

The Lord's Prayer - Part 5

Luke 11:1-4

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In Luke 11:1-4, it says, “Now it came to pass, as He...” that is, “Christ” “...was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, ‘Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.’ So He said to them, ‘When you pray, say: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.’”

“I circled this block 20 times. I have an appointment to keep. ‘Forgive us our trespasses.’” When the owner of the car returned, he found this reply attached to his note: “I’ve circled this block for 20 years. If I don’t give you a ticket, I lose my job. ‘Lead us not into temptation.’”

Temptation is something we all have to deal with. None of us is above or beyond being tempted.

We come in our study of The Lord’s Prayer to our sixth and last petition. We’ve studied the three that are Godward and two that are directed toward man. The first petition is “Hallowed be Your name.” The second petition is “Your kingdom come.” And the third petition is “Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” The petitions toward man are “Give us day by day our daily bread” and “Forgive us our sins.” Now the third petition toward man, which we’ll study today, is in verse 4: “Do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.” This last petition is one petition but two sided.

Everyone knows what it’s like to be tempted. Even Jesus was tempted. He was tempted by the devil. And the fact that He was tempted indicates that it is not a sin to be tempted. It is only a sin when we yield to the temptation or yield to disobedience against God. But Jesus alone is the one who knows what it is like to be sinless. God has one Son, and that one Son alone is without sin, and that is Jesus Christ.

Notice that after praying for God’s provision—“Give us day by day our daily bread”—and God’s pardon—“Forgive us our sins”—we now have God’s protection—“Do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.” These are the petitions that are directed toward man.

Also notice that we have “Forgive us,” then “Deliver us.” I like the idea that the true child of God is not only concerned with having their past sins forgiven but also with deliverance from future sins. John R.W. Stott said, “The sinner, who is evil, in the past has been forgiven and longs to be delivered from its tyranny in the future.”

In other words, it’s not enough to keep praying, “Lord, forgive my sins...forgive my sins...forgive my sins.” We looked at 1 John 1:9, “the Christian’s bar of soap,” that says, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

We thank God for that, but we also should pray, "Do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

It's not enough to just be forgiven of our past sins; we should desire to be free of future sins. Jesus had forgiven a woman, in John 8, who had been taken in the act of adultery. He asked the woman, "Has no one condemned you? She said, 'No one Lord.' And Jesus said to her, 'Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more'" (John 8:10-11). God forgives our sin, and we forgive those who sin against us. But we also want to avoid future sins. So this last and sixth petition is a prayer for protection from sin. It's a prayer for God to keep us from presumption and self-sufficiency.

What I want to do with this last petition is to ask and answer three questions about it. Number one, "Why is this prayer so important?" Why should we pray, "Do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one"? Let me give you some reasons why this is important.

First, it is important because no one is above falling into sin. We are all weak. 1 Corinthians 10:12 says, "Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall." The moment you think you have your act together, the moment you think you're invincible, the moment you think you are strong is your moment of greatest vulnerability. So when we pray The Lord's Prayer, we are admitting our weakness and need for God's protection. That's a great place to be.

Ephesians 6:10-11 says, "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might." It's not in your own strength but in the Lord's strength. Then it says, "Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." So it's important, because we can all fall into sin. We need to know how to pray for spiritual protection. So this petition indicates proper prayer includes praying for spiritual protection.

Second, the devil is real and powerful. I know this is basic stuff, but it's all inferred or implied in this petition. We are weak but He is strong. In 1 Peter 5:8, Peter said, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." The word "devil" means "slanderer," and the word "Satan" means "adversary. So we have an adversary that slanders us. We need to be sober and vigilant, because he is trying to destroy us.

The Bible is clear that there is a real devil. Satan was created as an angel, but in pride, he lifted himself up above God, and as a result, he was thrown out of heaven, he fell and became Lucifer, the devil and Satan. He is the enemy of God and of the believer and is the enemy of all mankind. Evil comes from Satan, and we battle not only Satan but the world and the flesh, which the devil uses. So we need to be careful; he is powerful and real.

Third, sin breaks our fellowship with the Father. 1 John 1:5-6 says, "This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth." So it breaks my fellowship with God.

Also, even though God forgives our sins, the scars remain. You can't just say, "Well, I'm going to do this sinful thing, because God will forgive me." Yes, but the consequences are still there, and the scars still remain.

The fourth reason it is important to pray this prayer is because if I yield to temptation, God's name is not hallowed, God's kingdom is not advanced and God's will is not done in my life. If I'm praying as I should, "Thy name be hallowed, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done," then I cannot sin, because I don't hallow His name, advance His kingdom or do His will. So this prayer is important.

