



The Protection of Prayer

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Focus We all experience trials and temptations. God wants us to pray every day for protection from the Enemy and for victory over temptation.

Open If you could meet an important historical figure, who would it be?

Read The Lord's Prayer is a pattern that teaches us how to pray. The portion to memorize for this week is the first part of Matthew 6:13: "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

God can't tempt us because it's contrary to His character to tempt anyone (James 1:12–14). In fact, He blesses us and rewards us for enduring temptation. Temptation occurs when our desires (even for good things) take our focus off of God. Then when our focus is no longer on God, Satan comes to tempt us into fulfilling that desire without God. God is never the tempter—Satan is (Matthew 4:3; 1 Thessalonians 3:5).

God leads us into trials, but He won't *mislead* us. Testing is always for our good and for growing our character (Deuteronomy 8:16; James 1:2–3). However, the tempter is also in the trial. That's why Jesus taught us to pray: "Deliver us from evil." Jesus was led into a trial where He was tempted (Matthew 4:1–11). He understands our battles with temptation (Hebrews 4:15). Because He triumphed over his temptation and was strengthened by it (Luke 4:14), He is able to help us overcome temptation (Hebrews 2:18).

God will deliver us from temptation if we'll pray. He'll never allow us to be tempted beyond what we can bear (1 Corinthians 10:13). With every temptation, He gives us a way of escape (2 Timothy 4:18; 2 Peter 2:9). Our part in being delivered is to pray every day for protection from the Enemy and for success over temptation (Matthew 26:41; John 17:15; Psalm 119:133).

Talk

1. Practice reciting Matthew 6:9–13 together as a group. Say it together out loud.
2. What are some common temptations that many of us struggle with? Now read Hebrews 4:14–15. Have you ever thought of Jesus facing those same temptations?
3. Have you recently been through a trial (in your job, family, health, finances)? How were you strengthened by it or what good resulted from the trial? What were the temptations in the middle of the trial?
4. Read 1 Corinthians 10:13. What is the character quality of God mentioned in this verse? Now read Matthew 26:41. Why is the faithfulness of God important to us when we're in the middle of trials? Why is prayer important?
5. Prayer is one of our weapons for spiritual warfare (see Ephesians 6), and yet we often feel like we don't pray enough. What are some practical ways we can develop the discipline of prayer in our lives? Brainstorm together several ideas of what has worked for you during various seasons of your life.

Live

Is there a recurring temptation you are struggling to overcome? Pray! Ask God to show you the desire that has taken your focus off of Him. Ask Him to show you the way of escape out of the temptation. Ask Him to deliver you from the evil one. Also, ask a friend to pray with you for victory in this area of your life.

Pray

Thank You, Lord, for teaching us how to pray. We praise You, God, for Your faithfulness and that You never leave us alone in our trials. We ask You to lead us away from temptation. Help us to be strengthened in the midst of testing. Protect us and deliver us from the evil one.