

# LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION

These words are found in what is known as the “Lord’s Prayer” as found in Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:2-4. In these sections of scripture we see that Jesus was teaching

His disciples, as well as those who were listening and us today, how they should be praying to the Father. This is a simple basic prayer that we all have heard.

The type of prayer that Jesus teaches goes along with everything else of Jesus’ ministry and everything else that He was trying to re-teach the people concerning their relationship with their God. Jesus taught that a relationship with the Father was basically, very simple. As we know Jesus re-taught that the two greatest commandments were to love God and to love others (Matthew 26:36-40). If we look closely, this prayer encompasses that very teaching.

Jesus starts out with telling us who we are to actually be praying to – the Father, who is in heaven. He teaches us that we need to always start our prayer unto the Father by acknowledging who He is, *“Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.”*

Our Father God is to be respected and is to be given all our praise and all of our adulation. He is to be our “first love.” Isn’t this what Jesus told us throughout His ministry here on this earth? We are to love and put God first!!!

Jesus reminds us that, as we pray, we must know how truly holy our God is. Jesus states that the Lord God’s name is “hallowed,” or in other words it is very, very holy, pure and just. His name needs to be recognized as being totally holy, pure and just. It goes along with the first four commandments that are given to us as found in Exodus 20:3-8 (in brief):

- *“You shall have no other gods before Me.”* Why? Because God is Holy!!!
- *“You shall make no idols or any carved image of God”* Why? Because God is Holy!!!
- *“You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain”* Why? Because God is Holy!!!
- *“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy”* Why? Because God is Holy!!!

In Isaiah 6:3 in the Old Testament, and then reiterated again in the New Testament in Revelation 4:8, it is declared that God is *“holy, holy, holy.”* In the Hebrew language, this is

stating that God is truly holy but not just holy. In the Hebrew language when something is repeated it is referring to it exponentially. God is to be seen as so holy that it is as if we are saying it a thousand times. God is holy, Holy, HOLY!!!

Jesus then continues to teach us that God's kingdom shall come forth and that His will and desire for His people and for this entire earth shall come to pass. This first section of this prayer is directed at who our God truly is. He is the one and only true and living God.

The second part of the prayer then directs us to ask God to provide for our own needs as we live here on this earth. Jesus tell us that we should pray, "...*Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil...*" These are asking God to provide for our practical needs, our provisions, forgiveness from our sins, and for our deliverance from the forces of darkness.

Notice, that in teaching the disciples on prayer, Jesus makes a distinct point of teaching them, as well as us today, that when we pray we should not be simply thinking about ourselves but rather we should be praying for all other believers. He never uses the term "I" when teaching us to pray. It is all about "us" and "we." It is to be a family situation, the family of God, in which we all are a part of. This goes along with what Jesus taught as the second commandment, that we are to love others and put them first, even before ourselves. Hmmm.....

As we look down a little further in Matthew 6:33 we read, "*Seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be added to you.*" When each of us truly seeks after God's Kingdom and for His will to be done on this earth in the lives of others, then we can be assured that God will provide those things that each of us are in need of.

However, as we get to the part where it states that we are to be praying, "...*lead us not into temptation,*" I must admit that the way it is written always made me think and question what this section really meant. Does God actually lead us into temptation so much so that I need to pray that He does not lead me into being tempted?

That seems the opposite of a good God who cares about us. I don't know about you but that statement makes me a little uncomfortable. Well, that is what we are going to discuss in this brief essay. Let's see!!!

In this teaching on prayer, we see that Jesus first gives us a contrast of two ways to pray. For that we must begin in Matthew 5:5,6. In Matthew 5:5, Jesus tell us that we should not pray as the “hypocrites” pray who make a show of their prayers. Since attention is their goal, their reward will end there. For those who follow Jesus, He teaches in Matthew 5:6 that we are to pray in secret, and God will reward us openly.

Jesus warns against praying for a long time for the sake of just praying and sounding good. This is something that we all must be very careful about when we are praying. It is not the length of the prayer that matters or the quality of how good we sound. It is the attitude of heart that truly matters to God **and** that God truly hears. Using a lot of words does not impress God. Hey, the Father already knows everything we need before we even pray.

In other words we must be sincere, honest and most of all real when we pray. We must have the heart that God is seeking for. A heart that simply loves Him and knows that God truly loves us and desires to supply our every need. Notice, I said our every need, not our every want. Hmmm.... I think you get my drift on that!!!

So, does God tempt us? Well, I think we can say the answer is that even though God may “lead us into temptation,” He does not actually tempt us or entice us to do evil. We see that the Spirit did lead Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted - by the devil (Matthew 4:1).

Jesus, during that time of 40 days in the wilderness, was tempted in every way. However, remember that He was tempted **by the devil**, not God. The final three temptations that we read of tells us that the temptation came in the three major categories that sin can come our way-the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. (1John2:16) Jesus was tempted in every way like we are, however, He never sinned. (Hebrews 4:15)

How did Jesus overcome each one of those temptations. As we said, He did so with the Word of God. God will not tempt His people. However, temptation will come our way. We must be ready for it. God will allow certain things to take place.

Why God allows those temptations to come, we may never know. However, we do know that He will always make a way of escape from actually doing that temptation leading us to sin. Maybe that is what God wants to teach us. That He will make the way for us to get out of

every situation that may not be good for us. It is only when we totally trust Him and choose to turn to Him for our help, is when He will provide that “way of escape” for each of us.