Now let me ask the second question. "Why would we pray, 'Do not lead us into temptation,' if, in James 1:13, it says, 'Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone'"? There seems to be a contradiction between The Lord's Prayer and this James Scripture.

The answer to the problem is that the word "tempt" or "temptation" can be used two different ways in the Greek, depending on the context. It can mean "to test" or "to try," which God allows to bring out our good and our worth. And it can also mean "to tempt" or "to solicit to sin." In James 1:2-3, he says, "My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials..." meaning "tests" "...knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience."

When God tested or tempted Abraham, He told him to "Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you" (Genesis 22:2). This was a test and not a temptation; God does not tempt anyone. Nowhere in the Bible does God solicit us to sin.

So God allows in every life trials and tests. But when we are in a trial or a test, Satan will come to try to capitalize on that weak moment or that difficult time to tempt us to doubt God's love, God's provision, God's pardon and to get us discouraged, so we'll give up and yield to sin.

So what this petition is saying is that "When I'm being tested, don't allow us to fall under the sway of temptation and sin." He's talking about a time of testing or trial when Satan tempts us. God allows the test or trial as food for our faith. But we should be careful then, because Satan will come to tempt us to sin. I like the idea that we're praying to God and saying, "God, don't allow me to fall under the sway of temptation and sin during a time of testing or trial."

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 10:13, "No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it." This is one of the best promises in all the Bible about temptation. You should memorize this verse.

There are beautiful promises here. Number one, you're not alone. This temptation "is common to man." Sometimes you feel like "This is only me going through this. 'No one knows the trouble I've seen.'" And you start singing the blues. No; we've all been tempted like this.

Number two, this verse tells us that God will not allow the temptation to be more than we can handle. So when you are being tried and tested, and Satan comes to tempt you to do evil, God won't allow the temptation to be more than you can handle.

Number three, God will make a way to escape, so we can bear up under the temptation.

So in a temptation, you are not alone, you are able to resist and God provides protection in the midst of the temptation.

"How does God 'deliver us from the evil one'?" This is the second part of the petition. The first part was, "Do not lead us into temptation or trials that will cause us to sin." The second part is, "Deliver us from the evil one."

The list of how God delivers us from "the evil one" could be quite lengthy, but I've reduced it to three ways, to the bare minimum. Number one, God uses prayer to deliver us. We need to pray. The Bible says, "You do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss" (James 4:2-3). We are double-minded. But we should be praying. Someone said, "Satan trembles when he sees the weakest saint upon his knees." So get on your knees and pray.

You say, "Well, that's a cop-out!" No; that's the smartest thing you can do. Fight temptation on your knees. In Ephesians 6:18, Paul ends the section on spiritual warfare and the armor of God by saying, "...praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance..." or "endurance" "...and supplication for all the saints." I like that.

Notice in this petition, it's "lead us" not "lead me" and it's "deliver us." There are no personal pronouns in The Lord's Prayer. We should be praying for our brothers and our sisters. And we should be praying for our pastors, our spiritual leaders, our wife, our husband, our children, our grandchildren and our great-grandchildren. We should be praying for one another. We're all facing battles and temptations. So this should be part of our prayer list; that God would "not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."

So prayer is absolutely essential. In James 1:5, right after James says "that the testing of your faith produces patience," he said, "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him." Pray and ask God for wisdom in the midst of the trial. Not only do you pray that God would take away the trial, which He brought to you for a purpose and design, but better yet, pray for Him to teach you the lessons He wants you to learn in the trial.

When we're going through a trial, we sometimes forget that we are being tested. We forget to say, "Lord, give me wisdom to learn the lessons You want me to learn in the midst of this trial and testing."

Number two, God delivers us from Satan by us feeding on, reading and obedience to the Word of God. Psalm 119:11 says, "Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against

You.” If you hide God’s Word in your heart, it keeps you from sinning. And Psalm 119: 9 says, “How shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word.” 1 John 2:14 says, “I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the wicked one.”

“This book will keep me from sin, or sin will keep me from this book.” So we should read the Word and feed on the Word. Psalm 1:1-3 says, “Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates...” not “medicates” “...day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper.”

When Jesus was tempted by the devil in the wilderness, all three of the temptations —“Command that these stones become bread....Throw Yourself down [from the pinnacle of the temple]....All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me” (Matthew 4:3,6,9) —Christ answered with the Word of God. He didn’t just say, “Devil, that’s not nice! Bug off, Beelzebub. Leave me alone!” Rather, Jesus quoted the Word of God.

