

"THE PREREQUISITE"

What is the prerequisite to a valid claim upon God for our total needs? Our Lord said, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33). Jesus did not speak these words to unbelievers in order to tell them how to become believers. He was telling believers how they could lay hold of all the necessities of life. "His disciples came unto him: And he . . . taught them" (Matthew 5:1-2). He was telling them how to behave as children of God. They would have needs in their lives. Those needs were known to God. But if those needs were to be supplied, the disciples would have to put first things first. So He said to them, and to us, "Seek you first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

Pursue holiness. Behave rightly. This is what pleases God. It is what moves Him to supply all our needs. The more righteous we are in our behavior, the nearer we are to God's storehouse. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Matthew 5:6). If you put God and your relationship to Him first, then you have His pledge that all your needs will be supplied. We must first understand this truth. Then we must take the initial step and pursue it each day. Don't put the other things first, but put God first. We have no right to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread" (6:11) until we "Seek ... first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness" (6:33). This is the same prerequisite that the apostle Paul was talking about in Philippians 4.

"What Does It Mean To Seek First The Kingdom Of God?"

We are to seek the things of God as a priority over the things of the world. Primarily, it means we are to seek the salvation that is inherent in the kingdom of God because it is of greater value than all the world's riches. Does this mean that we should neglect the reasonable and daily

duties that help sustain our lives? Certainly not. But for the Christian, there should be a difference in attitude toward them. If we are taking care of God's business as a priority—seeking His salvation, living in obedience to Him, and sharing the good news of the kingdom with others—then He will take care of our business as He promised—and if that's the arrangement, where is worrying? But how do we know if we're truly seeking God's kingdom first? There are questions we can ask ourselves. "Where do I primarily spend my energies? Is all my time and money spent on goods and activities that will certainly perish, or in the services of God—the results of which live on for eternity?" Believers who have learned to truly put God first may then rest in this holy dynamic: "...and all these things will be given to you as well."



The sovereign Lord is the great Provider. When Israel needed a leader, He raised up Moses. When they needed water in the desert, He supplied it from a rock. When they needed food for their wilderness wandering, He gave it in the form of manna. Man needed a Savior from

his sins, so God sent His only begotten Son to die on Calvary's cross.



The hand of God's provision is also open to us in our time of affliction. He has provided for the need of His suffering saints. Paul wrote, "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19).

When we're deep in the vale of suffering, when we've been in God's waiting room for what seems like endless days, it may appear that the storehouse of God's supply is about to be exhausted. We may feel that He can do nothing more for us. But the promise of the Holy Scriptures is that He will supply all our need.

AN OLD TRUTH THAT NEEDS TO BE RECAPTURED

One of many promises in the Bible that has strengthened and sustained God's children for centuries is Philippians 4:19: "But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." In this verse the apostle Paul was not introducing a new promise. The provision of God for His children had its roots deep in the Old Testament. In fact, it goes back to the very beginning of human history, when God created man and placed him in the Garden of Eden. There in the garden Adam and Eve had all they needed. Our key text for this chapter, therefore, contains an old truth that needs to be recaptured by Christians today. The human source of supply has diverted our attention from God. With higher wages, social security, and guaranteed incomes for the unemployed, fewer people are bringing God into their thinking. In addition, some fine Christian men and women have never learned to trust God for all their needs.

"THE PROVIDER"



The first important truth of Philippians 4:19 is that God is the Provider. The apostle said that the Lord is "my God." When Paul received the Lord Jesus on his way to Damascus, he was brought immediately into a personal relationship with God. I fear that the belief many persons have in the God of the Bible is merely intellectual and academic, not experiential.

They believe God is omnipotent--that He has an ability that knows no inability--but they know nothing of a personal, intimate relationship with Him. Paul knew Him as the provider of all his needs.

