***Watch and Pray***

**The Lord’s Prayer, Summer 2023: Matthew 6:9-13 August 13, 2023**

***“Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation.  
The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.”***

**Matthew 26:41**

**Temptations**

*“Be careful not to do your ‘acts of righteousness’ before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven . . . .*

*“This, then is how you should pray: ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,*

*10 your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*

*11 Give us today our daily bread.*

*12 Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.*

*13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.’*

Matthew 6

*11 These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come. 12 So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall! 13 No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it. 14 Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry.*

1 Corinthians 10 (note that 10:14 is often placed with the next paragraph)

*12 Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.*

*13 When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; 14 but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. 15 Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.*

James 1

1. Temptation and evil cannot be faced with the power of the flesh alone

2. The words “temptation” and “trial” both translate the same Greek word. To decide which is the best translation, look at the source and the purpose:

-- temptations come from the world, the devil and my sinful desires; it’s goal is my  
 destruction

-- trials are allowed by God for my maturity

3. Remember Psalm 23 and the “through not from” principle

**Heidelberg Catechism, Part III: Gratitude, Lord’s Day 52**

Q 127. What does the sixth petition mean?

A.  “And do not bring us to the time of trial, but rescue us from the evil one” means:

By ourselves we are too weak to hold our own even for a moment.1 And our sworn enemies—  
the devil,2 the world,3 and our own flesh—4never stop attacking us.

And so, Lord, uphold us and make us strong with the strength of your Holy Spirit, so that we may not go down to defeat in this spiritual struggle,5 but may firmly resist our enemies until we finally win the complete victory.6

1 [Ps. 103:14-16](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ps.%20103:14-16&version=nrsv); [John 15:1-5](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%2015:1-5&version=nrsv) 2 [2 Cor. 11:14](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20Cor.%2011:14&version=nrsv); [Eph. 6:10-13](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Eph.%206:10-13&version=nrsv); [1 Pet. 5:8](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Pet.%205:8&version=nrsv) 3 [John 15:18-21](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%2015:18-21&version=nrsv)  
 4 [Rom. 7:23](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Rom.%207:23&version=nrsv); [Gal. 5:17](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Gal.%205:17&version=nrsv) 5 [Matt. 10:19-20](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matt.%2010:19-20&version=nrsv); [26:41](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matt.%2026:41&version=nrsv); [Mark 13:33](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark%2013:33&version=nrsv); [Rom. 5:3-5](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Rom.%205:3-5&version=nrsv)   
 6 [1 Cor. 10:13](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Cor.%2010:13&version=nrsv); [1 Thess. 3:13](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Thess.%203:13&version=nrsv); [5:23](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Thess.%205:23&version=nrsv)

**Jesus, temptation and the evil one**

*Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. 2 After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. 3 The tempter came to him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.”*

*4 Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”*

*5 Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. 6 “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down. For it is written:*

*“ ‘He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands,*

*so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.’”*

*7 Jesus answered him, “It is also written: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’”*

*8 Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. 9 “All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.”*

*10 Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’”*

*11 Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.*

Matthew 4

*17 For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. 18 Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.*

Hebrews 2

1. Jesus turns to the word to respond to the devil and temptations

2. Jesus’ temptation and suffering is part of his identification with me and with humanity

3. Jesus experienced temptation for my atonement and my encouragement

**Living out the sixth petition**

The eighth sentence is ***a petition respecting our weakness****--*"Bring us not into temptation." It teaches us that we are liable, at all times, to be led astray, and fall. It instructs us to confess our infirmity, and beseech God to hold us up, and not allow us to run into sin. We ask Him, who orders all things in heaven and earth, to restrain us from going into that which would injure our souls, and never to allow us to be tempted above that which we are able to bear. (1 Cor. 10:13)

The ninth sentence is ***a petition respecting our dangers****--*"deliver us from evil." We are here taught to ask God to deliver us from the evil that is in the world, the evil that is within our own hearts, and not least from that evil one, the devil. We confess that, so long as we are in the body, we are constantly seeing, hearing, and feeling the presence of evil. It is about us, and within us, and around us on every side. And we entreat Him, who alone can preserve us, to be continually delivering as from its power. ([John 17:15](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/John%2017.15).)

J.C. Ryles

Step One: Watch and Pray (which means stick close to Jesus!)

