

IX. The Lord's Prayer in Biblical Perspective
"Petition #6: Embracing Divine Tests While Fleeing Satan's Temptation"

Matthew 6

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This is the word of God. Matthew 6:5–13.

5 "And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. **6** But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. **7** "And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. **8** Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. **9** Pray then like this:

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

10 Your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.

11 Give us this day our daily bread,

12 and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

*(For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever and ever,
Amen. – this is omitted in some manuscripts)*

The grass withers and the flower fades, but the Word of God abides forever. May God bless this His Word to the heart of His people.

I am going to take this sixth petition of this study and divide it in two parts. In this study we will look at the part that says, "Lead us not into temptation" so that we can get a firm grasp on it before we go to the second part which is "deliver us from evil or the evil one." Temptation means testing. There is one Greek word that is translated in the Bible as "temptation, test, trial." This issue of temptation, testing is very interesting. It is on the opening pages of Scripture in the Garden of Eden. It is throughout the whole Old Testament. One can see David under trial and in temptation with Bathsheba and sin. One can see our Savior in the wilderness in the New Testament being tempted by the Evil One. Then at the end of the Bible it warns us that there is a day that is coming in which the temptation shall fall upon the entire world prior to the coming of Christ. It will be a testing upon the whole world.

The word that is translated "test, tempt, trial" is a Greek word that actually comes from a verb that if used 2100 years ago would have meant "to pierce a vessel to find out its contents or the condition of its contents." When one says "Lead us not into temptation" one is immediately confronted with something because the Bible says God tests us. So are we asking to be delivered from that? The Bible tells us that Satan tempts. Are we asking to be delivered from that? What are we saying when we say, "Lead us not into temptation"? I will take time to help one understand why many of the translators of the Bible when they come across this word when it is in relationship to what Satan has designed they use the word *temptation*. But if it is in relationship to

what God has designed and sent the translators use the word *trial* or *test*. Why would it be used differently and how does that relate to this request, "Lead us not into temptation"? What is the integrity of the life that really makes that request and means it, "Don't lead me into temptation"? What am I specifically asking of God and what am I committed to do in light of that prayer request?

So here we are looking at how Jesus taught His disciples to pray. So how should we pray? One can study prayer in general through the Bible but one can also begin with the way Christ instructed His disciples. They saw Him praying and they said, "Lord teach us to pray." Christ's disciples pray and so He says, "When you pray, pray this way." But He says, "Wait just a minute, you're already praying. You were made in the image of God with a desire to communicate with God so you have already been praying but the world has disciplined you in how you pray. So before I can teach you how to pray in this way, don't pray this way. Don't pray like the religious hypocrites. They pray not to be heard by God but to be seen by men. They do their private prayer life publicly and prayer has become the badge of their self-righteousness. They have got their reward and that is when people see them. That is all they will get. And don't pray like the pagans. They pray superstitiously. They think if they say a lot of words in a certain way then they can somehow manipulate God whoever he or she may be or whatever it may be. I want you to pray this way."

If you know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior you enter into the Holy of Holies with this phrase; "Our Father who art in heaven." This Thrice Holy God is your Father so you enter in intimately. I long for that for everyone reading this. That the person reading this has said, "I know I am a sinner. I know Jesus died for my sins. I repent of my sins and come to Jesus Christ." If you have done that this God who is righteous now through the blood of Jesus invites you to call Him "Father." Yet the intimacy is not irreverence because He then gives the phrase of reverence; "Our Father *in heaven...*" This is the Lord of Glory, intimate and reverent.

Now, there are six basic petitions that follow to guide one's prayer life. The first three are God-ward and the second three are man-ward. The first one is the one that controls the next five; "Hallowed by Thy Name." God's glory is my greatest desire, my greatest joy. My passion is that my life will be a God glorifying life and that this world might know the glory of God. I want His glory to be spread throughout all the earth and for that to be done then the next petition comes; "Thy Kingdom come." People must be taken from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of Light because until we come to Jesus Christ we will glorify ourselves. We would not be able to say, "Glorify Thy Name among the earth" until the Kingdom comes to our hearts, the King lives in our heart, and the Savior rules and reigns. If that happens then comes the next petition; "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." We look to the heavens and the angels are content with God's secret will as it unfolds in providence and worship Him. The angels hear His revealed will and they seek to do it. God, we want the same thing here. As we encounter the issues of life we are content and we give You praise. No matter where we are in life we give You praise. God we want to walk in obedience to Your revealed will. "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." In order to do that we go to the fourth petition which is man-ward and I need Him to sustain me; "Give us our daily bread." Give us our competent portions in life to live for You with food, shelter and clothing. That is all I want because I want Your glory. I do not glory in the things of this

earth. I want to seek first the Kingdom and let the things be added. The things are just here to be used for You. Then God I not only need Your provision but I need Your pardon; "Forgive me of my debts as we forgive our debtors." God I am going to forgive those who owe to me and I assign them to You. I refuse to drink the poison of bitterness. God, thank You that You have forgiven me. I glory in Your forgiveness. The grace of God that provides our daily needs and pardons us from our sins we now finish by asking His protection.

