

# Model for Praying: Lead Us Not Into Temptation, deliver...

by J. Glyn Owen

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*The sermon explores the meaning and significance of the phrase 'Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil' in the Lord's Prayer, and how it relates to the fear of the forgiven and the spirit of the sincere.*

**Duration:** 45:26

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:13, Matthew 6:33

**Topics:** "Prayer Model"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the last two petitions of the Lord's Prayer, specifically addressing God as the provider of our daily bread and the one who forgives our sins. The speaker emphasizes the importance of recognizing that all good things come from God and encourages listeners to worship and trust Him for their needs. The sermon also highlights the need to guard against sin and temptation, acknowledging that even when we are doing the right thing, the enemy can still try to seduce and tempt us. The speaker concludes by emphasizing the greatness of God and the power of prayer in seeking deliverance from evil.

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## Transcript

Now, will you kindly turn with me for a little while to the 13th verse in the 6th chapter of that great Gospel written by Matthew, and to the last petition in the Lord's Prayer, words with which we are very familiar, lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, or deliver us from the evil one. It is evil with a definite article here, and it is probably inclusive of both the evil, the major evil, and the evil one that lies behind all evil. What should be our mood as we come to another Communion season? Well, one can turn to many passages of Scripture for guidance, I think, on that subject, but I have been brought back to this.

I have no doubt but that we have here a key to the kind of attitude that befits men and women redeemed by the grace of God, intending to gather on a Lord's Day around our Lord's table to partake of the broken bread and the outpoured wine as Jesus ordained we should do so very long ago. There is an attitude that is revealed here which I believe is the kind of attitude that He looks for in every one of His children, and may it please Him to enable us in some measure to produce by His Spirit what pleases Him at this time. Now, the more I have been browsing over the Lord's Prayer and meditating upon it over the last year or so, the more obvious it has become to me that we have here something not only of exquisite beauty, and it is a thing of beauty, it is the work of an artist.

There is not a spare word here. The movement of thought is something that defies description and the movement from one aspect of the subject to the other. It is a piece of logic.

But over and above everything else, of course, it is a directive, a spiritual directive. It is the incarnate Lord Jesus Christ telling His followers how we should pray. It is a piece of practical advice brought within the compass of just a few words.

You can number the words here, they don't come to many. And yet within those few words you will find an inexhaustible mine of spiritual wealth. Well now, tonight we are coming to the last of the six petitions.

I say six petitions, some speak of seven petitions here. I say six because I think that what we have in the verse before us tonight comprises one petition, though there are two sides to it. Lead us not into temptation, that's a negative, and then there is the complementary positive, but deliver us from evil or from the evil one.

The one without the other is incomplete. The two are but halves of the one yearning which our Lord would have in our hearts, in your heart and mine. Do we have it? Let's be honest for a moment before we come to think of the text.

As the Lord looks down upon you and upon me tonight, meeting for this preparatory service, does He find in my heart any real desire that I should not be led into temptation, but that I should be delivered from the evil one? I don't know how you will have to answer that, but He knows where we stand. And let us pray that by the Word, by meditating upon this truth and by the ministry of the Spirit, He will enable us not only to pray it, but in some measure to manifest the underlying attitude that is here exemplified. Well now, it ought to be said, I suppose, that there are almost as many interpretations of certain words and phrases here as there are commentaries of the Gospel of Matthew.

I can only try and pass on to you what I deem to be most appropriate in the context, and if I'm wrong, I'm sure you will check up and you will take only what you think is right. Now there are three main thoughts here, it seems to me, and we'll take them in turn. I'd like us to think first of all of the fear of the forgiven.

The fear of the forgiven. There is a fear, an anxious dread, that often beclouds the life of the impenitent, the unregenerate, the unbeliever. We think of that from time to time.

There is no peace, says my God, to the wicked. And we often think of the dis-peace and the dis-quietness, dis-quietude that is often exemplified by men and women outside of Christ who have no faith, who show no repentance, who are without God and without hope in the world. That's not what I'm referring to.

