

## Prayer, From the Westminster Larger Catechism, part 8

Q194: What do we pray for in the fifth petition?

A194: In the fifth petition (which is, Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors), acknowledging, that we and all others are guilty both of original and actual sin, and thereby become debtors to the justice of God; and that neither we, nor any other creature, can make the least satisfaction for that debt: we pray for ourselves and others, that God of his free grace would, through the obedience and satisfaction of Christ, apprehended and applied by faith, acquit us both from the guilt and punishment of sin, accept us in his Beloved; continue his favor and grace to us, pardon our daily failings, and fill us with peace and joy, in giving us daily more and more assurance of forgiveness; which we are the rather emboldened to ask, and encouraged to expect, when we have this testimony in ourselves, that we from the heart forgive others their offenses.

Mark 11:25-26 “And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your father who is in heaven forgive.”

We must take heed that God’s forgiveness to you is conditional upon your forgiveness of others. Before you are converted (born again), you are incapable of loving and honoring God, and you are unlikely to forgive people who have unrepentantly wronged you.

But, thanks be to God! For once you are awakened from death to life by the Holy Spirit, and you are granted faith to believe, you become a new creation! You become aware of your crimes against God, your vileness, and you realize that except for God’s grace, there is no sin that you could not commit, everything changes. And this change from death to life, is due entirely to the work of God through the death of Jesus, in *your* place.

Your new life is characterized by honoring God, gratitude and joy, which produces the fruit of thankfulness and forgiveness! Since you have been forgiven so much, it is now sensible and imperative to forgive rather than hold a grudge. Forgivingly, it becomes apparent that there are divine, wondrous, praiseworthy thoughts on which to set your mind.

Philippians 4:8      New Living Translation

And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.

My glorious, merciful Father! You are the God of forgiveness, gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in loving kindness. By your mercy only, you had compassion on me and saved me from utter destruction! Jesus sought me when a stranger, wandering from the fold of God; He, to rescue me from danger, interposed His precious blood!

Now I continually thank you, praise you and honor you, because you brought sight to my blind eyes, you gave me a new heart and a new life! I still sin, but nothing like before, and you are gracious to forgive and forget them when I do. My old self is dead and gone, and by your word, I will never go back to my old ways. You have saved me for good!

Therefore, the trespasses others commit against me do not have the power they once did, and seldom do they trigger an evil response in me. This would not be possible without your power

and grace working in me. You have given me peace! You are great and greatly to be praised! I pray that you will give me even more grace, to make me more willing and able to glorify you through service and obedience to you.

I pray this in the name of my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who saves sinners and forgives sin!  
Amen!