*36 Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.” 37 He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. 38 Then he said to them, “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.”*

*39 Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.”*

*40 Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. “Could you men not keep watch with me for one hour?” he asked Peter. 41 “Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.”*

Matthew 26 (see John Owens’ “Temptations” and Mike Adkins’ “How to Tell the Difference”)

Step Two: Nurture the biblical perspective on trials and temptations

*2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. 4 Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything . . . .*

*16 Don’t be deceived, my dear brothers. 17 Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. 18 He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.*

James 1 (Doug recommends the Challies article to start)

Step 3: Fill up with the good stuff

*I write to you, young men, because you are strong,*

*and the word of God lives in you,*

*and you have overcome the evil on e.*

*15 Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world. 17 The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.*

1 John 2 (see John 15:1-6; 17:13-17 and John Piper’s sermon on this text)

**Resources for further study**

The poster for Matthew does a good job of showing the 5 Parts of the gospel, reflecting a “new Torah”, can be found at [*https://bibleproject.com/downloads/posters/*](https://bibleproject.com/downloads/posters/)

Ryle has a commentary of Matthew 6 at [*https://www.gracegems.org/Ryle/m06.htm*](https://www.gracegems.org/Ryle/m06.htm)

J. C. Ryle also has a wonderful study of how believers should respond to the disciplining work of God at [*https://www.monergism.com/finger-god*](https://www.monergism.com/finger-god)

Here are some of our growing number of prayer resources:

The CRCNA’s Prayer Guide illustrates how to use the Lord’s Prayer as a guide to corporate prayer at

[https://www.crcna.org]( https://www.crcna.org › files › the_lords_prayer) *[› files › the\_lords\_prayer]( https://www.crcna.org › files › the_lords_prayer)*

Kevin DeYoung’s article at [*https://www.crossway.org/articles/what-does-it-mean-to-pray-your-kingdom-come/*](https://www.crossway.org/articles/what-does-it-mean-to-pray-your-kingdom-come/)

Lora Copely’s “Extraordinary Prayer” article at <https://www.abideproject.org/articles/extraordinary-prayer>

Becket Cook’s story of his mother’s prayer at [*https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uFWl9eWkmWg*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uFWl9eWkmWg)

Tim Challies has a good place to start at [*https://www.challies.com/articles/3-truths-to-speak-to-your-temptation/*](https://www.challies.com/articles/3-truths-to-speak-to-your-temptation/)and his “Particular Temptations of Young Men” is for everyone, at [*https://www.challies.com/articles/the-particular-temptations-of-young-men/*](https://www.challies.com/articles/the-particular-temptations-of-young-men/)

John Owen’s 1658 essay “Temptation” at [*https://www.biblebb.com/files/owen/Owen-Temptations.htm*](https://www.biblebb.com/files/owen/Owen-Temptations.htm%20)

D. A. Carson wrote a series of “open letters” to young believers, and his letter on temptation is very good.  
[*https://www.crossway.org/articles/an-open-letter-to-the-christian-disheartened-by-ongoing-temptation/*](https://www.crossway.org/articles/an-open-letter-to-the-christian-disheartened-by-ongoing-temptation/)

John Piper’s sermon on 1 John 2 is helpful at [*https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/the-word-of-god-abides-in-you-and-you-have-overcome-the-evil-one*](https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/the-word-of-god-abides-in-you-and-you-have-overcome-the-evil-one)

Mike Adkins has a wonderful piece on how to tell the difference between a temptation and a trial at [*https://discovergrace.com/is-it-a-trial-or-a-temptation-how-to-tell-the-difference/*](https://discovergrace.com/is-it-a-trial-or-a-temptation-how-to-tell-the-difference/)

Larry Stockstill has a good summary of the pattern of the Lord’s Prayer at [*https://larrystockstill.com/blog/prayer-template*](https://larrystockstill.com/blog/prayer-template)

Keller has a good listen at [*https://gospelinlife.com/downloads/the-upside-down-kingdom-5106/*](https://gospelinlife.com/downloads/the-upside-down-kingdom-5106/)or the .pdf version at [*https://www.scribd.com/document/258555474/Upside-Down-Kingdom-Tim-Keller*](https://www.scribd.com/document/258555474/Upside-Down-Kingdom-Tim-Keller)

Keller also has an 8-part series on the Lord’s Prayer on .mp3 at [*https://www.monergism.com/lords-prayer-8-part-mp3-sermon-series*](https://www.monergism.com/lords-prayer-8-part-mp3-sermon-series)

