

“Lord, Teach Us to Pray” VIII (Matt 6:13)

Introduction – Evangelical, ‘Gospel’ grace does not simply save a man from his sins. It frees him from the power sin had over him, it changes his nature so that He loves God and His ways, and places him on the road to holiness. Evangelical life shows signs of that life with growth in intensity of love for God, joy in Him, and hatred of sin. But this road is a battle-torn road and this life has true enemies, internal and external.

We pray for daily bread that we might have the good blessings of God to strengthen and equip us to serve Him. This leads to a need to pray that God would forgive us our sins and lead us in true repentance. And this leads us to pray that He keep us from temptation and evil. Grace is not license to sin. Grace is the weapon to fight and mortify sin.

Does God Lead His People Into Temptation? – What are we implying in this prayer?

God Does Not Tempt Us (James 1:12-15) – While the scriptures teach that every single thing that happens has been foreordained by God, we also see that, in another sense, God is not the one bringing the temptation upon us. We may not blame God for falling into temptation (1 Cor 10:13). We fall into sin when our own desires (from our own flesh directly or enticed by the world or the evil one) give birth to sin. There is a blessing to those who endure temptation, and there is a blessing to simply be kept from the temptation through prayer.

There Is Difference Between Temptations and Trials (Gen 22:1) – James tells us to rejoice when we enter into *trials* (James 1:2) and this is the same word as *temptations* in verse 12 and in Matt 6:13. Same word, but different meaning. Jesus is not teaching us to pray that we are not led into trials, for these test our faith in a way that produces great fruit (James 1:3-4, 1 Pet 4:12-13). But when it comes to evil temptations, the Lord knows how to rescue us (2 Pet 2:9).

How Does God Keep Us From Temptation? – Certainly by His providential care, He answers this prayer. But other direct means include His Word and His ordinances of baptism and the Lord’s supper, where by faith, the Holy Spirit imparts Christ to the believer, and all the benefits of His grace. God also imparts wisdom, by which we learn to avoid evil and temptation (Prov 22:3).

Deliver Us From Evil, or the Evil One? – The answer is, “yes.” The two are not that disconnected. There is an evil within (Matt 15:19-20) and there is a very real evil outside of us as well (John 17:15, 2 Thess 3:3, 2 Tim 4:18).

The Status of Satan – First, we must understand that he is a defeated foe (Heb 2:14, Luke 10:18-20, Col 2:15). But this defeated foe can gain strongholds and must be resisted (1 Pet 5:8-9). So we are to be sober, watchful, and vigilant. He is seeking to devour and destroy. We are to stand against Him in the steadfastness of our faith, not in our own strength. And so, Christ teaches us to pray. We pray that the ‘temptations’ of the devil (as well as our flesh and the evil in the world) never bring the fruit that they seek, but rather become the ‘trials’ and ‘tests’ God uses to perfect and purify His saints.

What Are We Praying – We are implying many things as we pray “and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”

We Do Not Have the Strength to Stand – If we could, Jesus would not instruct us to pray in this way. When we do not pray, we betray how much we really trust in ourselves to walk the road of holiness. We are like the foolish Galatians (Gal 3:1-3).

We Will Always Have Temptations (Gal 5:17) – You need daily bread. You need daily forgiveness. You need daily deliverance. You will never ‘arrive’ while still in the unresurrected flesh. The Christian is no longer in bondage to the flesh, but ‘the flesh’ remains in every Christian throughout the present life. Never let your guard down.

Satan Is Not Stronger Than Christ (Luke 22:24-46) – Jesus is the One who serves (v27) as we walk with Him in His trials (v28). Peter learned that he was not strong enough to stand against the devil, that Satan longed to sift him, but that Christ is stronger, and in Him there is victory (vv 31-34). In that context, the disciples were to learn they needed to pray that they would not be led into temptation (vv39-46). It is this same Peter who, years later, instructs us to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He might exalt us in due time (1 Pet 5:6).

Seek The Means of Grace – Hear God’s Word, sing God’s Word, and hide God’s word in your heart. Avail yourself of Christ at His Supper. Hear the words of rebuke or admonition from a brother.

Pray for One Another – You are commanded to pray this prayer, not only for yourself, but for your spouse, for your children, for your elders, for your brothers and sisters, for your church, and for the body. Why? Because we need you to do so.