

The Fourth Petition



Opening Prayer

Father, dear Father, grant me what I need for this body and life – on the table, in my family, in the state. Of your bounty dear Father, of your infinite grace and goodness, grant all that I need and enough to share, so that others too may see what a kind and merciful Father you are. Father, you provide generously for your children. Give us today all the material blessings we need to serve you in the manner you desire, and make us grateful for all we receive. We pray this especially for Christians distressed by need, wherever they may be. Amen.



Introduction

Think about the kind of prayers you use. What kinds of things do you ask for from God when you go to him in prayer? Are most of the things you ask for physical things – such as health or help with things in school, friendships, new things you'd like, or general aid with the problems you're facing? Or do you mostly ask for spiritual things – such as a stronger trust in God's love and promises, help with sharing Jesus with others, or to be more open to doing what God wants you to do along with the strength to do it? If you're like most people, you tend to focus on physical things instead of spiritual things in your prayers. In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus teaches us to pray about both kinds of things, because both are important. But he reminds us that while the physical things are necessary and important, the main things he wants us to be concerned about are the spiritual things.

Lesson Aim: What do we ask God to do when we pray the Fourth Petition?

Throughout this lesson, attempt to construct a list of the physical blessings with which God has blessed you already this day.

Part One

Read Matthew 14:15-21 (context vs. 1-12).

Jesus had been teaching and healing people all day.

- 1) What concern did the disciples have as it got later in the day?
- 2) What solution did the disciples have?
- 3) How did Jesus feed the people?
- 4) As you compare verses 17, 20 and 21, what made this miracle so astounding?

Read 2 Kings 4:1-7.

- 5) What problem was the widow facing? Why did that happen to her?

- 6) What did Elisha tell her to do?
- 7) What did she do with all the oil she ended up having?
- 8) How did the Lord provide for her through this miracle?



KEY POINT 1 - God gives all people their bodily needs as a gracious gift.

What I've learned so far:

Part Two

Read Matthew 6:25-33.

- 1) What does Jesus say is the biggest concern most people have in life?
- 2) How does it show that these are their biggest concerns?
- 3) Why is worrying about physical things so unnecessary and foolish?
- 4) How does God show us that he cares about our physical needs and will take care of them for us?
- 5) Which kind of people are the ones who are concerned and worried about their physical needs?
- 6) What does God know that we need?
- 7) What does Jesus tell us are the most important things in life?
- 8) What are some ways that you can put "God's kingdom and his righteousness" first in your life?

Read Matthew 6:11 and Luke 11:3.

Matthew's version of this petition gives the time frame of only today, while Luke's version considers a long span of time reaching into the future ("be giving, keep giving, give repeatedly"). Although we do not often use the words from Luke's version of this petition, at first glance a Christian may prefer these words. Our God does not just give once and then is done. He keeps giving to us all that we need day by day. That is true, therefore the words from Luke's version would be more appropriate if the Lord's Prayer is something one prays once and then is done. The words of this petition as written in Matthew bring out a little more clearly that prayer is a daily practice and the Lord's Prayer is suitable as a daily prayer.

The fourth petition is the only petition in the Lord's Prayer which requests anything earthly or physical.

- 9) What does Jesus teach Christians with this petition?

Read Philippians 4:6.

10) What attitude should we have as we present our requests to God?

Read Psalm 118:1.

11) God wants us to learn that he is the giver of everything we have. What else does God want to teach us to do regarding all of his gifts to us?

KEY POINT 2 - Jesus teaches us to receive our bodily needs with thanks and to trust God to keep providing them day by day.

What I've learned so far:



Part Three

Study pages 267-272 in the Catechism and answer the following questions in your own words.

- 1) What is the "daily bread" God gives to us?
- 2) Why does our heavenly Father give us our daily bread?
- 3) What are we praying in the fourth petition?
- 4) How does the fourth petition show us God's mercy and grace in Jesus Christ?

Helpful Passages

James 1:17

5) From whom does everything we have come?

Psalm 145:15-16

6) When God gives us "daily bread," he gives us more than just food. What else does he give us?

Matthew 5:45

7) God doesn't just care about his believers. He is the God of love towards everyone. To which people does God give the daily needs of life?

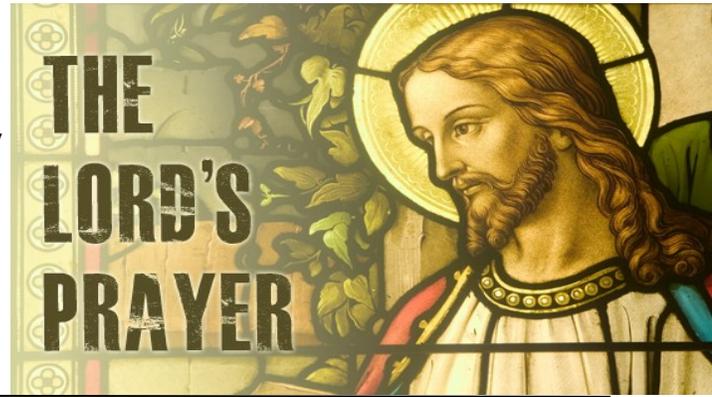
Romans 8:32

8) What is the greatest gift God has given us? What makes it the greatest gift?

9) In light of that, what else will God always give to us?

Main point – I ask God to graciously provide for my bodily needs day by day.

In this petition, we are asking God to provide for us all the basic necessities of our body and temporal life. As used in this petition, "bread" is a very simple word, but it has a very wide scope. We pray for everything that is necessary, but only for that which is necessary, in order to have and enjoy our bread, and we pray against everything that interferes with it. It is up to God to provide the kind of blessings necessary for the kind of service he desires from us. We leave that in his hands.



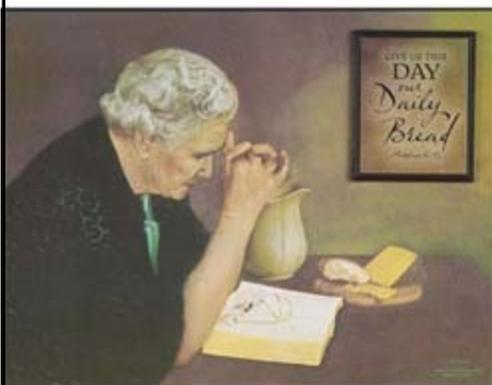
Final Considerations:

1) How would you answer the person who says, "I get the credit for everything I have. I worked hard for it and provided for myself."



2) How's that list you've constructed of the physical blessings with which God has blessed you already this day?

3) Write your expounded version of the fourth petition.



Commit to Memory:

- The Fourth Petition (with *What Does This Mean?* and *What, then, is meant by daily bread?*)

What I've learned about the Fourth Petition of the Lord's Prayer and my daily bread: