

Subject: *Lead Us Not into Temptation*

Scripture: *Matthew 6:13*

Prayer is not a substitute for action. It is an action for which there is no substitute. Nothing can take the place of prayer. The Lord's Prayer is comprehensive, all-inclusive. When you have car insurance, you can get what is called "comprehensive coverage." It covers every kind of loss. It covers every aspect of life—our past, our present, and our future. When we use the Lord's Prayer as our blueprint we are asking for God to:

- Pardon our past
- Provide for our present
- Protect our future

We need to ask the Lord to forgive us of past sins ("Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors"). We need to ask the Lord to take care of our present needs ("Give us this day our daily bread"). We need to ask the Lord to protect us from future temptation ("Lead us not into temptation"). We ask God to guide us ("Lead us not...") and we ask God to guard us ("but deliver us from evil").

When we pray this part of the Lord's Prayer, we are doing several things:

1. We admit our own weakness

The Bible says that all are tempted. It is a part of being human. Even Jesus was tempted. *Hebrews 4:15* *For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.* It is not a sin to be tempted, but it is a sin to yield or give in to temptation.

James 1:13-15 *Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.* Verse 13 says that God does not tempt man. Why then do we need to ask God not to lead us into temptation?

The word "tempt" can mean tempt with the intention to leading someone into sin or it can mean test or try someone. The devil tempts us to get us to break us down. The Lord allows us to be tested to build us up. To ask God to lead us not into temptation is really to admit that we are weak and we don't want to be tested and tried. A professional boxer was asked what motivated him to become a great champion. He said, "I was afraid of getting beat."

We can be tempted at all times and in all places. Ask David and he will tell you that just looking in the wrong direction can be the beginning of sin. Ask Peter and the apostles and they will tell you that sleeping can lead to sinning. They slept in the garden when they should have been watching and praying. We know by experience the truth of Jesus' words: "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." There is danger even in the common, ordinary, routine things of life. *Ecclesiastes 10:9* *Whoso removeth stones shall be hurt therewith; and he that cleaveth wood shall be endangered thereby.* What is true in the physical world is also true in the spiritual world. Danger lurks in ways we least expect.

2. We avoid known temptation

As we have said before, we must not only pray, but we must be willing to cooperate with God and be part of the answer. If we pray that God will not lead us into temptation, then we need to avoid people, places and things that we know will tempt us to

sin. We pray for God to spare us from temptation, but we must put action to our prayers and try to avoid it at all costs.

A man went on a diet and he was craving donuts. On his way he passed right by a donut shop, so on his way to work, he prayed, “Lead me not into temptation.” He went by the donut shop and the parking lot was full and there was no place to park. He thought, “That’s just like the Lord to answer my prayer.” That’s not the end of the story. He later confessed that he did break over and eat three donuts. He said, “There wasn’t a parking spot until I circled the block five times!”

The Bible says we must stay clear of temptation. **Proverbs 4:14-15** *Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.* The Bible says that God will make a way out. **1 Corinthians 10:13** *There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.* Our problem is that we don’t always look for a way out, but for a way in.

3. We are aware of our enemy

We are behind enemy lines. We are walking in a spiritual minefield. We face the unholy trinity of the world, the flesh, and the devil. The Lord is the only One who can deliver us.

- The ways of the world – There is nothing in this world to strengthen our walk with the Lord, but there is plenty to destroy it. **1 John 2:15-16** *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.*
- The weakness of the flesh – The flesh means our sinful human nature. When we are tempted it is like sparks falling on gas. There is something in us that is highly flammable, and it is called “the flesh.” Someone said that sin often happens when “an undetected weakness meets up with an unexpected opportunity.”
- The wiles of the devil – The devil never goes fishing without any bait on his hook. We need to look for the hook. **Ephesians 6:11** *Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles (methods) of the devil.*

The only way to overcome sin and temptation is to pray and feed on God’s Word. I like what Spurgeon said in a message about being full of pride and overconfidence. He took this for his text: **1 Corinthians 10:12** *Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.* Here’s part of what he said, “Be much more in prayer. Spend a longer time in holy adoration. Read the Scriptures more earnestly and constantly. Watch your lives more carefully. Live nearer to God. Take the best examples for your pattern.” Think about that—“Live nearer to God.” Each one of us is as close to God as we really want to be. The Lord says, “Draw near to me and I’ll draw near to you.”

We must pray and depend on the Lord if we get victory over temptation and sin and Satan. How sweet it is to know as we pray for victory, the Lord has prayed for us and continues to pray for us. **Luke 22:32** *But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.* **John 17:15** *I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.* How comforting it is to realize that we are protected and preserved by God’s grace and power. **Jude 1:24-25** *Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present*

you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.