

“Lead Us Not into Temptation”

Allan Pole on Saturday evening, May 22nd, 2021



Theme: Praying for our Heavenly Father's protection is vital to fulfilling His plan for us.

Text: Matthew 6:13a

Here's a thought: Alan Redpath taught, "Before we can pray, 'Lord, Thy kingdom come,' we must be willing to pray, 'My Kingdom go.'"

Having grown up on a farm as the youngest of four, I remember going places with our family that were scary and intimidating to a little boy. Occasionally we would go shopping downtown where the streets were busy and the vehicles much larger and louder than I was. Crossing the road would have been very scary ... except my little hand was wrapped tightly around my dad's strong dairy farmer finger.

Likewise, life can be scary and intimidating but we can find great comfort and confidence in taking our Heavenly Father's all-powerful finger. Let this picture form the backdrop in our minds as we look at this simple line in our Lord's model prayer in Matthew 6:13a: "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." KJV

In the fifth petition, forgive us our debts, we focused on past sins. In the last petition, deliver us from evil, we focus on future sins. In the fifth, we asked for forgiveness from *actual* sins. In the sixth and final petition, we ask to be delivered from *potential* sins (from <https://bible.org/seriespage/26-deliver-us-evil-one-matthew-613>).

Jesus teaches us to ask our Father to:

Lead Us



Woven throughout the Lord's model prayer is the theme of surrender or submission. We can pray with great fervency and discipline, but if we are not committed to following our Heavenly Father's leadership our prayers are ineffective or even rebellious. The main objective is not to pray for what *we* want but to pray for what the *Father* wants.

British evangelist, pastor and author Alan Redpath (1907-1989) taught, "Before we can pray, 'Lord, Thy kingdom come,' we must be willing to pray, 'My Kingdom go.'"

The Lord led the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt through a desert where they were completely dependent upon Him. He tested His people to see what was in their hearts (see Deuteronomy 8:2). They looked to Him for their food, water, clothing and shelter. What could have taken as little as *11 days* took them *40 years!* The problem was neither circumstances nor enemies but their own hearts. When they should have prayed, they grumbled and complained. When they should have prayed, they got scared and shrunk back. When they should have prayed, they disobeyed and took matters into their own hands.

Submissive prayer is the fertile soil where provision, faith and obedience grow.

What do birds do when their IKEA furniture doesn't come with directions?
They wing it.

The Lord doesn't want His people to wing it. He wants to lead His people day and night, as described in Exodus 13:21-22:

21 By day the LORD went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night. 22 Neither the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people. NIV

Having settled in our hearts who leads the way, we can now recognize our weakness and His strength. Our Father has a plan for us, and the fulfillment of this plan requires attentiveness, obedience and perseverance. He doesn't want us just to drift through life; He wants us to take a narrow path up a mountain that very few find and are willing to travel.

The New York Times reports
(<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/18/sports/climb-mount-everest.html>):
Mount Everest is the tallest and most famous mountain in the world - a

global beacon and metaphor wrapped in awe and mystery. It is also one of the most accessible big mountains in the world, bringing hundreds of climbers and thousands to its base camp in a typical season. At 29,029 feet (8,848 meters), Everest is the world's tallest mountain. It straddles Nepal and Tibet.

Nearly 300 people are known to have died on Everest. Nepal's government estimates that most of them, perhaps 200, remain there. The primary barriers for climbers are money and fitness. It can cost between \$30,000 and \$100,000 [U.S.] or more. Foreigners must buy an \$11,000 permit from the Nepalese government, plus pay other fees, but the variance has to do with the outfitters hired. Some offer Western guides for Western clients, which can be more expensive than local ones, or some hybrid in the ratio between climbers and guides.

Guides in the Himalayas are often called "sherpas," though not all are part of the ethnic group of Sherpa, from which many take their surname. Most are young men, living anywhere from small villages to the chaotic city of Kathmandu, who find they can make more money as a guide than in other lines of work. They are not immune to the dangers; nearly half the people who have died on Everest have been sherpa guides.

I can't say that climbing Mount Everest is on my bucket list, but if it were, I would not dream of doing it without a guide that knew what he or she was doing or where he or she was going. There are many risks and rewards all around us. While there is an exhilarating summit to ascend there are deep, cavernous valleys on either side of this narrow path. Likewise, I would not want to go through life without following someone who knew what he was doing and where he was going. I choose to follow the eternal one who created the heavens and the earth, who has an inexhaustible supply of wisdom and who loves me dearly.

Why would Jesus teach us to pray, "Lead us not into temptation"? Doesn't our Father already watch over us? Yes, He does, and Jesus points out in Matthew 6:8 that our Father knows what we need before we ask Him. We are told in James 1:13-17 that God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He tempt anyone. He tests us to reveal our hearts and to purify us but He never puts obstacles in front of us to harm us or trip us up. Yes, He watches over us but when we pray this way, we recognize and confess our dependence not on our own understanding but on Him to direct our paths (see Proverbs 3:5-7). Such humility deepens our relationship with the Father and positions us for His plan to be fulfilled in us and through us.

GotQuestions.org (<https://www.gotquestions.org/lead-us-not-into-temptation.html>) offers this explanation:

We might illustrate Jesus' words "Lead us not into temptation" like this: a mother takes her young children grocery shopping with her and comes

to the candy aisle. She knows that taking her children down that aisle will only stir up greediness in their hearts and lead to bouts of whining and pouting. In wisdom, she takes another route - whatever she may have needed down the candy aisle will have to wait for another day. In this way the mother averts unpleasantness and spares her children a trial. Praying, "Lead us not into temptation," is like praying, "God, don't take me down the candy aisle today." It's recognizing that we naturally grasp for unprofitable things and that God's wisdom can avert the unpleasantness of our bellyaching.