There is a fear that belongs only to the forgiven soul. Now you don't only, you do not simply encounter it here, you have it elsewhere. You have it in the Old Testament.

You have it, for example, in a text I've often wanted to preach about or preach on, and I'll come to it one day, God helping me, it's in Psalm 130, just puts it in a nutshell. There is forgiveness with thee that thou mayest be feared. Now forgiveness deals with some of our fears, but forgiveness, genuine forgiveness, creates other fears.

It takes away one fear, it inculcates in the soul another kind of fear. And that's the kind of fear that we have in this petition of the Lord's Prayer. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

I don't want to sin. It's the fear of sinning. It's the fear of displeasing our Father.

It's the fear of dishonoring our Savior. It's the fear of being. But the Lord has made it possible by his grace for us not to be the dupes of Satan.

There is forgiveness with thee that thou mayest be feared. He whose debt has been cancelled, he whose sin has been forgiven, by recourse to the atoning and the cleansing blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, should always be conscious of a growing dread of any such continued involvement in sin, as would again displease his Father, again dishonor his Redeemer, again incur him in debt when he has been forgiven such a vast, vast debt already. Our Lord envisages the emergence of such a holiness-breeding fear in the heart of every forgiven man and woman, that his whole being or her whole being will sigh for deliverance and victory.

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one, or from evil. Now let me just say one or two things about this. This is a fear of the emergence of such circumstances as would again result in sin.

The word used by our Lord for temptation has a somewhat general connotation. Its more common meaning would be better indicated by our English word to test, testing. Generally, it refers to this kind of experience, namely to the activity involved in testing something or someone to prove its genuineness.

The motive is always good. The motive is not evil. It's not testing someone in order to show him or show her up.

It's testing someone in order that that someone can prove his or her worth. It's testing with a noble end in view, to prove the genuineness of the person or the object, rather than to provoke something alien to life in anyone. It is to strengthen rather than to weaken.

It is to purify rather than to pollute. Now something of that pure motive comes to light when we remember some of the Biblical passages in which this or a kindred term is used. For example, in the Old Testament in Deuteronomy, you hear of the mother of the mother eagle coming one day and throwing the little family overboard out over the edge of the nest.

And there they all go out into space. Here's a cruel thing to do, is it not? Why does she do that? Is it because she hates her young? Not on your life. If you keep an eye on the mother eagle, you will find that she's swooping down under them, even as they tumble to try and find their wings on the way.

And her pinions are outspread so that if they fall and fumble and tumble, they fall on her wings. She loves them all right. What is she doing then? Well, she's testing them to teach them to fly.

She's getting them to discover the innate capacities given them, in order that one day they may leave the home and fend for themselves. You have the same kind of notion again in God's testing Abraham by giving him nothing other than his naked word and telling him, I am going to give you a child by Sarah. Now, we've been through this over recent times, and I don't need to pause very long with it, but you realize what a big thing this was.

God was testing Abraham. Can you really believe me? Can you really trust me? Can you really take my naked word? Moreover, John records how our Lord asked his disciples a question on one occasion in order to prove or to test them as to what they would say, particularly one of them. When Jesus then lifted up his eyes and saw a great company coming to him, he said to Philip, when shall we buy bread that these

may eat? And then this, and this he said to prove him, same word, to test him, for he himself knew what he would do.

See, he put the question to them in order to see now what will you make of a situation like this? How will you react? He was testing them not to show up their sins but to bring out their faith, to give them the opportunity of manifesting their confidence in him. God never tempts his people in the sense of seducing them to sin or of arousing their carnal desires. That he never does.

There is a world of difference between trying out his people's grace and arousing their corruptions, as one of the Puritans says. When God tests us, it is never to make us sink into sin but rather to make us soar above it. Not to see us defeated but rather to see us defeating the enemy of our souls and the enemy of our Lord and rising above him in the power of his grace, of the Lord's grace.

Now that, however, is only one part of the truth. The same word does also denote seduction towards evil. And the reason for the transition of thought from the one to the other is not hard to discover.

