

Heidelberg Catechism
Lord's Day 51

126. What is the fifth petition?

“And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors;” that is, be pleased, for the sake of Christ’s blood, not to impute to us miserable sinners our manifold transgressions, nor the evil which always clings to us;¹ as we also find this witness of Your grace in us, that it is our full purpose heartily to forgive our neighbor.²

*[1] Ps. 51:1–4; 143:2; 1 Jn. 2:1–2. [2] Matt. 6:14–15; Ps. 51:5–7; *Eph. 1:7.*

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I. “Forgive us our debts”

A. The debt of **obedience**

*So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say,
‘We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty.’”*
Luke 17.10

B. The debt of **justice**

For the wages of sin is death ...
Romans 6.23

C. The debt of **mercy**

*... we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die,
but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.*
Romans 8. 12-13

“... miserable sinners ... manifold transgressions...”

Who can discern his errors? Declare me innocent from hidden faults.
Psalm 19.12

*... as it is written: “None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands;
no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless;
no one does good, not even one.”*
Romans 3. 10-12

*Truly no man can ransom another, or give to God the price of his life,
for the ransom of their life is costly and can never suffice,
that he should live on forever and never see the pit.*
Psalm 49. 7-9

“... for the sake of Christ’s blood ...”

... you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold,¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

1 Peter 1. 18-19

And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.

Colossians 2. 13-14

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

1 John 1.7

II. "As we forgive our debtors"

"... we find this witness of Your grace in us ..."

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.

Colossians 3. 12-13

"... it is our full purpose heartily to forgive..."

Peter came up and said to him, "Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?"²² Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times.

Matthew 18. 21-22

Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him, and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' you **must** forgive him."

Luke 17. 3-4

What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you?² You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask.³ You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.⁴ You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.⁵ Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, "He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us"?⁶ But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."⁷ Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.⁸ Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.⁹ Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom.¹⁰ Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.

¹¹ Do not speak evil against one another, brothers. The one who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks evil against the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge.¹² **There is only one lawgiver and judge,** he who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you to judge your neighbor?

James 4. 1-12

... 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."

Mark 11.25