

And lead us not into temptation

First, to be clear: God does not tempt us. James 1:13-15 says “When tempted, no one should say, ‘God is tempting me.’ For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.”

However, temptations will come. We have a very real enemy in the spiritual world who wants dominion and control, who delights in tempting, attacking, and trapping God’s children. As we see in the story of Adam and Eve in Genesis 3, this great deceiver starts by calling into question what God has said. He then makes something look very appealing. The choice to disobey God appears to have no consequences. Only after choosing self and sin over God did Adam and Eve feel ashamed and separated from their Creator.

The battle continues to this day. We can choose to be selfish, intent on getting our own way. We can give in to our emotions, our thoughts, and our desires. We can put ourselves, not God, first. However, Galatians 5:16-17 urges us to walk by the Spirit [of God] and not gratify the desires of the flesh, which are in conflict with each other.

Jesus knows about temptations. He Himself was tempted and chose to cling to God and His word. In Matthew 26:41, He instructs His disciples to “watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.” Temptations test us and allow our faith to grow. Jesus knows our struggle and prays that we will follow in His footsteps.

Jesus has redeemed us from sin and death. He led a sinless life, died the death we should have died to restore us to a right relationship with a holy God, and lives eternally so all who believe in Him and call on His name will be saved. By choosing God’s will instead of our own when we are tempted, we become more like Jesus. That is why we pray.

Take time to

- Ask God to give you wisdom and common sense and the willingness to use both when you are tempted
- Identify situations (who/what/when/where) that lead you to be tempted
- Pray to be more like Jesus

Pray “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors. Lead us not into temptation...”