By Your grace protect me; "Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil" which is the sixth petition. Protect me. Why? I have an adversary. I have a traitor within me, the "old man." I have got an adversary outside of me and I need Your protection. The "old man" is greater than me and the adversary is greater than me but I have got a God and "*Greater is He that is in me than he that is in the world*" (1 John 4:4). So I want to call on You to lead me not into temptation but deliver me from evil. I want to call upon You to do that. A man came to me one time and said, "Pastor can you pray for me?" I said, "Absolutely, how do you want me to pray for you?" He said, "I'm undergoing spiritual warfare. Do you believe that?" I said, "Absolutely. Are you a Christian?" Do you understand what I just said? We think spiritual warfare is a subset of the Christian life that we encounter at times in life, not so. Spiritual warfare is the Christian life. A Christian has to put on the full armor of God everyday. They have to take up the weapons of the Spirit everyday. We have an adversary who prowls about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour (1 Peter 5:8) and he is greater than you even though the One that is in you is greater than him. That does not mean that we live carelessly in this world.

Why have so many ministers fallen? So many families have been broken. Why have Christian families been broken? Covenant children have been lost. Why have testimonies been lost? Why has the testimony of Christ not been seen in the lives of some of our people like we want it to be seen in my life? Why have marriages been lost? It is because we have lived either carelessly or arrogantly. Carelessly, thinking that God's grace did not call me to carefulness and that the proof of living in grace was how careless I lived. Or arrogantly, thinking God thank You for saving me I will take over from here on out or this little sin will not hurt, this little compromise will not hurt. Carelessly and arrogantly we begin to falter and we find the sin taking hold that destroys our lives and our marriages. And ministries we make shipwreck of our faith. We are still saved but look at all that we have lost. "God lead us not into temptation."

To understand this first phrase in the sixth petition "God lead us not into temptation" here are four things I want to outline. Earlier on in this study it was said that temptation, testing meant to pierce a vessel to find out its contents or the condition of its contents. Now does God test? Yes. The first thing to note is God tests us to grow us. We are not asking God to deliver us from His test because God tests not for our demise but for our good, for our growth. 1 Peter 4:12, 13 says, **12** "*Beloved, do not be surprised at the **fiery trial** when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. 13 But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.*" So what He is telling the Christians in the church here is not to be surprised at the suffering. Notice the phrase "fiery ordeal." 2100 years ago when this was written, these believers were in Rome who were being put to death and because they said, "Jesus is the light of the world and

we're the light of the world" the Emperor would take them and impale them upon stakes. Then pour tar over them, light them as human candles and put a sign underneath them that read "You are the Christians, the light of the world." That is the "fiery ordeal" Peter is talking about in this verse and he tells them not to be surprised by it. But rejoice in that God has granted you to embrace the sufferings of Christ which give the platform for a testimony.

It is here that we are reminded from the book of Philippians that it has been granted unto to us not only to believe in Him but also to suffer for His sake (Philippians 1:29). So God sends tests that are designed for us to grow. Count it all joy not if when you encounter various trials knowing that the trying of your faith produces endurance and endurance character, and character hope (Romans 5:3–5). God has divinely designed tests to grow us in our life in the Lord. These are the things that refine us in our life and that burn off the dross in our life.

The second thing to note is that Satan tempts us to destroy us. Now we will look at a passage in the book of James that was also referred to from the book of Romans that we just looked at. James 1:2–4 says, **2** *"Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, 3 for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. 4 And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing."* So God sends tests to perfect, refine and to grow us. James 1:12 says, *"Blessed (happy) is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him."* In other words, God saved us. We are in a life in which we are being tested. It is not our passing the test that gets us the crown of life. It is God's grace that gives us perseverance and at the end of this call to serve Christ even in the midst of suffering, is the blessing of God, the crown of life, which has been purchased for us through the blood of Jesus Christ. It says further in James 2:13–15, **13** *"Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am being tempted by God,' for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. 14 But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. 15 Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death."* God tests to grow us. Satan tempts to destroy us. When that destruction comes it brings sin and with sin is death, the death of a marriage, the death of a ministry, the death of a witness, the death of a testimony. It brings death.

