

FAMILY WORSHIP HELPS

WEEK 100

THIS WEEK'S FOCUS

QUESTION 104: *What do we pray for in the fourth petition?*

ANSWER: In the fourth petition (which is, Give us this day our daily bread) we pray, that of God's free gift we may receive a competent portion of the good things of this life, and enjoy his blessing with them.



MONDAY



Praise: Sing Psalm 145C

Scripture: Read Ecclesiastes 3:12-13; James 1:17

Key Thought: *In the fourth petition we acknowledge our dependence upon God for material things.*

Questions:

- ☞ Can any man gain anything for himself apart from God?
- ☞ How does this petition humble us?
- ☞ How do we tend to take God's gifts for granted?

Prayer

Notes: Many prayers are little more than lists of personal desires. We tend to spend a disproportionate amount of time asking God for this and that, with relatively little time spent in praise, thanksgiving, and confession of sin. The Lord's Prayer teaches us that God's glory, the advancement of His kingdom, and obedience to His will are to be preferred above even our most basic needs. Thus, it is not until the fourth petition that Jesus' model prayer gets around to asking God to supply "our daily bread." The wording of his petition also reminds us that we are dependent upon God's grace. All that we have is a gift from the Lord. We cannot have even a morsel of bread unless God is pleased to give it to us. It is the tendency of sinful man to imagine that he is self-sufficient and that what he possesses is the result of his own efforts. Jesus reminds us in this petition that "every good gift is from above." This is why the *Larger Catechism* says that in the fourth petition we are, first of all, "acknowledging, that in Adam, and by our own sin, we have forfeited our right to all the outward blessings of this life, and deserve to be wholly deprived of them by God, and to have them cursed to us in the use of them; and that neither they of themselves are able to sustain us, nor we to merit, or by our own industry to procure them; but prone to desire, get, and use them unlawfully." We do not receive our daily bread by our own skill and industry, or through circumstances apart from God's granting us the strength and opportunity to acquire what we need to sustain us. Therefore we are reminded in

this petition of our utter dependence upon God, as well as His goodness to us in providing all of our daily needs.



TUESDAY



Praise: Sing Psalm 145C

Scripture: Read Philippians 2:1-4; Ephesians 6:18

Key Thought: *In the fourth petition, we seek not only our own needs, but also the needs of others.*

Questions:

☞ What do we learn from the word “us” in the fourth petition?

☞ For whom are we especially to pray in this petition?

Prayer

Notes: Thomas Watson’s comments on the word “us” in the fourth petition are especially helpful. He writes: “To show that we are to have a public spirit in prayer, we must not only pray for ourselves, but for others. Both the law of God and the law of love bind us to this, we must love our neighbor as ourselves; therefore we must pray for them as well as ourselves. Every good Christian has a fellow-feeling of the wants and miseries of others, and he prays God would extend his bounty to them; especially he prays for the saints (Eph. 6:18)” (commentary on the *Catechism*). These are the children of the family. Should we have a public spirit in our prayers? It reproves narrow-spirited men who move within their own sphere only; who look only at themselves, and mind not the case of others; who leave others out of their prayers; if they have daily bread, they care not though others starve; if they are clothed, they care not though others go naked. Christ taught us to pray for others, to say, ‘Give us;’ but selfish persons are shut up within themselves, as the snail in the shell, and never speak a word in prayer for others. . . . Let us pray for others as well as ourselves. . . . If we are members of the mystic body, we cannot but have a sympathy with others in their wants; and this sympathy would lead us to pray for them.” Jesus designed the model prayer of His disciples to remind us that our prayers, as well as our interests, are inseparably joined together with those of our brothers and sisters in Christ. Let us determine never to pray, “Give me,” but always to pray “Give us,” when we come before God with our petitions.



WEDNESDAY



Praise: Sing Psalm 145C

Scripture: Read Luke 12:15-31; Matthew 6:34; James 4:13-15

Key Thought: *In the fourth petition we acknowledge our constant dependence upon God by faith.*

Questions:

☞ What do we learn from the words “this day” in the fourth petition?

☞ Are we to be anxious about the future? Why?

☞ Does this mean that it is wrong to plan for the future? Explain.