[*Monergism.com*](file:///I:\Summer%202023\monergism.com) has many resources on the Sermon on the Mount at [*https://www.monergism.  
com/topics/sermon-manuscripts-mp3s-scripture/matthew/sermon-mount-ch-5-7*](https://www.monergism.com/topics/sermon-manuscripts-mp3s-scripture/matthew/sermon-mount-ch-5-7)

Bob Deffinbaugh has a sermon on this passage at [*https://bible.org/seriespage/fatal-failures-religion-3-externalism-matthew-61-18*](https://bible.org/seriespage/fatal-failures-religion-3-externalism-matthew-61-18)

Spurgeon has an interesting prayer take is at [*https://www.spurgeon.org/resource-library/sermons/the-secret-of-power-in-prayer/#flipbook/*](https://www.spurgeon.org/resource-library/sermons/the-secret-of-power-in-prayer/%23flipbook/)

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# 3 Truths to Speak To Your Temptation

[May 27, 2016](https://www.challies.com/articles/3-truths-to-speak-to-your-temptation/)  
Tim Challies at [*https://www.challies.com/articles/3-truths-to-speak-to-your-temptation/*](https://www.challies.com/articles/3-truths-to-speak-to-your-temptation/%20)

As a true son of Adam, a person born with a natural affection for sin, I have no shortage of opportunities to consider sin and to consider the desire to commit it in its infinite varieties. As a husband and father, a pastor, and a church member I have no shortage of opportunities to speak to other people about their sin and their temptations. And time and time again I find myself returning to the simplest truths, to words that can and must be spoken to temptation.

The first thing to say to the sin that is tempting you is this: That is not who I am! That temptation, that sin, does not fit your deepest identity. Those who have put their faith in Christ Jesus are in Christ Jesus—“For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive” (1 Corinthians 15:22). There is now a union in Christ that provides an entirely new identity. “You are not your own, for you were bought with a price” (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). If Christ is a vine, you are a branch that has been grafted into the vine and made inseparable from it (John 15:5). You are no longer who you were. You are a new creation, remade in the image of Christ. You are justified, you are adopted, you are holy. In your salvation you have been transformed so that your deepest identity, your eternal identity, is not Satan’s but Christ’s, not sinner but saint. Be who you are!

The second thing to say to temptation is this: You have no power over me! There was a time when sin and temptation had complete power over you. You were under the dominion of Satan, a slave to sin and unrighteousness (Romans 6:20). But no longer. By putting your faith in Christ you have been liberated from sin’s authority. “We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin” (Romans 6:6-7). Not only that, but you have been indwelled by the Holy Spirit (1 Thessalonians 4:8) who gives you the power to not sin, to instead joyfully choose righteousness. The only power sin has is the power you give it when you refuse to take hold of the sin-crushing strength of the Holy Spirit. Never fail to remind your sin that it has no authority over you.

The third thing to speak to your temptation is this: You over-promise and under-deliver! Sin always promises so much and always delivers so little. Just think of what sin promised Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:4-5) and what it actually delivered to them (Genesis 3:7 – Revelation 22:21). Think of what sin promised to Abraham, to Samson, to David, to Judas, to Peter, to Ananias and Sapphira, and compare that to what it cost them. Even more, think of Jesus and what sin cost him (though the sin was his by imputation, not commission)! If you read your Bible with even half an eye open you cannot miss the vast chasm between what sin offers and what it delivers. If you read your life with even a hint of honesty you will see that same vast chasm. Sin promises joy but brings pain, sin promises happiness but brings shame, sin promises life but brings death, sin promises freedom but brings guilt, sin promises heaven but brings hell. It is always, always a lie.

The temptation to sin is inevitable when you are a sinful person living in a sinful world. But the actual committing of sin is by no means inevitable when you are made a saint through Christ Jesus. Learn to speak truth, his truth, to every temptation.

# Is it a trial? Or a temptation? How to tell the difference.

By [Mike Adkins](https://discovergrace.com/author/mikeadkins/)  
April 10, 2021 at [*https://discovergrace.com/is-it-a-trial-or-a-temptation-how-to-tell-the-difference/*](https://discovergrace.com/is-it-a-trial-or-a-temptation-how-to-tell-the-difference/)

Have you ever felt down and not known why? Whether it’s a general malaise or a deep sadness, King David could relate. Often in the Psalms, David looks inward and asks some variation of the question, “Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me?” (Psalm 42:5) Sometimes his despondence is the result of external circumstances – running for his life, being hunted like an animal (you know, everyday stressors). And sometimes his sorrow is a direct result of his own sin.