The third thing to note is Satan will seek to exploit God's tests for our demise. Satan wants to solicit you towards sin. So there are times when God brings a test where Satan begins to move in and he desires to exploit it for your demise. Here are some illustrations on this from the Scriptures. In Genesis chapters 1 through 3 God made man in His image. In His image He made man male and female. He put man in a garden and said to him, "I want you to do three things and not do one thing." God brought the covenant of creation test before man. God's test was "Will you serve Me or yourself, Satan and this world?" The test comes with three things to do. The first thing was to be fruitful and multiply. The second thing was to subdue the earth and the third was to rule over the creation. The one negative was, do not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Satan comes in disguised as a serpent, with his lie "if you eat this fruit you can become like God." Here is the test of God being exploited as a temptation by Satan and Satan was successful because the Word of God was

abandoned by Eve and Adam. When God's Word was abandoned they became prey for Satan's temptation.

One can further see in the Scriptures the illustrations of this from our Savior who was led by the Spirit out for the test in the wilderness. Satan comes to tempt Him and Satan enters in to tempt Christ. (Matthew 4:1–11 and Luke 4:1–12) There is always the fact that Satan is looking for an opening and will even enter in to the test of God in order to exploit them for his own purposes through his lies and deceit.

The fourth thing to note is that God can and does use Satan's temptations for our progress. Not only do we see Satan entering in and using God's design but now Satan will come with temptation and remember Satan is God's Satan because Satan cannot do anything that God does not allow him to do. So many times God will take Satan's design to destroy us and He will actually enter in and make it His test to develop us for our progress. Remember a man named Job in the Bible? Satan wanted to tempt Job. Satan proposed to God, "The only reason Job loves You is because of all that You have given him. Let me start taking it away and see what he does." So Satan is allowed by God and then tempts Job but Job is being perfected with Satan's temptations as God over rules it for a test. Then Job says, "Though He slay me yet I will serve Him" (Job 13:15) Job rises up as a testimony of his confidence as God his Redeemer in the midst of all.

Another example of this fourth note is a favorite of every preacher. It is Peter. Here is a paraphrase of (LOOK UP). It is where Jesus is getting ready to go to the cross for us, He establishes the Passover meal, He looks at His disciples and says to them, "You will all fall away from Me and you will all desert Me." Peter raises his hand and says, "No! No, they may leave You, they may forsake You but I'll be your friend, to the end, thick or thin. Count on me, Jesus." Jesus says, "Simon, Simon, Satan has requested permission to sift you like wheat but I have prayed for you to return." Here comes Satan to tempt and certainly as Jesus warned Peter, "Before the cock crows" Peter denied Him three times (Luke 22). Then Jesus is raised. When Jesus is raised He tells Mary to tell the disciples that He will meet with them in the Upper Room and He also says to her to tell Peter specifically. He meets with them and encourages them and then meets with them at the Sea of Galilee. As they are at the Sea of Galilee He brings them in and sits down with them for breakfast. He looks at Peter and says, "Do you love Me more than these?" Peter's arrogance and self-confidence is now dissipated. Peter says, "Oh Lord you know I love You." Now his confidence is not in his love to the Lord but God's love that gives him a love for the Lord and Jesus asked him a second time, "Do you love Me more than these?" Peter says, "You know I love You." Jesus asked him a third time, "Do you love Me?" and Peter was grieved in his heart and said to Him the third time (John 21). The temptation of Satan became the test of God. A servant was broken and then remade, then restored and the next time Peter opens his mouth 3,000 people come to Jesus (Acts 2:14–41). God is using Satan's temptations for His own purposes in our lives.

There are three practical takeaways in this matter of leading us not in temptation that can be applied to our lives today. The first takeaway is if God tests then we want to be ready and relying on Him but if Satan tempts we need to know what temptations are and we need to know how deal with them. Before we get to the takeaway on how to deal with them we need to understand how Satan tempts for your destruction. God

tests by piercing the vessel to see what is inside and it becomes the opportunity to grow it in its quality. Satan pierces the vessel with his temptations. Satan says, "Is there anything inside and if there is, can I discourage him? Can I shipwreck him? Can I lead him astray to dismay and discouragement and detour him from serving God for His glory? So no longer will he hallow the Name of the Lord."

