

Biblical Topics

Lord's Prayer – Fourth Petition

Give us today our daily bread.

What does this mean?

God certainly gives daily bread to everyone without our prayers, even to all evil people, but we pray in this petition that God would lead us to realize this and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving.

What is meant by daily bread?

Daily breads includes everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house home, land animals, money goods a devout husband or wife, devout children, devout workers, devout and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, self-control, good reputation, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like.

This petition and, in part, also the Seventh, speak of the needs of our body. All the other petitions treat the need of our soul. This is to teach us that also in our prayers we should first seek the kingdom of God and ask for spiritual blessings.

The word “bread” does not include everything we might wish and long for, such as, special luxuries and comforts. It does include all we actually need for daily life.

Christ tells us to ask for daily bread in order to teach us that our daily bread is a gracious gift of God. Christ also tells that we are to receive it with thanksgiving and use it according to His will.

- Psalm 145:15-16: ¹⁵The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food at the proper time. ¹⁶You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing.
- Matthew 5:45: that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.
- Ephesians 5:20: always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We say “our” bread because we should ask for that bread only which is honestly ours. If we work faithfully, God will bless our labor so that we can earn a livelihood. We say “us” because we should also pray for our neighbor and share with him when he is in need.

- 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12: ¹⁰ For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: “If a man will not work, he shall not eat.” ¹¹ We hear that some among you are idle. They are not busy; they are busybodies. ¹² Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the bread they eat.

- Hebrews 13:16: And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

We are to say “daily” and “this day” because we should be satisfied with what we need each day. We are not to worry about the future.

- Proverbs 30:7-9: ⁷“Two things I ask of you, O LORD; do not refuse me before I die: ⁸ Keep falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. ⁹Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, ‘Who is the LORD?’ Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonor the name of my God.
- 1 Timothy 6:8: But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.
- Matthew 6:33-34: ³³ But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴ Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.
- Psalm 127:2: In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat— for he grants sleep to those he loves.

The above information is taken from: “Luther’s Small Catechism” annotated by Edward W. A. Koehler