The greatest distinction between a trial and a temptation lies within its source.

In his letter to the dispersed church, James differentiates between these forms of suffering by using two key terms: “trials” and “temptations.” This is a helpful distinction for diagnosing personal soul sickness. *Are you experiencing a trial or a temptation? How do you distinguish between the two, and what next steps can you take in response?*

The greatest distinction between a trial and a temptation lies within its source.  
Temptation never comes from God. In fact, James writes, “When tempted, no one should say, ‘God is tempting me.’ For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He tempt anyone” (James 1:13). Temptations arise from one of three sources: our enemy the devil, who “prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour” (I Peter 5:8); love of the world and the things in the world (I John 2:15); and the desires of our own flesh, which war against the Spirit (Galatians 5:17).

In contrast, trials or “tests” often come from God for the sake of producing steadfastness and maturity. “Consider it pure joy,” James writes, “whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.” (James 1:2-4).

The testing of our faith is a painful, powerful gift from God, born out of His deepest love. Now I’ll be the first to admit, it never feels like love in the moment. Hebrews 12:11 says, “No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.” Whether your trial is the result of a broken world, a test sent by God, or the discipline of a Father who fiercely loves you – ultimately it wields great potential for training and blessing.

If the purpose of a trial is to train and mature us, what then is the purpose of a temptation? The ultimate goal of any and all temptation is the destruction of the person being tempted, for “after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death” (James 1:15). For this reason, the biblical response to temptation is never to engage or linger, but always to resist and flee. James 4:7 urges us to “resist” the devil, and I Corinthians tells us to “flee,” promising that God will faithfully provide a way out (I Corinthians 6:18, 10:13).

When it comes to tests, our response is a little bit different. Instead of thinking in terms of “resist” or “yield,” we must think in terms of “pass” or “fail.” Make no mistake, Christ longs for us to pass because He wants to develop godliness within us. Like any faithful teacher dedicated to the growth of his disciple, if you fail the test, He will administer it again. It may not come in the same form, but it will come again because Christ is committed to developing steadfastness within you and me. He is committed to our ultimate good because He is a good and faithful Shepherd.

Temptations lead to death and tests lead to life. 2 Corinthians 7:10 talks about a similar principle using the terms “godly sorrow” and “worldly sorrow.” Paul writes, “Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.” *Is the sorrow in your life leading you toward Jesus or away from Him?* That is the ultimate question because the answer is (quite literally) a matter of life or death.

Let the sorrow in your life lead you to Jesus. Let it draw your heart close to His (James 4:8). Whether you come to Him for satisfaction so you may withstand temptation, or you come to Him for absolution because you’ve already given in – you will encounter the same Christ, One who welcomes and loves you regardless. So come to Him when the test is minor, and you think it’s too insignificant to mention. Come to Him when the test is more than you can possibly bear. Come when you pass and when you fail. What’s important is not why you come to Jesus, but that you come at all.

**Matthew chapter 6**

[J.C. Ryle](https://www.gracegems.org/23/ryle_sermons.htm), 1856 at [*https://www.gracegems.org/Ryle/m06.htm*](https://www.gracegems.org/Ryle/m06.htm)

*"Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven.  Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.  But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,  that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly.*

*"And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.  But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.  And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.  Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.* [Matthew 6:1-8](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Matt%206.1-8)

In this part of the sermon on the mount the Lord Jesus gives us instruction on two subjects. One is that of giving alms. The other is that of prayer. Both were subjects to which the Jews attached great importance. Both in themselves deserve the serious attention of all professing Christians.

Observe that our Lord takes it for granted, *that* ***all who call themselves His disciples will GIVE ALMS.*** He assumes as a matter of course, that they will think it a solemn duty to give, according to their means, to relieve the needs of others. The only point He handles is the *manner* in which the duty should be done. This is a weighty lesson. It condemns the selfish stinginess of many in the matter of giving money. How many are "rich towards themselves," but poor towards God! How many never give a farthing to do good to the bodies and souls of men! And have such people any right to be called Christians, in their present state of mind? It may be well doubted. A giving Savior should have giving disciples.

