

The Lord's Prayer: The Fourth Petition

Give us this day our daily bread.

What does this mean? God gives daily bread, even without our prayer, to all wicked men; but we pray in this petition that He would lead us to know it, and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving.

What is meant by daily bread? Everything that belongs to the support and wants of the body, such as meat, drink, clothing, shoes, house, homestead, field, cattle, money, goods, a pious spouse, pious children, pious servants, pious and faithful magistrates, good government, good weather, peace, health, discipline, honor, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like.

1. What does Luther understand Jesus to have included in "daily bread?" Jesus himself leads us to think this way in His Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 6:24–34). If we do not look to God for our daily bread, who, then, is our god?
2. On the other hand, with this article prefaced with "Our Father," and suffixed with "Amen!" (see their explanations), what do we confess, through this prayer, about all our bodily needs?
3. This petition connects first with one article of the Creed, as Luther explains it. Why does God give daily bread, according to that article? To what article of the Creed do we look for proof that He will, and why? What article shows us where God will give us the faith to believe this, despite how life often goes?
4. Consider the seventh commandment in light of this article, especially as Luther explains it to mean that our concern should be more for our neighbor's property and income than for our own. Why?

From Luther's *Large Catechism* (III: Lord's Prayer)

⁷² Here, now, we consider the poor bread basket, the necessaries of our body and of the temporal life. It is a brief and simple word, but it has a very wide scope. For when you mention and pray for daily bread, you pray for everything that is necessary in order to have and enjoy daily bread and, on the other hand, against everything which interferes with it. Therefore you must open wide and extend your thoughts not only to the oven or the flour-bin, but to the distant field and the entire land, which bears and brings to us daily bread and every sort of sustenance. For if God did not cause it to grow, and bless and preserve it in the field, we could never take bread from the oven or have any to set upon the table.

⁷³ To comprise it briefly, this petition includes everything that belongs to our entire life in the world, because on that account alone do we need daily bread. Now for our life it is not only necessary that our body have food and covering and other necessaries, but also that we spend our days in peace and quiet among the people with whom we live and have intercourse in daily business and conversation and all sorts of doings, in short, whatever pertains both to the domestic and to the neighborly or civil relation and government.