



Condensed Milk (Matthew 6:9-13 Series)

How to Pray, '...but deliver us from evil' (6:13).

SUMMARY: When we pray “deliver us from evil” we ask God to rescue us from the pervasive grasp of evil within ourselves, the world, and from the Evil One in particular.

Do you see yourself as being under constant threat? We should because according to this petition we are, and every day. The danger is not slight or unreal. The Bible teaches that we are in danger from evil in three forms. Evil is found in the corrupted impulses of a sinful nature within us (which the Bible calls the “flesh”), the relentless influence and pressure of a fallen and God-rejecting world around us, and from the ceaseless, wicked activity of a realm of evil spirits. Satan, the devil, is the ringmaster of them all.

The Bible indicates the danger and depravity found in Satan by the names it assigns him and their meanings. He is called “Satan” (adversary), “Devil” (slanderer), “Beelzebub” (prince of demons), the Greek “Apollyon” or Hebrew “Abaddon” (destroyer), “the god of this world” (indicating his temporary authority over earthly systems), and “the accuser” of believers. You see the cruelties, deceits, and malice of Satan in his works in the world. There was nothing casual in Jesus’ attitude to Satan. Of the devil he said, “He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies” (John 8:44). John summarizes the thrust of Jesus’ mission by writing, “The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work” (1 John 3:8). And Peter warns that we must be on the alert because the devil prowls about like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour” (1 Peter 5:8). Satan, then, is a clear and present danger. We are asleep at the wheel if we don’t see him as such.

¹ Bible verses about deliverance from Evil:

Proverbs 11:19. Truly the righteous attain life, but whoever pursues evil finds death.

1 John 2:15. Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them.

Galatians 5:16-17. So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want.

The evil of evil is to move us, in Packers words, “to do something other than God’s will and to love something or someone more than God himself...” (Growing in Christ, 200). And as the name “devil” means deceiver so evil works through deceit. Evil blinds us to what is true, and hardens our hearts against God. Behavior follows. As it works, we become enmeshed in pride, self-deception and lack of love expressed to God and others. Evil is so beguiling that it can persuade us that our sins are actually zeal for God, his truth, and his cause. Every sin is justified by evil and the mind of sinful people can find a justifying reason for anything they want to do.

Evil is bent on destroying us spiritually. Satan wants us like himself. He does not want us to be like God, nor to enjoy God, nor shine God’s light into the world, nor to enjoy the present and future blessings of walking with God.

This petition infers that God is willing and able to deliver us from Evil if we ask for it. It also implies that asking is a necessary part of deliverance and that without asking even God’s children live deceived and damaged lives. If we did not need deliverance Jesus would not have told us to regularly ask for it. Healthy Christians are not morbidly obsessed with evil – after all they live in the consciousness that God is their heavenly Father – but they are realists. They acknowledge the danger that is there. They know, however, that if they submit to God and resist the devil, the devil will flee from them (James 4:7). But they must resist. This prayer is their highest point of resistance.

If we do not believe in the danger of evil we are already under its sway. The only thing worse than making too much of the devil is to make too little of him. The Lord’s Prayer shows us what is really going on in our lives. And it shows us that God is willing to deliver us from Evil.

Practice Exercise: Write at least one sentence of prayer that expresses this theme. The verses in the footnotes can help you with this.¹

Galatians 6:8. Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.

James 4:7. Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

1 Peter 5:8. Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.



Condensed Milk Questions For...

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Content Questions:

1. What three realms of evil are we praying against when we pray, "...but deliver us from Evil?"
2. What do the names attributed to Satan tell us about him?
3. What is the goal of evil and Satan in our lives?
4. What is our highest point of resistance to evil?

Discussion Questions:

5. What stands out to you in this article and why?
6. What does the fact that we must pray daily for spiritual protection imply about our lives?
7. What good and right things is evil trying to keep us from doing?
8. What evils do you see occurring in the world or around you that give you an idea of what Satan is like?
9. How do you think we can resist evil?

Take-Home Practice:

In the prayer journals you've been given try to daily journal a prayer that expresses the themes of the Lord's Prayer to this point.

