His command. God is looking for men who can be trusted to use money—whether it is much or little—for His kingdom. To them, He gives the “gift of sharing!”

12 What is the secret of giving?

.....

A MATTER OF ASKING

Objective 4. *Illustrate how to worship through tithing and stewardship.*

Money seems to be the answer to many needs. The love of money is the root of all evil, but money itself is not evil. The use of our money is a good test of our priorities . . . and of our spiritual life.

13 Read 1 Timothy 6:10. What is the source of all kinds of evil?

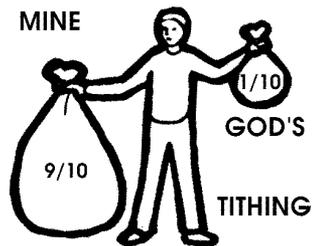
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Motivation of Law

Every believer should return to God a tenth of his income. This is called tithing. But why should a believer tithe? Should he do it because the Bible teaches tithing? Should he do it because tithing is the law of his church? Why should believers tithe? What should be their motive in tithing? Tithing is a form of worshiping God. We tithe because we love God and want to thank Him for providing for us. Giving is worshiping. Worshiping is giving! Worshiping is not only giving of our words but of our money also.

14 A believer should tithe because

- the law requires it.
- he will get rich by doing it.
- he is motivated by his love for God to do it.
- he is ashamed not to do it.



Some people tithe because the Bible teaches us that we should do so. This is true, the Bible does teach us to tithe.

Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek, who was a type of Christ (Genesis 14:20).

Jacob paid tithes before Moses was given the law (Genesis 28:22).

Malachi said that a man who didn't pay tithes was robbing God (Malachi 3:8).

15 The Bible says that

- a) Abraham paid tithes to Christ.
- b) Jacob tithed before the Law was given.
- c) Moses was the first man to tithe.

Jesus said, "You will be able to enter the Kingdom of heaven only if you are more faithful than the teachers of the Law and the Pharisees in doing what God requires" (Matthew 5:20).

The Pharisees paid tithes. We will have to be more faithful than they! They only paid tithes because the law said they should. If there had been no law, they would not have paid tithes! The Pharisees paid tithes, but they did not do it willingly. They only did as much as the law required. Their motives were wrong.

The Pharisees were much like some Christians today. Some Christians want the blessings that tithing brings, but they are not concerned about the One who blesses! They "use" God as a "means" to their own "ends!" They know the promise of God to those who tithe, so they give one-tenth of their income, hoping that God will make them rich. Then God does bless them, for He does not break His promises. However, their motives are wrong and when your motives are wrong you miss the greater blessing that unselfish giving brings.

16 Believers can be more faithful than the Pharisees when they give

- a) to be seen of men.
- b) because of love.
- c) to get a reward.

Motivation of Love

You can tithe and not worship. But you can't worship and not tithe. Worship will cause the believer to give more than a tithe. In fact, when a person is concerned about the kingdom of

God above everything else, he gives himself and all that he has to God! He becomes a steward of the money he receives, and uses all of it according to the will of God. He says, "It is all Yours, Lord, and I am Yours, too. Use me and my money as You will!" This is stewardship! A steward belongs to his master. He has no wealth of his own. He is responsible for his master's wealth, and uses it as his master commands. The steward does not worry about himself because he knows that his master will supply all his needs. He knows that his master's wealth is far greater than his own and that, if he is faithful, he will lack nothing. What a beautiful picture of Christ providing for the believers. Our Master takes care of us—He supplies our needs. We in turn have a responsibility to be careful stewards of our Master's wealth. We must always remember that everything we own rightfully belongs to God. He is the Creator of all things including our money.



STEWARDSHIP

So, what we are saying in this lesson is that a believer who is concerned above everything else with God's kingdom and glory has nothing to worry about for his "support." His whole life is a life of worship and praise. God will care for him!

We are also saying that you cannot separate prayer and worship from a believer's walk. Proper praying will change our attitude. We will not worry about our needs. As we prayerfully seek above all else the kingdom of God, He will supply our every need.

17 In what way is a believer a steward?

.....

self-test

SHORT ANSWERS. Write the correct answer in the space provided.

1 Why doesn't God provide our needs without our asking?

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2 What two things should we remember when praying for things?

.....

3 Why does the "gift of sharing with others" require much prayer?

.....

4 How can believers exceed the faithfulness of the Pharisees?

.....

5 How can the use of money be a test of our spiritual life?

.....

6 State three things about a steward.

.....

7 How will proper praying affect our attitudes toward support?

.....

answers to the study questions

- 9** To know how to use them properly.
- 1** All the things we need for living—food, clothes, homes, money, etc.
- 10** No, it is not a sin to be rich. But rich men need to be careful that they have not obtained their money dishonestly and rich men must be careful not to become selfish.
- 2** When we continue to want them when we know it is not God's will that we have them.
- 11** That he is a servant of God entrusted by Him to use his riches for the Kingdom.
- 3** b) knows what we need before we ask.
- 12** When Christ is master over all we have, it is then easy to give at His command.
- 4** The one praying is not seeking God, he is seeking support needs.
- 13** The love of money.
- 5** They only wanted the bread He gave them.
- 14** c) he is motivated by his love for God to do it.
- 6** a) True.
 b) False.
 c) True.
 d) False.
- 15** b) Jacob tithed before the Law was given.
- 7** a) True.
 b) False.
 c) True.
- 16** b) because of love.

- 8 a** False.
- b** True.
- c** True.

17 His work is to worship and obey his master, and to trust the master to provide his support.