

Prayer Diagram XV Temptation or Test?

Matthew 6:9-13

- Finally, we are down to the last request of this model prayer, “lead us not into temptation.”
- When it comes to temptation, we are fooled into thinking that the biggest threat is somewhere out there—the World and the Devil are looking to sabotage with some kind of spiritual cyber-attack.
- The fact of the matter is that our greatest threat by far is not what’s on the outside but what’s on the inside of us—our own hearts! **Jeremiah 17:9; James 1:13-15**

Oswald Chambers:

- “The purpose of prayer is not that we get ahold of an answer but that we get ahold of God.”
- The purpose of prayer is not to make us more independent and self-reliant; that would be disastrous for us. But that is what we seek when we seek only answers and are not seeking God Himself.
- The purpose of prayer is to make us more dependent on God because only He can debug us and protect us from the world, devil and especially ourselves.

1. God does not tempt us to do evil -- James 1:13

- Evil is all on us not on God!
- The Devil and the world can’t make us do anything: this is why we are responsible for our sin.

Why does Jesus tell us to ask God not to lead us into temptation?

- This is the cry of sober believer that knows what he’s up against—he knows his chances alone against the devil, the world and especially his own heart are slim to none.
- Spiritual sobriety – The priority of the model prayer that Jesus has taught us is God’s glory and our humility—if we are thinking and praying that way, we are sober.
- Matthew 5:3**—Being strong in spirit is the biggest lie your heart will tell you.
- Luke 9:23** – Since this is the disciple’s prayer, the key will be denying ourselves!

This is a prayer for sobriety—if you think God’s glory is the most important thing—you’re sober.

- If you think you’re dependent on Him for your sustenance you’re sober.
- If you think you’re dependent on Him for the most important thing in your life: forgiveness—you’re sober.
- If you think you’re dependent on Him for not falling to temptation—you’re sober.

2. God doesn’t lead us into temptation, so why even ask?

- Not because of what God will do, but because of what we will do.
- The word for temptation in the Greek is actually a neutral word: it can mean “temptation” and it can mean “test” depending on how its applied.
- God will allow tests in our lives, right? We are to expect them and rejoice in them! **James 1:2-3; I Peter 1:6-7**
- This word can mean test or temptation. God leads us into tests, but our sinful natures and the world and the devil can turn it into a temptation.

When does a test become a temptation? It’s all up to how you handle it and that should scare you.

- This is a request that is born out of self-distrust: I know myself; I know my weaknesses, I’m afraid of the shallowness of my devotion;
- “Don’t let me get into a place that is too much for me.”
- God put Abraham to the test: **Genesis 22:1-2**; Would that have been too much for you?

--How do we know it was a test? Because he passed it! Had he failed, it would have been a temptation; it would have been his sin, if he had not obeyed.

--Which would it have been for you?

--Job got put to the test; he lost everything including his children and his health in very short order—but it was test for him because he passed; what about for his wife? **Job 2:9-10**

“Lead me not into temptation”: Don’t let me get into something that I will fail at and dishonor You and hurt myself.

--Deliver me from evil or the evil one: He wants me to fail, he doesn’t want this to improve me, like a test would, but to destroy me like a temptation would.

--Who decides whether it’s a temptation or a test? We do! That ought to scare us!

It’s not just trying things that try us, but also blessings try us:

Proverbs 27:21

--We see it all the time: man who walks with God faithfully until a big blessings roles into his life and then he loses his mind—are those blessings a test or a temptation? It’s all about how he handles it!

--When things are tough and difficulties overwhelm us, we need to humble ourselves:

“God, please don’t let this swallow me up, I know my sin nature, I know what I’m capable of. Keep this from becoming sin for me.”

--When things start coming up roses and a windfall is on the horizon (We’ve seen it: somebody comes into a lot of money or popularity; will it make them better or will it destroy them?)

“God, please don’t let this swallow me up; I know my heart and how deceitful it can be, keep me from turning this into something evil.”