Observe again that our Lord takes it for granted, *that* ***all who call themselves His disciples will PRAY.***He assumes this also as a matter of course. He only gives directions as to the best way of praying. This is another lesson which deserves to be continually remembered. It teaches plainly that prayerless people are not genuine Christians. It is not enough to join in the prayers of the congregation on Sundays, or attend the prayer of a family on week-days. There must be private prayer also. Without this we may be outward members of Christ's church, but we are not living members of Christ.

But what are the rules laid down for our guidance about almsgiving and praying? They are few and simple. But they contain much matter for thought.

In GIVING, ***everything like ostentation is to be abhorred and avoided.***We are not to give as if we wished everybody to see how liberal and charitable we are, and desired the praise of our fellow men. We are to shun everything like *display*. We are to give quietly, and make as little noise as possible about our charities. We are to aim at the spirit of the proverbial saying, "Don't let your left hand know what your right hand does."

In PRAYING, *the principal object to be sought, is to be alone with God.* We should endeavor to find some place where no mortal eye sees us, and where we can pour out our hearts with the feeling that no one is looking at us but God. This is a rule which many find it very difficult to follow. The poor man and the servant often find it almost impossible to be really alone. But it is a rule which we must all make great efforts to obey. Necessity, in such cases, is often the mother of invention. When a person has a real desire to find some place, where he can be in secret with his God, he will generally find a way.

In all our duties, whether giving, or praying, the great thing to be kept in mind is, *that* ***we have to do with a heart-searching and all-knowing God.*** Everything like formality, affectation, or mere bodily service, is abominable and worthless in God's sight. He takes no account of the quantity of money we give, or the quantity of words we use. The one thing at which His all-seeing eye looks is the nature of our motives, and the state of our hearts. "Our Father sees in secret."

May we all remember these things. Here lies a rock, on which many are continually making spiritual shipwreck. They flatter themselves that all must be right with their souls, if they only perform a certain amount of "religious duties." They forget that God does not regard the quantity, but the quality of our service. His favor is not to be bought, as many seem to suppose, by the formal repetition of a number of words, or the self-righteous payment of a sum of money to a charitable institution. Where are our hearts? Are we doing all, whether we give or pray, "as to the Lord, and not to men?" Do we realize the eye of God? Do we simply and solely desire to please Him, who "sees in secret," and by whom "actions are weighed?" ([1 Sam. 2:3](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1%20Sam.%202.3).) Are we sincere? These are the sort of questions, with which we should daily ply our souls.

**MATTHEW 6:9-15**

*In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.  Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.  Give us this day our daily bread.  And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors.  And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.  "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.  But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.* [Matthew 6:9-15](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Matt%206.9-15)

Perhaps no part of Scripture is so well known as this. Its words are familiar, wherever Christianity is found. Thousands, and tens of thousands, who never saw a Bible, or heard the pure Gospel, are acquainted with "Our Father," and "Paternoster." Happy would it be for the world, if this prayer was as well known in the spirit, as it is in the letter!

Perhaps no part of Scripture is so *full*, and so *simple* at the same time, as this. It is the first prayer which we learn to offer up, when we are little children. Here is its simplicity. It contains the germ of everything which the most advanced saint can desire. Here is its fullness. The more we ponder every word it contains, the more we shall feel, "this prayer is of God."

The Lord's prayer consists of ten parts or sentences. There is one declaration of the Being to whom we pray. There are three prayers respecting His name, His kingdom, and His will. There are four prayers respecting our daily needs, our sins, our weakness, and our dangers. There is one profession of our feeling towards others. There is one concluding ascription of praise. In all these parts we are taught to say "we," and "our." We are to remember others, as well as ourselves. On each of these parts a volume might be written. We must content ourselves at present with taking up sentence by sentence, and marking out the direction in which each sentence points.

The first sentence declares ***to whom we are to pray****--*"Our *Father* who is in heaven." We are not to cry to saints and angels, but to the everlasting Father, the Father of spirits, the Lord of heaven and earth. We call Him Father, in the lowest sense, as our Creator; as Paul told the Athenians, "in him we live, and move, and have our being--we are also his offspring." ([Acts 17:28](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Acts%2017.28).) We call Him Father in the highest sense, as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, reconciling us to Himself, through the death of His Son. ([Col. 1:20-22](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Col.%201.20-22).) We profess that which the Old Testament saints only saw dimly, if at all--we profess to be His children by faith in Christ, and to have "the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Father." ([Rom. 8:15](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Rom.%208.15).) This, we must never forget, is the sonship that we must desire, if we would be saved. Without faith in Christ's blood, and union with Him, it is vain to talk of trusting in the Fatherhood of God.