You see, due to the sinfulness of our natures and the subtleties of Satan, what is intended to be a testing with a view to bringing out our faith and our obedience and our allegiance to the Lord often becomes the occasion for arousing in us the carnalities that lie hidden and entrenched in our beings. That's what happened in Eden. So that what was meant to be a testing in the good sense becomes a temptation as Satan interferes and especially as he appeals to our fallen human natures.

The forgiven man will dread the thought of being tempted or even being tested in such a way as would lead him on the route to sin. And that's the thought here. He whose past has been so dearly forgiven will learn to become careful of the future and so he cries, lead me not into temptation anywhere but nowhere where I'm liable to be tempted to do what I don't want to do and what I know I shouldn't do.

In all probability this is precisely the same concern as that underlying our Lord's words when he said to the disciples in in Gethsemane, pray lest you enter into temptation. It's not the fear that God will actually entice them into sin. That's not it.

God does not do that. But the fear of sinning. Wonder whether we really know anything of this in our hearts.

The next thing I want you to notice here is this. This fear is also one that reflects the sorrow and the shame that would be involved in running into debt with one who has already forgiven us so much, so often and so freely. Deliver us from the evil.

Now we shall refer to the phrase again, the evil. We'll take it here as having reference to sin only. We've already indicated that it goes beyond that.

The evil with a definite article from which the forgiven person desires ardently to be delivered is the shameful but dastardly act of going against the grain of the will of the only one who could have mercy upon us and save us and has given his only begotten son to be our savior. It is of inflicting pain upon the one who was not only the lawgiver of Sinai but the lamb-giver of Calvary. Now this is the capital disaster in the mind of the maturing disciple.

He shudders at the very thought and as he grows in grace, the fear becomes greater. Of course it becomes part of a plethora of other emotions too, so that it may not always be as evident on the surface.

But if he examines it, it is there.

The fear of displeasing one's Lord. I trust we know something of this fear of the forgiven, of this holy dread that makes us pray daily, lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one or from the evil. If we do not know this divinely kindled fear, then we ought to pray for it and pray for it and pray for it.

Our God expects it in us. Secondly, I'd like us to look at the spirit of the sincere. There is the dread possibility facing us here again as in the rest of this passage, in considering the rest of this prayer or indeed almost at every turn in our spiritual pilgrimage, especially in prayer, the dread of acting hypocritically and especially in prayer the dread of mouthing mere words rather than of praying.

Where, however, the fear of which we have spoken is genuinely felt in any real measure and the utterance of this plea is sincere and honest, there should be an accompanying submissiveness to the God whose favor we seek and a confident obedience to his will. And I want you to notice those two things. One, in the first place, the sincere expression of this request, of this plea, should be accompanied by a due submission to the leading of God.

We are praying for leading. We must submit to it. Lead us not into temptation.

Lead us in any other way but not that way. The spirit of the sincere is this. I'm praying that I should not be led into temptation.

Therefore, I follow the leading of God in any other way to avoid temptation. That is hardly honest, which says with the lips, lead us not into temptation, and then proceeds not only to reject the means whereby the Lord would divert us from temptation, but to trifle and to play with those very things that tend to bring about temptation in our lives. You know, we sometimes do that kind of thing.

We ask our Lord to deliver us from temptation. And then we deliberately get ourselves entangled in the kind of things that we know from experience generally lead us to sin. Here, of course, we encounter practical difficulties.

We do not like to yield at any rate. We do not like to yield unquestionably to anyone. And when we say this word, lead us not into temptation, lead us not.

When we think of God's leading us in the other way away from temptation, it means that we are submitting, that we are yielding to him, that we are following him. And this is what we don't like to do. We like to choose our own way.

Do you notice the way this prayer has come to this point? Talk about, talk about psychology. I don't know whether that word is the right word to use here. But at any rate, see the way our Lord brings us there.

How did he start? When you pray, he said, say, our Father who art in heaven, turn your hearts and your thoughts to God as revealed in the Lord Jesus Christ. And see in him your own heavenly Father. Then learn to say, hallowed be thy name.