James makes it clear in James 1:13 that God does not tempt us as it states, *“Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempts he any man.”* James 1:14 tells us what actually does tempt a person. They are tempted by their own desires. We are tempted by our own wants, our own lustful tendencies. The devil then uses those things and tries to pull us into sin.

The Bible gives two other sources for temptation other than ourselves—the Devil and the World (Ephesians 2:1-3). These are the systems built by the devil and by people who have a sinful nature. Yes, the devil will tempt us to walk away from the things of God and His ways. He will always try to take us away from the truth of God’s Word causing us to enter into sin.

The world, who is under the devil’s dominion at this time, will also bring ways that will try to distract us from God and His ways. Both of these are formidable obstacles in our walk with the Lord. The temptations are always very, very strong. They come against each one of us in such a way that is definitive for each of us, personally.

As stated previously, our own desires and our own lusts, can and will be used as the greatest weapon against each one of God’s people. Each of us must understand this and know this. Yes, we will be tempted until the day we are with Jesus. That is simply a fact of life and our God tells each one of us that very fact. But...we can overcome every temptation.

1Corinthians 10:13 tells us, *“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.”* Yes, temptations will come. However, we see that God will not allow any temptation to come our way that we are not able to overcome. The fact of the matter is that, will we be aware that they will come and that we can overcome each one in the power of God’s might and ability?

Yes, each of us will be tempted by the evil one, by this world or even our own lustful thoughts and desires. However, with the Holy Spirit’s help, we can be delivered from those temptations and will not have to fall victim to those temptations by falling into sin.

We see in that same verse in Matthew 6:13, that we can ask our God to, “...*deliver us from evil,*” or the “evil one” – the devil and his ways and tactics. This is an important aspect in overcoming the enemy and its temptations. Only God can truly deliver us. We can only be delivered by and in the power of God’s might.

God has delivered us from the greatest temptation. That greatest temptation is the thinking that we can be our own god and that we do not need a Savior, that we do not need salvation, that we do not need Jesus. Even as a child of God, now, we must know that we need the saving power of God; we need the saving blood of Jesus; we need the Holy Spirit to help us and to lead and guide us through every temptation every moment of our lives.

We must be aware that the devil is out to steal, kill and destroy each one of us. We must not be immune to the understanding that the devil is out for each one of God’s people. We must not be ignorant of Satan’s strategies. Even as a child of God, the devil is still out to take you away from God.

I know that this is difficult to truly grasp, but another aspect of overcoming the temptations is to be aware that, yes, we do have those tendencies to be tempted and we do have the tendency to fall into sin. We will have them until we are with the Lord. But...we can overcome those tendencies. Paul tells us in 2Corinthians 12:9, “*And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.*”

We must recognize that it is possible that we may have some areas that may be open to temptation. However, it is our God who will strengthen each of us in those times of weakness. It is only in the power of His might will we overcome those areas of temptation.

Also, and this is so very important, that when we are tempted or tested, we must know, without a shadow of a doubt and we must realize that God has **made a way of escape**. God has made a way out of that difficult situation. It is not hopeless. We do not have to give in to that temptation and live with the consequences.

Jesus was tempted “...*in every way and yet without sin*” (Hebrews 4:14). We should not think that we will never be tempted. Rather, we should know that when we are tempted and if we

do fall to that temptation and sin, we have a King who loves us and knows what we are going through. Jesus, was tempted in every way that we are and will be yet He never sinned. He knows what we are going through. We must always know that God is faithful and just to forgive us. We just need to “own up” to what we did.

The scriptures are clear in letting us know a most important fact. 1Corinthians 10:13, tells us, *“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.”* Yes, God is so very, very faithful to His people. It is God who will give us the way out of the temptation. We just need to do it His way.

Our God understands our weaknesses and temptations. Hebrews 4:15,16 tells us, *“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need”* In times of temptation our greatest asset is to know that we are to turn to and even run to God for help!!!

One important aspect that we must recognize is that we must not confuse temptation with sin. Being tempted is not being in itself a sin. We sin when we give in to temptation. This is important. Everyone will be tempted. It is what we do with that temptation that is the important step. We must turn away from it. We must fight against the temptation in the power of God’s might. It is even most valuable to have a friend or someone you can contact to call and pray with you in those difficult times.

The best way to stay out of temptation is to stay away from it. Come on...we all know those areas that we are vulnerable to being tempted to do the wrong things. We simply must keep ourselves as far away as possible from that evil thought or from that temptation. Paul urged Timothy to *“...flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life...”* (1Timothy 6:11,12)

We must remember and know that as long as we are in this world, the tactic of temptation will be something that we will always be attacked with. As we see in the prayer that Jesus taught

His disciples and all of His people today in Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:2-4, temptation will be a fact of life. But... God will deliver us from it... if we continually seek after Him.

As we deal with and struggle with temptations, let us remember that the greatest way to overcome them is by knowing, believing and using the name of Jesus, as well as the Word of God. This is how Jesus did it when He was in the desert for those 40 days and He was tempted. He was at His weakest point. However, when confronted with those temptations from the devil, He overcame them through knowing, speaking and applying God's Word to every one of those temptations. So can we!!!