

# Instruction In The Westminster Standards

## The Historic Standards of Presbyterian Denominations

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### STUDIES IN THE WESTMINSTER SHORTER CATECHISM

Q. 104. What do we pray for in the fourth petition?

A. 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.

Scripture References: Matt. 6:11. Prov. 30:8, 9. Gen. 28:20. I Tim. 4:4, 5.

#### Questions:

1. How can we best interpret the word "bread" in this question?  
The word "bread" can be interpreted as all the needful things God gives to us in this life. An excellent verse in this regard is Prov. 30:8—"Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me."
2. Why should we take note of the word "give" in this question?  
The Lord had good reason for using the word "give" here. This is to remind us that these things are gifts from above. Too many times we take for granted the needs that are supplied for us by Him. We should remember He delights in giving and be thankful!
3. Is it possible that the Lord is speaking here of spiritual blessings as well as the good things of this life?  
It would seem that the Lord here means simply the good things of this life. The Lord's Prayer is complete and this is the portion that has to do with the temporal things while the spiritual things are covered in other petitions.
4. Is it necessary for us to pray daily for these good things?  
Yes, it is necessary because He taught us to do so. In addition, we are taught by Him to live a day at a time (Matt. 6:34).
5. What can we learn from the words "our bread" in this question?  
We can learn that it is ours only in that we have labored for it, all to the glory of God. If we have obtained "our bread" through false means it is not really ours in the sight of God.
6. Could you comment on the word "us" in this question?  
It is interesting to note the word "us" is used. Here we have the opportunity of making known our wishes to the Lord to include our fellowmen in our prayer. We are urged in the Word of God to constantly pray for our neighbors and to love them.

## LEARNING TO BE CONTENT

"Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." (Phil. 4:11). When we pray "Give us this day our daily bread" we are praying that He will teach us to be content with what we have, a daily portion of the showers of blessing. We are praying that He will discipline us to the day at a time instead of the prayer that is filled with greed and calls out, "More, More!"

William Hendriksen points out here, "The satisfaction of a material need must not be construed as being either the real reason for or the measure of my joy. On the contrary, regardless of outward circumstances, I would still be satisfied. My conversion-experience, and also my subsequent trials for the sake of Christ and His gospel, have taught me a lesson. The path which I traveled led me ever closer to Christ, to His love, and to His power, yes to Christ and contentment in Him. That very contentment is riches to me." (A Commentary on the Epistle to the Philippians). It is a good commentary on Phil. 4:11 and equally as good on the fourth petition of the Lord's Prayer.

May God help us to learn to pray for "our daily bread" and mean by it that we are content with what we have. We must always remember that we have far more than we deserve and God is perfectly capable of giving us far less than we have! We should be blessing God for our daily bread, realizing He knows what is best for us. It is a lesson we need to learn, all to His glory.

Some years ago God gave me the privilege of watching an eight year old girl when she was shown to the room she would share with another girl. It was a school for children from broken homes where I was serving the Lord. The girl's eyes took in the bed, clean sheets, the three drawer dresser, her own space in a closet. She turned to me and said, "All for me? Wow! This is like heaven!" It may be hard for some to understand her enthusiasm, but it must be noted that she came from a background where such things were not commonplace to her. Her life had been without such wondrous things. Some three months later she came up to me, took me by the hand, and said, "Thanks again for all the things I have!" She was content and part of her contentment was motivated by a recognition on her part that she: (1) Did not deserve what she had; (2) Was so much better off than before. May we apply her material position and recognitions to our spiritual position! May our prayer be made in an attitude of contentment: "Give us our daily bread."

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Editor

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