

Jesus said to them, "When you pray, say this: Give us this day our daily bread."

First of all we need to admit that prayer is not "putting coins in a vending machine." It is not putting our prayer in the right slot, pushing the right button, and waiting for the vending machine God to spit out exactly what we want.

God is not a vending machine. God is "Father" or "Daddy." Prayer is a relationship -- an intimate, loving, caring parent/child relationship. Whatever God wants to see happen in your life and world would be far better than whatever we could think up.

But like all good Dads, God does not want to see His children go without. Yet what we think is essential ala a large screen plasma may not be what God thinks is essential.

Jesus instructs us to pray for the bread we need each day. This bread is more than the food we eat but the clothes that we wear, the shelter that protects us, the people to come to us when we are in difficulty. The daily bread is the right medical care when we are sick and the right people to help us enjoy our lives.

But our daily bread is also the spiritual nourishment that we need: the scripture that comes to our mind when we need a word of encouragement or guidance. For, as Jesus said, to Satan in the wilderness, that man does not live on bread alone but on everything that proceeds from the mouth of God.

Pray the Lord's Prayer out loud. Write a list of your daily needs. Pray through the list with the expectation that God will provide in a way better than you can imagine.