

# 39

## The Fourth Petition— God Gives to Us



How much trash does your family create each week? (The average garbage can holds almost a cubic yard of trash.)

Estimate the amount of waste generated each year by your city, county, or state. (Your trash divided by the number of family members, multiplied by the total population, multiplied by 52.)

That's a *lot* of stuff to get rid of!

One way of seeing the great wealth God has given us is to look at how much extra, unused, or worn-out stuff we send to the landfill because we have no need of it.

Do you ever complain about what you have? ("It's not what I really wanted. It's not brand new. I wish I had something else instead.") Or about having too much? ("I don't know where I'll put it. My room is too small.") Your problem is not new. God's Word records similar complaints among His people.

### WE TURN TO GOD'S WORD

Read Exodus 16:2–5, 13–15, 31–35, and 17:1–6. What words could you use to describe the children of Israel?

### 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.

What words could you use to describe God?

2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

2. God blesses you; what is His will that you now do? See 2 Corinthians 9:8-12.

While we might not like to admit it, we often act like these people. We complain about the food we have, and complain about the leftovers and the trash that accumulates because of it. We complain about our needs, and we forget to thank God when they are filled. Fortunately, God also treats us like He treated the people in the Bible story—full of mercy and slow to anger, always ready to give us more than we need—before we ask for it and even after we complain.

### OUR DAILY BREAD

Read catechism questions 268-272. "Daily bread" includes everything we need to live on earth. God wants us both to ask Him for everything we need and to show concern for the needs of others. God desires that we receive His gifts with

### OUR GRACIOUS GOD

God provides for our physical needs. (And as His redeemed people, we also enjoy great spiritual blessings, particularly His grace and forgiveness that abound daily through Christ.) God's good and gracious blessings to us lead us to respond with contentment, generosity, and thanksgiving.

1. What is God's message to you about being content? See Matthew 6:25-34.

3. We receive many gifts and blessings—many we didn't even ask for, many we haven't even shown appreciation for. Write a prayer you might pray with your family tonight. Think about things you are learning in the Fourth Petition and special reasons you have to thank and praise God.

and without

God has given you a great wealth of gifts. List five of the most unusual ones you can think of below.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

## SHARING WHAT WE HAVE

Recall or review the story of the Feeding of the 5,000 (Luke 9:10-17). Suppose Jesus had asked His disciples, "What are you going to do with the 12 baskets of leftovers?" What are some possible answers the disciples might have given?

through our family?

God provides everything we need in this life. It is His will that we thank Him and share our blessings with others. What "daily bread" blessings did you share last week? What specific thing will you do this week to share your *daily bread*?

individually?

Think again of the abundance our country enjoys—so much that we throw away tons of unused or worn-out material each day. Yet many in our world have too little and suffer because of it. We are directed to share with those in need.

Look at the example of the early Christian church in Acts 4:32-35. Then consider the poor in our world today, both in our own country and throughout the world. How can we help them:

through our government?

through our church?

## TO REVIEW AND REMEMBER

Matthew 6:33: Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Galatians 6:10: Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.



# 40

# The Fifth Petition— Forgiven, We Forgive

## SOMETHING WE ALL NEED

Imagine two very unusual stores near each other along a strip of shops in your town. They are unusual because of what they offer—forgiveness—something everybody needs, sooner or later.

*Forgiveness-4-U* is something of a trading post. You bring in the times that you have forgiven others and trade them for forgiveness for yourself, to be used on those occasions when you've done something wrong and need it. The exchange rate is vague, however, and you're never sure just how much forgiveness you've gotten and whether or not it will be enough.

Nearby is *Forgiveness Unlimited*. It is more of a thrift shop. Large quantities of forgiveness are available, for all kinds of situations—and it's free! Frequency of

shopping is not a problem. You can come in and get forgiveness anytime, as often as you need it. You even get a bonus: forgiveness to share with others comes with every package of personal forgiveness!