Who will you rely on to make it through the pitfalls to reach the peak? Yourself? The people around you? Social media? Celebrities? Dr. Phil? I encourage you to make or renew your commitment to trust and obey our Heavenly Father.

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Lead Us

Deliver Us



The Bible is full of parallelism, where similar thoughts are conveyed in slightly different ways. "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil" appears to be an example of parallelism. God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life. It is also true that Satan *hates* you and has a *terrible* plan for your life. While there is someone who wants to bring you *up*, there is someone else who wants to bring you *down*. While there is someone who wants to *guide* you, there is someone else who wants to *misguide* you. While our Father will test us to purify us and grow us, the tempter will do everything he can to destroy us along with the work of God in us and through us.

Earlier we talked about how the Israelites were in the wilderness for 40 years. BibleStudy.org (<https://www.biblestudy.org/bibleref/meaning-of-numbers-in-bible/40.html>) explains:

Mentioned 146 times in Scripture, the number 40 generally symbolizes a period of testing, trial or probation. During Moses' life he lived forty years in Egypt and forty years in the desert before God selected him to lead his people out of slavery. Moses was also on Mount Sinai for 40 days and nights, on two separate occasions (Exodus 24:18, 34:1-28), receiving God's laws. He also sent spies, for forty days, to investigate the land God promised the Israelites as an inheritance (Numbers 13:25,

14:34).

It is no coincidence that the number 40 appears again in Matthew 4:1-4:

1 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. 2 After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. 3 The tempter came to him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.” 4 Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’” NIV

The Israelites were tempted to doubt God’s provision, protection and power. One generation fell to temptation and failed to enter the Promised Land. Jesus, on the other hand, responded to each temptation with obedience and secured a path for His followers to enter into an eternal Promised Land.

This question was submitted to Public Health Ontario after a listeria outbreak at a Maple Leaf Foods plant in 2008: “The Stanley Cup was recently on tour in Toronto, and I kissed it. Do I have to worry about being infected by listeria?”

The answer came quickly: “You are safe. The Stanley Cup has not been in contact with any Maple Leaf product since 1967.”

How many times have you been told to “stay safe”? We tend to think about and pray for safety in the physical realm which has temporal implications, but safety in the spiritual realm has *eternal* implications. Our souls and the souls of those around us are at stake here. Our Father knows this and our adversary knows this. A lifetime of godly living and leading can be damaged or undone in a moment by yielding to temptation.

The Apostle Paul writes from prison with urgency in Ephesians 6:10-20:

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11 Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. 13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand ... 18 And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints. 19 Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should. NIV

Paul exhorts the Ephesians and us to pray five times in these 11 verses. This is because our ground is won or lost in prayer. This is because heavenly plans are fulfilled or foiled in prayer. We need not fear the powers of darkness but we

need to have a healthy respect for them, knowing that we need the power of heaven to resist and overcome. We need not doubt the sovereignty of God, for on the grand scale His ultimate plans will prevail, His kingdom will come and His will shall be done. The question is, “Will His kingdom come and His will be done *in you and me, through you and me as it is in heaven?*” The powers of darkness will do all they can to stand in our way, but we need to pray, to take our stand and to fight to take the ground promised to us.

George Lucas, the creator of “Star Wars,” says he wanted to do more than entertain the masses. He wanted to introduce young Americans to spiritual teachings through “new myths” for our globalized, pluralistic millennium. Lucas himself has been called a “Buddhist/Methodist,” though it’s not clear that he identifies with either religious tradition. “Let’s say I’m spiritual,” he told Time magazine in 1999 (from <https://www.cnn.com/2018/01/26/us/star-wars-religion>). His storylines about the light side and the dark side have led many to believe that the universe is caught in a struggle between two dualistic impersonal forces.

The definite article “the” appears in the Greek text so Bible scholars differ on whether it should be translated as “deliver us from evil” or “deliver us from the evil” or “deliver us from the evil one”. Evil is pervasive and evil is personal. There is a struggle but the Bible is clear that a real, all-powerful God has a plan and a real, not nearly as powerful adversary tries to keep this plan from being fulfilled. Spiritual battles are often won by praying soldiers in war rooms in undisclosed locations. The enemy knows this and he will do what he can to keep the people of God from praying. Someone has said it this way: “Satan hinders prayer, but prayer also hinders Satan.”

Wesley Hill writes (<https://gcdiscipleship.com/article-feed/2019/10/25/deliver-us-from-eviland-the-evil-one>):

In the middle of the Rwandan civil war of the early 1990s, over the course of a mere one hundred days, almost a million members of the Tutsi community were murdered with machetes and rifles. It took the rest of the world time to come to grips with what had happened and eventually face its own complicity insofar as it had done nothing to stop the horror. When Canadian general Roméo Dallaire arrived as commander of the UN Assistance Mission to try to achieve a ceasefire, he witnessed firsthand the bloody hundred days: “In Rwanda I shook hands with the devil. I have seen him, I have smelled him and I have touched him.”

Confronted with neighbours invading the homes of neighbours, raping and hacking them to pieces, we can’t rely on abstract tropes about sin being present in every human heart. We need to speak about the demonic, about Satan. That is what Dallaire understood as he gaped at the piles of Tutsi corpses and witnessed the indifference of his fellow Westerners.

Your real enemy is not a human being. Will you stop and think about your enemy the devil and his demons? Will you ask our Father to deliver us from evil?

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