Let your name be hallowed, sanctified, separated above every name, given honor above every name, given preeminence above every other. So that your name is altogether singular. No other name stands alongside of it.

It's alone. It is sanctified. It is holy.

It's alone. In your estimation, in your affections, in every aspect of your life, the name of the Lord is above every other name. Do you see the way we're going? He's the Father.

He's the Father whose name is above every name. He's the King of the kingdom. His kingdom has already come and yet it's coming.

It's a kingdom that is coming throughout the ages and throughout the years. It includes yesteryear and the year before that and right to the beginning. He was king at the beginning and he is the king of a kingdom that gathers its subjects out of every kindred and tribe and people and nation and age and clime and so forth until the very end.

He's Lord of history. See him, says Jesus. Then you've learned to say, your will be done on earth as it is being done now in heaven.

And it's only at the end he comes to this, lead us not. But you see the picture that he's presented of God. He's presented the picture of God that we, if we're honest, if we're sincere in what we've said, then he's a God that we should be able to follow without difficulty.

He's a God that we should be able to trust without difficulty. He's a God that we should be able to respect without difficulty. But our carnal natures resent yielding and obeying wholly and utterly anyone.

This is where the cross comes right into our experience, you see. We have to die to self in order to render obedience and to yield even to the great almighty omnipotent God who gave his son to be our savior. But now there's a principle here.

We are only able to do that insofar as we get to know the God he is, know him for who he is and what he is. There are two things that grow together according to this principle, I would think, and they will generally grow together or they don't grow at all. One, our knowledge of God.

Two, our capacity to pray. If you and I really know God, then we can pray, lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. If we don't really know God well enough, we shall never pray that, not really pray it.

Knowledge of God and the sheer activity of prayer are two things that move together like the two lines of a railway track, side by side. They belong together where the one stops, the other stops. Where the knowledge of God stops, prayer stops.

I will never pray beyond my knowledge of God, save the hypocrite's prayer. Now, my friends, you and I have many weak spots in our lives through which Satan finds his way in. His power is not unlimited, however.

It is limited power. But, oh, how he finds a way into our lives to cripple our prayer and to curb our knowledge of God. You remember the story of Achilles, the hero of the Trojan War, the legend.

The legend is that he was submerged by his mother in the waters of the Styx River when he was a child. And according to the legend, his mother dipped him in the waters holding him by the heel. And every bit of him, every spot of his body was covered in the water apart from the spot under her hand, the heel that she was holding.

And so, for the rest of his life, he was immune to wounds. If somebody shot an arrow at him, it never penetrated his skin. Of course, this is only a legend.

He was immune to everything. But, at long last, Paris found a vulnerable spot where his mother's hand had been, where he had remained dry even though he'd been plunged in the water of the Styx. And Paris's arrow pierced and he was slain.

You and I have a thousand such spots in our lives that we need to guard. We are vulnerable in the realm of the mind and of the imagination and of the will and of... Let me move to this. Moreover, he who sincerely prays this prayer should learn to trust the delivering hand of God, not only to yield to his leading, but trust him to deliver us.

The two go together, two halves again of one truth. He who cries for deliverance must learn to submit to the instruction of the deliverer in order to look confidently to him for his deliverance. Now, whereas in the first half of this plea we pray to be led away from the circumstances that might involve us in sin, in the second half our Lord has in mind the fact that there is an enemy that comes after us even when we walk the right way.

You see? Oh, Satan, our foe, is cunning. He will first of all try and get us to walk into sin, walk in the way of sin, the way of unrighteousness, where he knows there will be temptation and plenty of people to seduce us. The right program on the TV and the right people, and they'll insist on having that just when you are there, or the right topic of conversation, or the right principles or absence of principles enunciated.

He knows that, and he knows how to get us there. Did we not have a shepherd who is good and who is great? That's where we would all go. But, and this is the thing, the Bible is so open and so blessedly relevant.

