

“And Lead Us Not Into Temptation!”

(07-28-13)

Let's continue our journey through the Lord's Prayer by speaking the Sixth Petition and Luther's explanation. The Sixth Petition: *“And Lead Us Not Into Temptation!”*

What does this mean? *God tempts no one. We pray in this petition that God would guard and keep us so that the devil, the world, and our sinful nature may not deceive us or mislead us into false belief, despair, and other great shame and vice. Although we are attacked by these things, we pray that we may finally overcome them and win the victory.*

The person who prays, *“And Lead Us Not Into Temptation”* sounds as if he or she is playing it safe. This is a foolish idea because in our human nature, everyone is bound to get into trouble and go against what God demands of us!

This isn't the prayer of someone weak. It's a prayer knowing the difficulties of life and of Satan's work at trying to have us fail. And it's a prayer to our Heavenly Father. God isn't the enemy! He isn't trying to trick us into making a mistake! He doesn't tempt, but He does provide tests, which aren't hard to bear when we meet them with faith and strength.

The Apostle James made it quite clear that temptation isn't God's fault. We yield to temptation because we want to! We like to be on the edges of temptation and try not to slip in, but we do! But in this petition, we pray that God wouldn't let us alone, but He would guard and protect us from the real enemies—Satan, the world, and our sinful flesh!

Martin Luther said, *“Even though we be godly now and stand before God with a good conscience, we must pray that He would not suffer us to relapse and yields to trials and temptations.”* Falling into temptation is a relapse in morality that moves us away from faith! That relapse can be fatal, so Jesus urges us to pray, fervently and with a true heart!

It's popular today to think of sin as old-fashioned and temptation isn't really an issue. When we hear the word sin, we don't want to think about it or talk about it, because all it does is make us feel guilty!

When Jesus taught about temptation, please know that He Himself had already been through severe temptation! Listen to what happened right after His Baptism in Matthew 4:1, *“Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.”* This was a test of His faith in His Father. Because of what He went through, He included this petition because of His concern for us as His followers!

When Jesus was tempted, He beat the tempter. He showed His power! There was never a question of Him giving in. He *would* not sin! The first Adam gave in to Satan when he was tempted. But the last Adam, Jesus Christ, didn't give in to Satan and had complete victory over Satan and won redemption for us!

Open to Matthew 26. As a part of the family of God, temptation will be even greater because Satan wants you back. He wants control of your life and everything you do. But to stay firm in our faith, you need to stay alert and have Jesus Christ to fill you! Look at verses 40-41, *“And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping. And he said to Peter, “So, could you not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”*

Temptation is a spiritual struggle of our will! It almost always happens in our personal passions or desires! Look at Romans 8. The temptations that attack God's children begin with Satan! Look at verses 5-6, *“For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.”*

Satan's subtle points of approach to my person to make me sin are through My Emotions, My Mind, and My will! We think we can withstand Satan's temptations and be victorious, but we can't! James 1:13-15 says, *“But each person is tempted when he is lured*

and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.”

God doesn't allow us to be tempted above or beyond what we're able to endure! To be tempted isn't sin. But to give into Satan, our enemy, and allow Him to control us and to turn us against God is to sin!

There are six steps Satan causes which lead to defeat to temptation. First, Satan gives us a false impression that whatever wrong we do, it's really not serious! Satan plays with our mind and makes us think that no matter what we do really doesn't matter to God!

Second, Satan makes us see something that will appeal to us. He makes things wrong look right and we desire to do our own will rather than God's!

Third, Satan produces a powerful response within us. It's a deep desire to follow the temptation through because it seems to be reasonable and to our advantage to follow it.

Fourth, we begin to toy with the idea of this sin. It starts to appeal to us more and more, so we finally reach out and do it. It's at this point we've fallen for Satan's trick and sin against God! When this happens, we become a slave to sin and Satan.

Fifth, we act on it in a subtle, skillful way. The moment we sin, we can become discouraged and feel as though we have no worth, because we've fallen and we know it!

Sixth and last step is that we hide the defeat. We try to excuse ourselves and conceal the sin from others and from God. When this happens, the sin and the separation from God can overwhelm us and we think we're lost for eternity and God will never forgive us!

Think back to the Garden of Eden. These are the steps Adam and Eve followed as they were tempted by Satan and fell away.

The final decision as to whether or not you can triumph in temptation is pretty much yours! Pray that the Holy Spirit will fill you and give you His strength! Please know, your Father believes in you! He forgives us and is convinced that if you believe in His Son, Jesus your Savior, who overcame, so can you!