"Jehovah-Jireh"



In the Old Testament the Hebrew name for God the provider is **Jehovah-Jireh**. It appears in Genesis 22 when Abraham, in obedience to God's command, took his son Isaac to Mount Moriah to offer him for a burnt offering. After father and son had arrived at the designated place and

prepared the altar, Isaac said to his father, "**Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? And Abraham said, My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering**" (Genesis 22:7-8). And that is precisely what God did: He provided a substitute to die in the place of Isaac (v. 13). "And Abraham called the name of that place **Jehovah-Jireh**" (v. 14), meaning "**The Lord Will Provide.**" But keep this fact in mind: **Abraham did not experience God's miraculous provision without first giving obedience to God's command.** Abraham was not presumptuous; rather, he displayed implicit faith and obedience. He became acquainted with Jehovah-jireh.

Do you know Who Jehovah-Jireh is? He is the God Who provides. He is the God of the Bible, and the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is through personal faith in Christ that we gain that experiential knowledge of God. Jesus said, "**I Am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me**" (John 14:6).

"THE PROMISE"

"My God Shall Supply."



The second important truth in Philippians 4:19 is found in this promise: "**My God shall supply.**" Take note of how this thought follows logically upon the first. The expression "my God," used also by Paul in Philippians 1:3, gives assurance that one who is rightly related to God will have his needs supplied. There is to be no doubting, no hesitation, no apprehension. Our Lord said,

"**Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you**" (Matthew 7:7). "**And all things, whatsoever you shall ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive**" (Matthew 21:22). There is positive assurance in these promises. Why can a believer be confident that his need will be supplied? Because the promise is supported by the Provider. "**My God**" is the all-knowing Provider; therefore, He knows exactly what I need. Twice in one discourse our Lord said, "**Your Father knows what things you have need of, before you ask Him**" (Matthew 6:8). "**For your heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things**" (v. 32).

"God Knows What We Need Better Than We Do"

In contrast with God's omniscience is our lack of knowledge. The apostle Paul reminded us that "**We know not what we should pray for as we ought**" (Romans 8:26). Because we are inherently selfish, our prayer requests often reflect more greed than need.

The writer to the Hebrews was commenting on this truth when he wrote, "**For you have need of patience, that, after you have done the will of God, you might receive the promise**" (Hebrews 10:36). We know that it is not God's will for us to be impatient, yet if we are honest with ourselves we must admit we have all been at one time or another been woefully lacking in patience. To say it as Jesus said it, "**Your Father knows what things you have need of.**" Having the resource of patience is a part of the abundant life. With patience we learn to trust God our Provider. I am sure there were times when you were baffled about why trials and tribulations had come your way. We might even asked God to remove the trial, believing that was what we needed, when our real need was patience. When then I learned that God had sent the trial, because it was His way of producing patience in us. If this boggles your mind, perhaps the Word of God will make it clear to you. "**My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into divers trials, knowing this, that the trying of your faith works patience**" (James 1:2-3). The Provider keeps His promise to supply all our needs. We need to be satisfied that He knows our needs and that He keeps His promises.

"THE PROVISION"

How vast is the wealth of God? How rich is the Provider? I doubt that we will ever fully know in this life the extent of God's riches. He said to His people Israel, "**And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that you may know that I, the Lord, which call you by My name, am the God of Israel**" (Isaiah 45:3). Yes, God has hidden riches in secret places about which we know nothing. The apostle Paul mentioned "**The riches of His goodness**" (Romans 2:4), "**The riches of His glory**" (Romans 9:23; Ephesians 3:16), and "**The riches of His grace**" (Ephesians 1:7; 2:7). What an amazing provision! **We Christians who read the Bible know all of this, and we know that it is all true. But do we show plainly and clearly from day to day that we live in that personal knowledge of God and His bountiful provision for us? If we do, we need never be anxious, and we must never be worried.** If we would really and truly grasp the truth of this great text, then worry, stress, and anxiety would be banished from our lives. In other words, we must bring ourselves in mind and heart and will to take seriously what our Heavenly Father says to us. We must exercise ourselves to rely implicitly upon His Word. **We are never alone in our need. We always have access to the Provider and His provision.**