Even when you're walking the right way, Satan comes after you on the right road. He overtakes you on the road of righteousness. He can catch up with you when you're doing the right thing.

And there's no one else there to tempt you. There is no one to seduce you. The heavens above are blue, and the grass beneath is green, and the birds are singing, and everything's beautiful, and only man is vile.

And he can catch up with you when there's no one there, and yet tempt you and seduce you. Isn't this true? Thus understood, there is a wholeness about the prayer before us, for we know full well from man's universal experience that we can fall into sin in one of these two ways. We can be taken captive by him at his will.

He walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour, and you never know where he's coming from. But our Lord Jesus Christ taught us to pray. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

There's a way out of the jaws of Satan into the liberty of the sons of God, and Jesus taught us to pray to his Father for that. The one word about the third main point here, the greatness of God. Now I guess I'm repeating myself a little here, but I can't help it.

See, the more our Lord says, or the more we examine his words here, which are brief as we've indicated, the more do we realize that he's painting a picture of God all the time. And in his mind there is such a massive, such a masterly, such a gigantic picture of God in his greatness, in his goodness, in his wisdom, in his faithfulness, in the infinity of his mercy that we need have no doubt at all. Though Satan may be right at our heels, he is able not to lead us into temptation, but to deliver us from the evil one.

God's greatness is clearly reflected in the adequacy that is attributed to him by Jesus. Now let's confine ourselves to the last two petitions, just to remind you. According to Jesus, God is the provider of our daily bread.

Or a simple thought. How often we forget it. We see the baker's wares as coming anywhere and everywhere other than where it really comes from.

A hand that gives life to the grain is an omnipotent hand. It's the creator's hand. Children of God, you and I need to have that eye and that penetrating vision that sees that and recognizes that and worships him for that.

Jesus also spoke of him as the partner of our daily sins. Not only the provider of our daily bread. This is his grand prerogative and none shall share in it, says the writer of the hymn.

He stands alone. He alone has the capacity to forgive the sins of men. There is no other source of forgiveness.

Seek it where we may. We shall never discover pardon elsewhere, but in God and in God through Christ his Son. Moreover, our God is capable of leading us through the swamplands of temptation and of keeping us safely in the way.

He knows each step of the homeward road. And he knows how to choose the safe path for every child as we move through the bog land that has been mined by satan. And he can take all his children safely home and not one of them will be lost.

Satan, our archenemy, is no match for him according to the estimation of Jesus. And Jesus knew satan, remember, as well as he knew the Father. All we know about satan is fundamentally from Jesus.

When we think about him ourselves, we may be weaving webs of imagination together. It's the easiest thing done in the Christian life to imagine things about satan and about angels and even about God. The infallible things we know about satan as about God came from the lips of the Son of God, the only infallible revealer of truth.

And he has given us to know about him that he's a very mighty person. The three Synoptic Gospels record his conflict with the adversary at the outset of his public ministry. And they clearly insist that Jesus constantly detected his sinister hand behind so much that was saddened, sordid in the world.

Jesus referred to him as, well, listen to some of the epithets, listen to some of the titles, the enemy, the wicked one, the prince of this world, the wolf that menaced his sheep, the murderer, a liar from the beginning. Jesus most certainly knew the enemy's power. He knew it in his capacity as mediator, as well as from the vantage point of his divine sonship.

But Jesus also knew the almighty power of God, and he knew God the almighty as his father. And he told his children, you come to my father and your father as your father. Now that's the privilege.

You do not simply come to him as the potentate of time, though he is that. But you come to him as my father and your father. The lily grows, and it's only like a little bit of grass.

It is here today, it's gone tomorrow. It grows in the morning and is green and beautiful and white as the flower. But it'll be cast in the oven tomorrow, or it'll be gone.

But you are children of your heavenly father. You have a father. They don't have a father, the lilies of the field.

You have a father, a heavenly father. And your father is my father. Let us not think then that because we are less aware than our Lord was of Satan's power and presence, and perhaps less intimately aware of the greatness of God, that he is not as great as he was.

