

Name: _____



**Advanced Bible Correspondence Course
Lesson 50: The Lord's Prayer**

The last three petitions

In the first three petitions of the Lord's Prayer, the petitioner has asked nothing for himself. They concern the honour and interests of God. That is first and foremost. This teaches us that our prayers should not be a list of desires which we would like to see fulfilled. We may pray for our bodily and spiritual needs, that is, for those things needed for body and soul: the means to sustain life, the forgiveness of sins, and preservation from sin. These are spoken of in the last three petitions. Here we are taught why we may openly ask for all these, even though we cannot bring forth a single merit in ourselves as a pleading ground.

LORD'S DAY 50

Q. 125. WHICH IS THE FOURTH PETITION?

ANSWER: "GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD"; THAT IS, BE PLEASED TO PROVIDE US WITH ALL THINGS NECESSARY FOR THE BODY (A), THAT WE MAY THEREBY ACKNOWLEDGE THEE TO BE THE ONLY FOUNTAIN OF ALL GOOD (B), AND THAT NEITHER OUR CARE NOR INDUSTRY, NOR EVEN THY GIFTS, CAN PROFIT US WITHOUT THY BLESSING (C); AND THEREFORE THAT WE MAY WITHDRAW OUR TRUST FROM ALL CREATURES AND PLACE IT ALONE IN THEE (D).

(A) PSALM 145:15, 104:27, MATTHEW 6:26; (B) JAMES 1:17, ACTS 14:17, 17:27; (C) I CORINTHIANS 15:58, DEUTERONOMY 8:3, PSALM 37:16, 127:1&2; (D) PSALM 55:22, 62:10, 146:3, JEREMIAH 17:5&7

"Give"

The word "give" with which this petition begins is not a demand, but a plea, spoken in deep humility and childlike trust. One who truly prays acknowledges that his Father in heaven possesses everything in heaven and upon earth. Likewise he feels himself to be dependent upon Him each day for the sustenance of life. He does not

speaking as one who claims his rights, because with God man has no rights. He eats the bread of grace. And if he may experience this as grace, then the simplest meal tastes good. He tastes God's favour in it. What a blessing if we may lay the cares of our daily life in the hands of the Lord!

Us

The person who prays does not only ask for himself, but also for his neighbour. The words of Cain: "*Am I my brother's keeper?*" (*Genesis 4:9*) are not fitting for a Christian. The Lord Jesus here teaches him to also have concern for others. That concern then ought also to be expressed in prayer. Therefore the word "us" is used. The Lord Jesus Himself has also taught us to pray for our enemies. He Himself gave the good example when He prayed for those who crucified Him: "*Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do*" (*Luke 23:34*).

This day

We are really concerned about our rest and our ease. We would prefer to live for many years without any cares, that is, to have heaven on earth. However, that would not be good. If it is well, there are cares to cause us to pray, day after day. Therefore the Lord teaches us to ask each day for the sustenance for *one* day, not at the same time for tomorrow and the day after tomorrow, and certainly not for many years. Of course, we may be concerned about the future; we are required to do so. But that does not take away the fact that day by day we live in dependence upon the Lord, Who is willing to care for us as a Father. Each day the Lord caused manna to fall for the Israelites. He gives us the birds of the air as an example, for which the Lord daily provides food, and they do not take thought for the next day (*Matthew 6:26*). This is what is intended by the words "this day" and "daily".

Our daily

The Lord teaches His children to ask for "*our* daily bread". How can they say it in that way? Is it not a great favour if they receive bread out of the hand of God? They do not have any rights, do they? Actually, they do - a child's rights. For everything they need, the Lord Jesus merited it for them. He suffered hunger in order that His people would have bread. He suffered thirst on the cross in order that His children should have enough to drink. Children do not come to the table of their father and mother as beggars, but as children who have a child's right for bread. What a wonder it is if we may ask God for bread in such a way.

Bread

We ask for what we are in need of, no more: food, drink, clothing, shelter, work, and health. These things are needed by us to go through life and to be able to seek and serve the Lord in this life. Often the Lord gives more than we need, that is true, but He is not obliged to do so, and we should not pursue luxury and excess. If we receive more than our daily needs, then we are required to bestow that to the honour of God and the well-being of our neighbour. This stands in opposition to this materialistic age, where the focus of life of many seems to be in having and keeping, in eating and drinking excessively, in a beautiful home, a nice car, and two or more holidays to foreign countries. What does the Lord Jesus say? *“Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth to everlasting life”* (John 6:27).

Trusting in the Lord

We tend to instinctively put our trust in creatures. That is because of sin. It was different in Paradise. There Adam put his trust entirely in the Lord. But since we have run away from God, it is our nature to expect our prosperity from sun and rain, health, diplomas, and a good salary. Wrong! says the Catechism. We must completely withdraw our trust from those things. They all lead to disappointment. Put your trust in the Lord only! He will never disappoint you. He is a Helper in bodily and spiritual needs, even if things turn out differently from what we expected. We must learn to live by faith, also in regard to temporal life. We need a lifetime to learn this, and much prayer is needed!

Questions:

1. *What did Agur pray for? (Proverbs 30)*

2. *Why did he not pray for riches or poverty?*

3. *What happened when the Israelites gathered manna for several days at a time? (Exodus 16)*

4. *What right do God's children have to ask for bread?*

Evaluator: _____

Meditation: *“She said, Truth Lord; yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master’s table.” Matthew 15:27*

Here is blessed reasoning: it produced admiration in the Lord: “O woman, great is thy faith!” It also obtained a rich grant from Him: “Be it unto thee even as thou wilt.” Great faith! How does it appear? We do not find that she came to Christ in full assurance of faith, saying, I know Thou art *my* Saviour, I am assured Thou hast loved *me* and wilt save *me*. No. Still, there was great faith without this. Look at her faith: imitate it: she honoured the Lord by it; He honours her for it.

She was in trouble; she flies instantly to Christ; she tells Him of her sorrows: “Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.” To cry to Jesus for mercy, in trials and under a sense of sin, is the prayer of faith, and honours the Lord of glory.

Here were great discouragements: Christ answers her not a word: the disciples desire Him to cure her, that they might get rid of her: but Jesus answers, (not her, but His disciples,) “I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”

Was not this repulse enough to strike her dumb and send her away in despair? Instead of this, her faith grew stronger and her importunity greater. She falls at His feet, with, *Lord, help me*. O that was putting it home to the loving heart of our dear Lord: she brought her case to a point; Jesus, Thou can help me; none but Thee can: if Thou do not, I am miserable. Have Thou no compassion for a poor miserable sinner? Lord, help me. Thus casting herself upon the Lord’s love and power, she at last gets an answer from Him: but, O such a one as was like a dagger to her heart, “It is not meet to take the children’s bread and cast it to the dogs.”

Does she now turn away in despair? No. She had a child’s heart, and a child’s faith too: she again puts her case home to the Saviour. Mark it: I am a dog, a vile, unworthy creature; let me be fed as such upon the falling crumb: I know I do not deserve even that from Thee. See what perseverance, faith and prayer will do: it overcomes all difficulties, surmounts all obstacles, obtains the sought-for mercy. Some in our day would have thought this woman undervalued herself: but Jesus humbles those sinners to the very lowest whom He raises to the very highest. O take up this resolution, “I will wait upon the Lord, Who hideth His face: I will look for Him.” Isaiah 8:17

Taken from: “A Spiritual Treasury for the Children of God” by William Mason