

# Thoughts on Life and Faith

In an Upmarket article in June last year, I referred to my early family life and in particular the experiences of my younger brother Michael and myself.

Our mother was often heard to say that home was where everything was done for us, but also the place where we complained the most!

Our father became exasperated whenever we found fault with the home life he and mother had provided, and he adopted his military approach, urging us to behave and be thankful for what we'd got. He usually insisted on best behaviour, ending with the order, "Jump, and ask how high on the way up!".

On one occasion, my brother expressed his dissatisfaction with the evening meal and father took him to task saying, "You don't know on which side your bread is buttered my boy". Michael foolishly, (I think) replied, "I don't really mind Dad, I eat both sides". A fortnight without pocket money was Micheal's fate.

Thinking about bread and life, there are some verses in St John's Gospel, Chapter 6 verses 26 – 27 which naturally ring true even in these days of plentiful bread supplies:

"Very truly, I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you".

This poses the question, "Is our God too small?" In Jesus' conversation with the crowd He tackles a distortion that is still with us. It is that we might see God merely as the supplier of material needs rather than the giver of eternal life. Put simply, we are urged not to work for what cannot last.

We might feel safe from the temptation to regard Jesus merely as a provider of our daily bread, but there is the risk that our prayers could lapse into mere lists of requests.

A few verses later in John's Gospel Chapter 6, verses 32 to 35, Jesus says:

"Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world". They (the crowd) said to him, "Sir, give us this bread always". Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty".

As the bread of life, Jesus is the one who nourishes the world family, the one on whom we can depend for everlasting life.

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