Our God is unchangeably the same. And he is Satan's master. And what our Lord Jesus wants us to exhibit here, and what he wants us to act upon, is the fact that God is great.

And you see, this is really what happens when we pray. We acknowledge the greatness of God in every respect. The man or the woman who doesn't pray and trust God in prayer is the man or woman that has never seen or acted upon the greatness of God.

You may have a marvelous creed. Your confession of faith may stretch from one end of the continent to the other. But your God is not as great as that, unless he's big enough to pray to and to trust.

So also is God's greatness implied in the expectancy that the Savior teaches us to have as we draw near to him. These words reflect his greatness in terms of goodness as well as power. There is something exquisitely beautiful here.

To Jesus, you see, there was no doubt at all as to God's power or goodness. No question about it. No question about it.

It was resolved. He knew the Father. You know, when you know someone, let anybody else impugn that person.

Let them say whatever they like. There's a rumor abroad. You can take it.

You don't get excited. You know him or you know her. You know.

Jesus knew. He who is great beyond human comprehension is, then, to come back where we began, is our Father. Himself knowing the inner reality of that sublime relationship, our Lord Jesus Christ would have his people pray for deliverance from sin without the least doubt as to the Father's willingness to grant it.

He is Father. Indeed, that the petitioner should be one who concedes honor to the Father, who has confessed him in the terms that precede this part in the prayer, is very wonderful. But even if we do not properly say and are not able out of a full heart to say, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven, He is still our Father if we are in Christ.

He who is great beyond human comprehension is also our heavenly Father. Jesus knew that, and he tells us to pray to the Father to deliver us from temptation with this expectation in our hearts. But even if we can go a step further than we have just indicated, even if it were not so, even if those who pray are not always honorable in their attitude to God, not honorable to his name, do not respect his kingdom nor his will, there is yet a further infallible ground for the expectancy that Jesus inculcates in the hearts of his people.

He tells them to pray, and he tells them to pray to the Father in his name. Now, what I'm getting at, I'm trying to put it in a nutshell. Assuming that I cannot say honestly all that has been said in this prayer, I cannot repeat it from the depth of my heart and with all my heart.

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. I place other names far too high. They come far too near to the Almighty in my estimation.

Okay. And I do not say Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. I've not grown there yet.

I'm struggling with it. By the grace of God, I'm moving forward, but I'm still a child. And I'm finding myself tempted and tried on every hand.

And the evil one has knocked me around, and I am bruised by him. What then? Oh, my dear Jesus tells me in my immaturity and my failure, he says, look, I'm telling you to pray to the Father. And I'm telling you to pray to the Father in my name.

There is no higher basis for which you can ever appeal to the Father. The ground of appeal before God is not your perfect stand or stance or what you think you have done perfectly, but my perfection as I died on the cross and rose again triumphantly and sprinkle my blood on the mercy seat. Go to him on the basis of what I have done and what I have said and what I promised, the basis of my finished work.

You see, this is something we need to grasp. Many of us are unable to pray properly because we always have a guilt that, well, I'm not living up to it. Now, we need to confess our sins in that case, and we need to humble ourselves in the sight of God and perhaps of men.

But when all is said and done, the basis of our acceptance with God is not in the fact that we have done this or we have done that. The basis of our acceptance is this. The mediator acknowledges us as his own.

And he says, you're mine. I died for you on the cross. I shed my blood for you.

And I tell you, go to the Father in my name. Ask him in my name, and he will do it. Now, that's authority.

And the man or woman that has authority in prayer is the man or woman that takes Jesus Christ at his word. He counts, you see, before God. He doesn't always count here upon earth in the present tense.

The government of Canada is at the moment unwilling to have his name inscribed in the Constitution or even the name of God. I don't know whether you shudder at that or not. I have a sense of awesomeness about it.

But in heaven, Jesus counts. And his blood counts. And Jesus says, go in my name.

Stand on my merits. I'm sending you. I'm telling you.

Pray, lead us not into temptation, but deliver us.

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