*Forgiveness Unlimited* sounds almost too good to be true. *Forgiveness-4-U* sounds pretty expensive. Which store will get your business? Maybe it will help to do some "consumer research."

## WE TURN TO GOD'S WORD

1. Read Luke 22:31–34 and 54–62. How did Peter sin?

2. How do you think Peter felt when Jesus turned and looked at him?

3. Peter wept bitterly. What feelings was he showing about himself and God?

4. A later encounter between Peter and Jesus is recorded in John 21:1–19. Jesus did not say, "I forgive you, Peter." Nevertheless, Peter could be certain that he had been forgiven. Why?

## The Fifth Petition

And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

What does this mean?

We pray in this petition that our Father in heaven would not look at our sins, or deny our prayer because of them. We are neither worthy of the things for which we pray, nor have we deserved them, but we ask that He would give them all to us by grace,

for we daily sin much and surely deserve nothing but punishment. So we too will sincerely forgive and gladly do good to those who sin against us.

## WE PRAY AND PROMISE

1. In the Fifth Petition, what do we ask? what do we promise?

2. Why do we ask God to give us everything *by grace*? (Read Psalm 130:3 before you write your answer.)

*Group A:* Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.

*Group B:* Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit.

*Reader 1:* When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long.

*Reader 2:* For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer.

*All:* Then I acknowledged my sin to You and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord"—and You forgave the guilt of my sin.

a. 2 Samuel 12:7–9, 13:

b. 2 Chronicles 7:11–15:

## WE ASK FOR FORGIVENESS

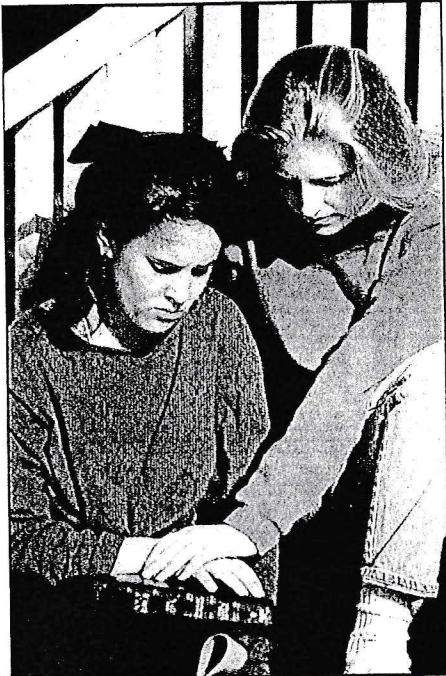
God desires that we ask Him to forgive our sins. As a matter of fact, many psalms are prayers for forgiveness. Pray these words of Psalm 32:1–5 responsively with your classmates.



c. Mark 2:1–12:

things to you. Suppose you feel very unhappy about the fight. You want to forgive the classmate, but you just can't get that bitterness out of your heart, no matter how hard you try. So you ask God to forgive you. Will He? If so, why? If not, why not?

d. Luke 23:32–34a:



e. John 8:2–11:

Because Jesus suffered and died in our place, God has forgiven, and continues to forgive, all our sins. Jesus tells us in the Lord's Prayer to ask for forgiveness. Because we know God's love, we can believe we are forgiven. We can go again and again to God for mercy.

### WE FORGIVE OTHERS

We have learned from 1 John 4 that we love God and others because He first loved us. The same is true of forgiveness. A Christian's willingness to forgive others flows from gratitude and appreciation of God's love and forgiveness. "Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you" (Colossians 3:13).

1. Suppose you have a fight with a classmate. During the fight he or she says some very nasty

2. Change now from a "suppose" situation to a real situation. Think about a time you hurt a friend by what you said or did, or they hurt you. How did you feel? What did you do later to rebuild the friendship? Is there something you can do right now? To begin, spend some time in silence. Ask God to forgive you. Also ask Him to lead you to do the right thing. Then plan some things you will do with this friend today and tomorrow.

### TO REVIEW AND REMEMBER

Ephesians 4:32: Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

The Fifth Petition and its explanation.