

**GOD IS GREAT; GOD IS GOOD.  
LET US THANK HIM FOR OUR FOOD.  
BY HIS HANDS WE ARE ALL FED.  
GIVE US, LORD, OUR DAILY BREAD. AMEN.**

When we were children, my sister and I, were taught a short prayer prior to eating. I am certain you are, at least, familiar with the short prayer: “God is great; God is good. Let us thank Him for our food. By his hands we are all fed. Give us, Lord, our daily bread. Amen.” *Have you reflected upon the wonderful theological truths that constitute this prayer?*

Unfortunately, because the prayer is easy to memorize, it often can be prayed in a repetitive and rote manner. Many parents will have their children, plead the prayer, and yet not truly be reflective upon the truths that are being spoken. Indeed, there are profound truths contained with this brief child’s prayer.

## THE LORD IS GREAT AND GOOD

*God is great.* Without the Lord’s greatness maintaining order throughout the universe, the galaxies would be a compost of battered planets and stars. *God is sovereign over all!* He is holy, just, majestic, and righteous. Many verses within the Bible attribute praise and worth to God. Psalm 48:1a reads, “Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised.” Psalm 86:10 confesses that God alone is great, and therefore, He does “wondrous deeds.” The Lord is “a great God and a great King above all gods” (Ps 95:3). God alone is truly great, and thus his grace overflows throughout the earth and heavens. The Lord is abundantly and eternally worthy to receive praise.

*God is good.* When asked what is good, Jesus replied, “There is *only* One who is good” (Matt 19:16). Without the goodness of God to restrain every malevolent despot, the earth would be controlled by the mightiest of tyrants, who would merely regard the world as recreation for their own evil desires. God is infinitely good, and thus his entire nature is good, as our all his actions. God is the very definition of good; He has no impure motives or thoughts. When the Lord’s people returned from captivity to rebuild the Temple, they “sang, praising and giving thanks to the LORD, *saying*, ‘For He is good, for His lovingkindness is upon Israel forever.’ And all the people shouted with a great shout when they praised the LORD because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid” (Ezra 3:11).

The word *halal* (לָלַל) translated “praise” is derived from a primitive Hebrew root, which means “to be boastful.” When the Lord is praised, his people boast in the good things that He has accomplished. People who praise a good God have no reason to complain or grumble. Praising God should be common behavior for those who trust in Him by grace and through faith.

The simple child’s prayer has celebrated two attributes of God: his immanence and his transcendence. The doctrine of immanence conveys the notion that God is near to his creation. The truth of God’s transcendence means that the Lord is beyond the world, and thus He is distinctly and utterly separate from creation. Whereas understanding the transcendence (greatness) of God should cause the believer to praise God humbly, comprehending the immanence (goodness) of God should uplift the Christian to know that the Lord is actively involved in and with his creation.

The amazing testimony of Scripture is that the transcendent God humbled Himself and became one of his creation (Ps 135:5; Phil 2:8). The Lord God of Scripture uses his greatness not to destroy humanity but to save those who trust in Him – by grace through faith –, and He manifests his goodness not as a reason to abandon fallen sinners but to provide reconciliation in the Lord Jesus Christ.

*Let us thank Him for our food.* Why should one ask a blessing upon food to be eaten? First Timothy 4:4-5 answers, “For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with gratitude; for it is sanctified by means of the word of God and prayer.” We ask God to bless our food because we are grateful for it, and thus it is received with gladness. God is the one who provides the necessary meals that we eat.

*By his hands we are all fed.* God is our Provider; ultimately, it is not our abilities and skills that feed us. God provides our occupational skills that give us capability to acquire our provisions. One of the numerous compound names of God is “Jehovah-Jireh,” meaning “The LORD Will Provide” (Gen 22:14).

*Give us, Lord, our daily bread.* God is the Provider and Sustainer, giving what we need daily. The reference to “daily bread” recalls Israel’s wilderness experience when God provided manna to eat, and required that they gather only what was needed for the needs of each day. God knows exactly how much food to provide for our sustenance. We starve with too little food, and are wasteful with too many provisions. Every good and perfect gift is received from the Giver of all blessings. God may use our occupation to provide food (in addition to our families and friends), yet, as the infinite Sustainer, the Lord God feeds us all.

*Amen.* We conclude our prayers with an acknowledgement that we understand who God is. He is the One who has given our daily provisions, and thus it is He who we thank for his provision and sustenance. Our prayers should not be complicated nor do we need to use theological terminology. There is not any necessity to pray with Elizabethan terminology and words. We simply pray “with confidence to the throne of grace”– through faith alone in the Lord Jesus – as a little child would ask to receive “in time of need” (Heb 4:16).