The second sentence is ***a petition respecting God's name****--*"May your name be kept holy." By the "name" of God we mean all those attributes under which He is revealed to us--His power, wisdom, holiness, justice, mercy, and truth. By asking that they may be "holy," we mean that they may be made known and glorified. The glory of God is the first thing that God's children should desire. It is the object of one of our Lord's own prayers--"Father, glorify your name." ([John 12:28](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/John%2012.28).) It is the purpose for which the world was created. It is the end for which the saints are called and converted. It is the chief thing we should seek, that "in all things God may be glorified." ([1 Peter 4:11](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1%20Pet%204.11).)

The third sentence is ***a petition concerning God's kingdom****--*"May your kingdom come." By His kingdom we mean first, the kingdom of *grace* which God sets up and maintains in the hearts of all living members of Christ, by His Spirit and word. But we mean chiefly, the kingdom of *glory* which shall one day be set up, when Jesus shall come the second time, and "all men shall know Him from the least to the greatest." This is the time when sin, and sorrow, and Satan shall be cast out of the world. It is the time when the Jews shall be converted, and the fullness of the Gentiles shall come in, ([Rom. 11:25](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Rom.%2011.25),) and a time that is above all things to be desired. It therefore fills a foremost place in the Lord's prayer. We ask that which is expressed in the words of the Burial service, "that it may please you to hasten your kingdom."

The fourth sentence is ***a petition concerning God's will****--*"May your will be done, as in heaven, so on earth." We here pray that God's laws may be obeyed by men as perfectly, readily, and unceasingly, as they are by angels in heaven. We ask that those who now obey not His laws, may be taught to obey them, and that those who do obey them, may obey them better. Our truest happiness is perfect submission to God's will, and it is the highest charity to pray that all mankind may know it, obey it, and submit to it.

The fifth sentence is***a petition respecting our own daily needs****--*"give us this day our daily bread." We are here taught to acknowledge our entire dependence on God, for the supply of our daily necessities. As Israel required daily manna, so we require daily "bread." We confess that we are poor, weak, needy creatures, and beseech Him who is our Maker to take care of us. We ask for "bread," as the simplest of our needs, and in that word we include all that our bodies require.

The sixth sentence is ***a petition respecting our sins****--*"Forgive us our debts." We confess that we are sinners, and need daily grants of pardon and forgiveness. This is a part of the Lord's prayer which deserves especially to be remembered. It condemns all self-righteousness and self-justifying. We are instructed here to keep up a continual habit of confession at the throne of grace, and a continual habit of seeking mercy and remission. Let this never be forgotten. We need daily to "wash our feet." ([John 13:10](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/John%2013.10).)

The seventh sentence is ***a profession respecting our own feelings towards others****--*we ask our Father to "forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors." This is the only profession in the whole prayer, and the only part on which our Lord comments and dwells, when He has concluded the prayer. The plain object of it is, to remind us that we must not expect our prayers for forgiveness to be heard, if we pray with malice and spite in our hearts towards others. To pray in such a frame of mind is mere formality and hypocrisy. It is even worse than hypocrisy. It is as much as saying, "Do not forgive me at all." Our prayer is nothing without charity. We must not expect to be forgiven, if we cannot forgive.

The eighth sentence is ***a petition respecting our weakness****--*"Bring us not into temptation." It teaches us that we are liable, at all times, to be led astray, and fall. It instructs us to confess our infirmity, and beseech God to hold us up, and not allow us to run into sin. We ask Him, who orders all things in heaven and earth, to restrain us from going into that which would injure our souls, and never to allow us to be tempted above that which we are able to bear. ([1 Cor. 10:13](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1%20Cor.%2010.13).)

The ninth sentence is ***a petition respecting our dangers****--*"deliver us from evil." We are here taught to ask God to deliver us from the evil that is in the world, the evil that is within our own hearts, and not least from that evil one, the devil. We confess that, so long as we are in the body, we are constantly seeing, hearing, and feeling the presence of evil. It is about us, and within us, and around us on every side. And we entreat Him, who alone can preserve us, to be continually delivering as from its power. ([John 17:15](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/John%2017.15).)

The last sentence is ***an ascription of praise****--*"yours is the kingdom, the power, and the glory." We declare in these words our belief, that the kingdoms of this world are the rightful property of our Father--that to Him alone belongs all "power,"--and that He alone deserves to receive all "glory." And we conclude by offering to Him the profession of our hearts, that we give Him all honor and praise, and rejoice that He is King of kings, and Lord of lords.

