

The Lord's Prayer: The Fourth Petition

Give us this day 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 bread 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 speaks to our attitude toward life and how we treat things. When we pray for our daily bread, it helps us realize that:

- 1) Everything we have comes from God. It is true that He provides daily bread whether we pray or not. After all, He provides for the unbeliever, even though they do not recognize He exists. By praying to Him daily for what we need to live on, it focusses our life not on the things, but on the Giver. This teaches us to be **thankful**.
- 2) Our daily bread is everything we need for this earthly life. That doesn't mean that God just drops everything in our laps. He provides by making conditions right and by giving us the ability to work for the things we need. This teaches us to be **industrious**.
- 3) Since our focus is not on things, it helps us to see those in need in the proper light, that we are the answer to their prayer to receive their daily bread. This teaches us to be **compassionate**.
- 4) Since it's our *daily* bread, it means we shouldn't expect an abundance. If we were given too much, it would make us either greedy or wasteful of what we have. This teaches us to be **sensible**.
- 5) Since it's God who provides our daily bread, we know we can trust that He will see our needs are always met. This teaches us to be **faithful** to God and not worry about tomorrow.

In short, the Fourth Petition of the Lord's Prayer teaches us to be **thankful, industrious, compassionate, sensible, and faithful**.