So if Jesus used the Bible to resist the devil, so should we. It’s the Word of God that sanctifies the child of God. I must pray, “Lord, do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one” while I’m feeding on God’s Word and obediently submitting to its authority in my life. James 4:7-8 says, “Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.”

Number three, God delivers us from temptation by our two feet. Get away, run for your life, flee temptation. In 2 Timothy 2:22, it says, “Flee also youthful lusts.” In Philippians 2:12-13, Paul said that once you are saved, you need to “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.”

When David was tempted by the devil he was watching Bathsheba. He went onto the roof of his house and looked down onto the next courtyard and saw her taking a bath. (I don’t know if that’s why she was called “Bath-sheba.”) I think it’s kind of bizarre to take a bath out on the back patio. But David should have immediately gone back into his house. “Go read Psalm 23!” So David, the sweet palmist of Israel, the author of Psalm 23, lusted after this beautiful woman. He inquired of her, took her to himself, committed adultery and then committed murder by having her husband killed to cover his sin. How sad!

None of us are above falling. But we need to be careful that we don’t go where we will be tempted. We need to be careful that we don’t look where we will be tempted. We need to be careful that we don’t do what will cause us to be tempted. I can’t pray, “Do not lead us into temptation,” if I’m deliberately placing myself in its path. If you have a problem with alcohol, you don’t go walking into a bar to get a grilled-cheese sandwich as you’re praying, “Lead me not into temptation.” You can’t be walking into someplace where you know you’ll be tempted! That’s a very foolish thing to do.

So where do your feet take you? Where do your eyes take you? Where do your hands take you? Where does your mind take you?

As a little boy, I grew up in Sunday school singing the song:

“Oh, be careful, little feet, where you go,

Oh, be careful, little feet, where you go.

There's a Father up above looking down in tender love.

Oh, be careful, little feet, where you go.”

Now it's “big feet.”

“Oh, be careful, little eyes, what you see,

Oh, be careful, little eyes, what you see.

There's a Father up above looking down in tender love.

Oh, be careful, little eyes, what you see.”

That's not just for kids; it's for adults as well. We need to be very careful.

What a contrast to Joseph, when he was a slave in Egypt. He became a slave in Potiphar's household. Mrs. Potiphar had eyes for Joseph and tried to seduce him. She grabbed his coat and tried to force herself on Joseph. To resist temptation, Joseph ran from her. So run for your life.

You say, “But I couldn't help it!” Yes, you could; you've got two feet. Just start running for your life. But you say, “That's a chicken thing to do!” No; that's a smart chicken. Just get outta there!

Jesus said, “If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out....If your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off” (Matthew 5:29-30). He wasn't literally saying to chop off your hand. If so, we'd all have stumps. But He is saying to take sin seriously; get rid of the TV, get rid of the computer, get rid of the magazines, get rid of the relationships. Are you hanging out with someone who causes you to sin?

When Peter denied Jesus three times, he said, “I do not know Him” (Luke 22:57). It started with self-confidence. Peter had said, “Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!” (Matthew 26:33). But he did. Then it progressed to him following afar off. Then he was hanging around the wrong crowd in the enemy camp, and finally he denied the Lord and “went out and wept bitterly” (Luke 22:62). Yes, God forgives. But the consequences still remain.

I heard a story of a mother who told her son not to go swimming. His mother said, “Johnny, I

have to leave for a couple of hours, and I don't want you to go out to the lake to go swimming."

"Yes, mother." She came back two hours later, and he had on a wet bathing suit and had wet hair.

"Did you go swimming?"

"Yes, mother."

"Why did you go swimming?"

"Well, it was just so beautiful, the water was so lovely, so I went swimming."

"Well, why did you take your bathing suit with you?"

"I brought it along just in case I was tempted." That wasn't smart.

Perhaps you're being tried and tempted right now. Perhaps you're in a test; God has brought a trial of your faith. It's food for your faith. Trust Him, pray for wisdom, read His Word and "Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (Ephesians 6:10-11). "Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the Gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Ephesians 6:14-17).

This petition confirms Satan's existence, confirms his power, confirms our weakness, but thank God that it confirms His greater power to protect and deliver us!

So what we are praying is, "God, when I'm being tried, when I'm being tested, keep me from falling into sin." In Jude 24, Jude says in a closing benediction, "Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy...."