Prayer

Notes: The fact that Jesus taught His disciples to pray for a daily provision of daily bread emphasizes the fact that God is pleased when His people live by faith. We are not to be anxious about the future, as the worldly are who trust in themselves for their provision and fear that if they do not hoard their wealth they will be left in poverty. We have a God who has promised that He will always provide for our needs. God taught this lesson to the Israelites in the wilderness by literally providing “daily bread,” causing just enough manna for each day’s needs to fall from heaven. Jesus may well have had this part of Israel’s history in mind when He taught the disciples this petition. Our eyes are to look to God by faith for all that we need, trusting that He who feeds the sparrows and clothes the lilies of the field will give us what we need, and even the desires of our hearts, if we trust in Him and seek first His kingdom and righteousness. Fretful worry about our needs is unbelief in the promises and faithfulness of God. It evidences a lack of trust in His goodness, faithfulness, and love. Furthermore, Jesus would have us to understand that we are to live each day as if it were our last. We are not to grow comfortable in the abundance of our possessions, like the foolish man in the parable of Luke 12. This kind of future-orientation exhibits trust in self rather than faith in God. Being future-oriented is not wrong in and of itself. God commands us to provide for the needs of our families, and to use our resources wisely for His glory, which certainly requires careful and purposeful planning. The point is that we are not to make the accumulation of worldly goods our aim in life, or rest upon them as our hope and comfort. If a brother or sister is in need, and we have the resources to help them, we are not to turn away because we fear that our “nest egg” will be depleted. God has promised to provide our daily bread. Most of us have been blessed far beyond the present day’s needs. For this we should give thanks, and pray that God will continually help us to serve Him with our substance and to live by faith.



THURSDAY



Praise: Sing Psalm 145C

Scripture: Read 2 Thessalonians 3:7-12; Proverbs 4:14-17; 31:27

Key Thought: *In the fourth petition we recognize our privilege and duty as stewards of God’s good gifts.*

Questions:

- ☞ What do we learn from the words “our bread” in the fourth petition?
- ☞ What kinds of bread are not rightfully “ours”?
- ☞ What is the responsibility of a steward?

Prayer

Notes: The fourth petition also acknowledges the fact that we are appointed as stewards over God’s good gifts. We ask the Lord to “give us” bread, understanding that all that we have belongs to Him. Yet we call it “our bread” because He com-

mits it to us both for our good and for His glory. The Bible speaks of the “bread of idleness,” which is the result of living off the efforts of others. Likewise, the “bread of wickedness” refers to any unjust gain received at the expense of another. These kinds of bread cannot rightfully be called “our bread.” But that which God grants us by His grace, whether as a gift or through the means of sanctified labor, is committed to our ownership through Christ to be used for His honor. Watson reminds us, “They who can say ‘our Father,’ can say ‘our bread.’ Wicked men have a legal right to what they possess, but not a covenant-right; they have it by providence, not by promise; with God’s leave, not with his love. Wicked men are in God’s eye no better than usurpers; all they have, their money and land, is like cloth taken up at the draper’s, which is not paid for; but the sweet privilege of believers is, that they can say, ‘our bread.’ Christ being theirs, all is theirs.” We are therefore reminded in this petition of the great privilege and duty we have to regard God’s good gifts as a trust to be received with thanks and consecrated to His service.



FRIDAY



Praise: Sing Psalm 145C

Scripture: Read Proverbs 30:8-9; 1 Timothy 6:6-11

Key Thought: *In the fourth petition we pray for contentment with God’s provisions and deliverance from greed and covetousness.*

Questions:

- ☞ Why does Jesus instruct us to pray for our “daily bread”?
- ☞ What are the dangers of covetousness?
- ☞ What are the benefits of contentment?

Prayer

Notes: In His model prayer, our Lord by repetition (“give us this day our daily bread”) teaches us to be content with God’s provisions. We are to seek our satisfaction in God, who is our portion, and not in the abundance of worldly goods. Thus Paul writes to Timothy, “And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content.” Discontent, greed, and covetousness lead to all manner of wickedness, but “godliness with contentment is great gain.” We are naturally prone toward discontent, but as we pray in the spirit of Christ’s model prayer, we are shown the blessing of being content in the Lord.



Note: Only five lessons per week are included. You are encouraged to lead your family in worship seven days a week. On weekends, you may want to review or build upon the lessons from the previous week, discuss the sermon from Sunday morning, or work on questions from the Catechism or memory verses. These lesson suggestions are intended to provide a simple framework for parents to build upon. You are not limited to this content. The habit of morning and evening family worship is the biblical ideal. We hope you can use these lessons as a starting point for the development of a blessed practice of family worship in your home.