So what does Satan do to tempt us? Paul tells us three different times in the Bible not be ignorant of Satan's schemes, not be unaware of his snares. One of the passages is in 1 John. 1 John 2:15–17 says, **15** *"Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions—is not from the Father but is from the world. 17 And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever."* In other words you cannot love God and the world. You are in the world but not of the world. You cannot serve two masters. So God I love You then do not love the world. Do not love the world's value system and what it brings to you. It is all passing away. God wants us to know that when Satan tries to lure us away from Him and giving Him glory with our lives into idolatry and its destruction this is what Satan uses; the desires (lust) of the flesh, the desires (lust) of the eyes and the boastful pride of life. Here are three words that reflect these three areas; appetites, attractions and arrogance.

The lust of the flesh is to live for the gratification of your appetites – sex, hunger, thirst, knowledge, power. We have appetites for these and instead of bringing them under the sanctifying presence of Jesus Christ we begin to worship them. How does Satan get us there? It is through allurements. He makes them attractive. He positions them and puts them in front of us. Satan makes promises like "You can be like God. This will make your life complete. All you have to do is sell-out and buy in to me and it will be life." Actually it will bring death. So why do we do it? It is because of arrogance. We think, "I deserve it. It is all about me." This is the boastful pride of life.

Remember Adam in the Garden of Eden? They took the fruit and they ate. Satan comes as a serpent and brings the lie "You can be like God." Then Genesis 3:6 says, *"So when the woman **saw** (lust of the flesh) that the tree was good for food, and that it was a **delight to the eyes** (lust of the eyes), and that the tree was to be desired to **make one wise** (the boastful pride of life), she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate."* Satan is constantly doing that to us. Appetite (lust of the flesh), attraction (lust of the eyes) and arrogance (boastful pride of life) are Satan's schemes and snares.

Satan is a master at this lust of the eyes deal. I have this one restaurant I go to regularly. I like this restaurant because it is very quiet. On the menu at this restaurant they put a lot of pictures and not many words. I look at those pictures and out goes every diet I have ever tried and I think "I want that!" I will usually go ahead and order it and I would like for just one time that the thing comes out of the kitchen to vaguely resemble the picture on the menu. Satan says things like "This will make your life" but it actually destroys your family. Actually it gives sexually transmitted diseases. Actually it destroys your emotional life. Actually it renders you incapable of true intimate relationships. Actually it makes you arrogant and obnoxious. Actually it brings self righteousness. Actually it brings the death of promiscuity, the death of perversion. It

brings all kinds of death in our lives. But Satan says, "You deserve this so why not have it *your way*?" Our way is a way that leads to death.

Remember Jesus? He was not in a garden with everything He needed. He was in the wilderness without anything to eat or drink for forty days. Satan comes and the first thing he says is "Jesus, are you hungry? Turn these stones into bread." Jesus replied, "Man shall not live by bread alone but by every Word that proceeds from the mouth of the Father." Satan tried here the lust of the flesh. He saw that did not work so he tries the lust of the eyes. He takes Jesus up to the top of a mountain and says, "*Look*, all these kingdoms I will give to you if you fall down and worship me." Jesus said, "You shall only worship the Lord Your God." Then Satan takes Jesus to the pinnacle of the temple and says to Jesus "Okay You want to quote Scripture well doesn't the Scripture say that if You are the Son of God He will not allow You to dash Your foot? Cast Yourself down from this pinnacle so that He would save You and prove who You say You are." Again Jesus replies with the Word of God, "You shall not tempt the Lord Your God." (Matthew 4 and Luke 4) Through the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life Satan is constantly trying to work in your life. Do not be careless. You are in a spiritual war and Satan has planted ambushes and land mines everywhere.

As I was studying this passage the Iraq conflict came to my mind. The traitor is deposed but the partisans are putting mines and ambushes everywhere. Satan has been defeated at the cross but the partisans, the demonic world, puts ambushes and land mines in one's computer, on the radio, in the CDs, in the movies and on the TV. When I was a kid we invited a guest into my home. The guest behaved himself for years because our home allowed no profanity and no sacrilege. Our home did not allow that which was inappropriate but over a period of time this guest that we let into our home began to speak profanely with vulgarity and display immorality but we left him in our home. One may say, "Harry who was that guest?" It was the television. He is there and people cut him on for hours on end not realizing or aware of all its spewing forth. The TV itself is not evil. The movie theater is not evil. The records are not evil. The CDs are not evil but there is nothing that communicates to you that is neutral. You cannot be careless. "Do not walk in the counsel of the ungodly. Do not stand in the path of sinners and do not sit in the seat of scorners." (Psalm 1:1). Satan is constantly working with these three traps. So how do I deal with it?

This is takeaway number two. Do you fight it or flee it? Fight or flee? You fight Satan. You flee temptation. Do not resist temptation. The person who resists temptation will eventually be felled by Satan. We are to fight Satan. We have a tendency to get this mixed up. It is like we exalt ourselves and then we pray for humility. The Bible says we have this opposite. We are to humble ourselves and God will exalt us at the right time (1 Peter 5:6). There are times we fight temptation and we flee Satan and the Bible says it is the opposite. Flee temptation. Resist Satan and he will flee from you (James 4:7). In James 1 it says that sin brings death. Death comes from sin. James says that sin has two parents. If they get together and conceive they produce their child, sin. The two parents are the "old man" (the desires of the flesh) and temptation. When these two conceive they produce sin and sin grows up to bring death in our life, our witness, our testimony, our ministry and our families.

God, I know I am forgiven of all my sins but I will not take that as a reason to be careless about sin in my life as a follower of Jesus Christ. Therefore what do I want to do? I do not want death to my life, my ministry, my family and that means I do not want sin un-reigned in my life. I want to get rid of sin in my life. Thank You for forgiving me. Now lead me not into temptation therefore God by Your strength everyday I am going to kill the “old man” and I am going to flee temptation. If they are not there they cannot get together and there cannot be sin to destroy my life, my family, my marriage, my ministry. I will make that commitment before God to die to myself everyday and live unto Christ fleeing temptation.

The third and last takeaway in dealing with this matter of God not leading us into temptation one needs to realize God’s purpose and God’s promise in these matters. So what is God’s purpose in the midst of the testing in this world and even when He enters in to turn around our life? God’s purpose is found in 1 Peter 1:3–7; **3** “*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,* **4** *to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you,* **5** *who by God’s power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.* **6** *In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials,* **7** *so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”* God is refining you. The tests are God’s purpose refinements. We do not grow in prosperity but we will grow in adversity when we are called back to Him.

The picture that Peter has here is a fire that is under a pot of gold and as the fire brings the gold to a boil all of the impurities rise to the top and can be swept off. The fire of testing from God’s hand is the refiner’s fire that God will be at work in and through our life. George Mathison, the great Scottish preacher, realized that which is why he wrote the hymn; “Oh love that will not let me go, I rest my weary head in Thee.” I particularly love this line from the third verse; “In the midst of my pain, I trace the rainbow in the rain.” So he says in the midst of the rain I see the rainbow. In the midst of the test God is refining me. Satan would tempt to destroy you but our God is able to take His test and refine you. Even when you falter and fall into temptation seek and flee to Your God.

God’s promise is found in 1 Corinthians 10:13 that says, “*No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide **the way** of escape, that you may be able to endure it (be steadfast and pure).*” So if God brought the test what do I know? I know He is refining me. If Satan has got the temptation and I was careless and arrogant what do I do? Call upon Your God because as the verse says there is **the way** of escape. It is through the Word of God that Satan has to flee even as he fled from Jesus in the wilderness. Know God’s Word.

Most of all, watch and pray! Remember when Jesus had already told Peter he was going to deny Him three times? He then takes him into the garden and Jesus is praying with them. As He is praying they fall asleep and He comes back and says, “Couldn’t you keep watch for one hour?” Then He comes back again and they had fallen asleep again. He said again, “Couldn’t you keep watch for an hour?” Then He

said, "Watch and pray that you not be led into temptation" (Matthew 26:41). A few hours later the sun rose upon Jerusalem and a cock crows. Peter had denied the Lord three times. Now God will make the way of escape, praise His Name, but Peter does not heed the Words of the Lord; "Keep watch, be careful and pray." Call upon the Lord.
Prayer:

Father, thank You that You protect Your people in the midst of the battle, how Your armor is sufficient, and that You will lead us forward. God, we call upon You. Do not lead us where we cannot stand in our life and ministry. Our families feel the destruction of sin. We are forgiven and we praise Your Name but our forgiveness does not call for carelessness. Help us to watch and pray. Perhaps there is one reading this prayer who has never come to Jesus Christ and you have become Satan's play thing even embracing his lie. How my heart yearns for you as Satan's lies lead to discouragement, death and despair. There is a Savior who will love you and loose you that you might know everlasting life. I invite you to Him. Brothers and sisters, would you join me in asking God that the joy of salvation will not lead us to carelessness or arrogance but we will watch and pray. God we know that You will test us to refine us but allow us to flee temptations, Satan's designs to destroy us and our families. Allow us Father to know the forgiving power of Jesus Christ and the guiding power of Your grace that not only provides and pardons but protects us. In Jesus' Name, Amen.