And now let us all examine ourselves, and see whether we really desire to have the things which we are taught to ask for in the Lord's Prayer. Thousands, it may be feared, repeat these words daily as a form, but never consider what they are saying. They care nothing for the "glory," the "kingdom," or the "will" of God. They have no sense of dependence, sinfulness, weakness, or danger. They have no love or charity towards their enemies. And yet they repeat the Lord's Prayer! These things ought not to be so. May we resolve that, by God's help, our hearts shall go together with our lips! Happy is he who can really call God his Father through Jesus Christ his Savior, and can therefore say a heart felt "Amen" to all that the Lord's Prayer contains.

**MATTHEW 6:16-24**

*"Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.  But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face,  so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.  "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal;  but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.  For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.  "The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light.  But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!  "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.* [Matthew 6:16-24](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Matt%206.16-24)

There are three subjects brought before us in this part of our Lord's sermon on the mount. These three are fasting, worldliness, and singleness of purpose in religion.

***Fasting****,* or occasional abstinence from food, in order to bring the body into subjection to the spirit, is a practice frequently mentioned in the Bible, and generally in connection with prayer. David fasted, when his child was sick. Daniel fasted, when he sought special light from God. Paul and Barnabas fasted, when they appointed elders. Esther fasted, before going in to Ahasuerus. It is a subject about which we find no direct command in the New Testament. It seems to be left to every one's discretion, whether he will fast or not. There is great wisdom in this. Many a poor man never has enough to eat, and it would be an insult to tell him to fast. Many a sickly person can hardly be kept well with the closest attention to diet, and could not fast without bringing on illness. It is a matter in which every one must be persuaded in his own mind, and not be hasty to condemn others, who do not agree with him. One thing only must never be forgotten. Those who fast should do it *quietly, secretly, and without ostentation*. Let them not "appear to men" to fast. Let them not fast to man, but to God.

***Worldliness***is one of the greatest dangers that beset man's soul. It is no wonder that we find our Lord speaking strongly about it. It is an treacherous, harmful, enticing, and powerful enemy. It seems so innocent to pay close attention to our business! It seems so harmless to seek our happiness in this world, so long as we keep clear of open sins! Yet here is a rock on which many make shipwreck to all eternity. They "lay up treasure on earth," and forget to "lay up treasure in heaven." May we all remember this! Where are our hearts? What do we love best? Are our chief affections on things in earth, or things in heaven? Life or death depends on the answer we can give to these questions. If our treasure is earthly, our hearts will be earthly also. "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be."

***Singleness of purpose***is one great secret of spiritual prosperity. If our eyes do not see distinctly, we cannot walk without stumbling and falling. If we attempt to work for two different masters, we are sure to give satisfaction to neither. It is just the same with respect to our souls. We cannot serve Christ and the world at the same time. It is vain to attempt it. The thing cannot be done. The ark and Dagon will never stand together. God must be king over our hearts. His law, His will, His precepts must receive our first attention. Then, and not until then, everything in our inward man will fall into its right place. Unless our hearts are so ordered, everything will be in confusion. "Your whole body will be full of darkness."

Let us learn from our Lord's instruction about fasting, ***the great importance of cheerfulness in our religion.*** Those words, "anoint your head, and wash your face," are full of deep meaning. They should teach us to aim at letting men see, that we find Christianity makes us happy. Never let us forget that there is no religion in looking melancholy and gloomy. Are we dissatisfied with Christ's wages, and Christ's service? Surely not! Then let us not look as if we were.

Let us learn from our Lord's caution about worldliness ***what immense need we all have to watch and pray against an earthly spirit.*** What are the vast majority of professing Christians round us doing? They are "laying up treasure on earth." There can be no mistake about it. Their tastes, their ways, their habits tell a fearful tale. They are not "laying up treasure in heaven." Oh! let us all beware that we do not sink into hell by paying excessive attention to lawful things. Open transgression of God's law slays its thousands, but worldliness its tens of thousands.

Let us learn from our Lord's words about the "single eye," ***the true secret of the failures****,* which so many Christians seem to make in their religion. There are failures in all quarters. There are thousands in our churches uncomfortable, ill at ease, and dissatisfied with themselves, and they hardly know why. The reason is revealed here. They are trying to keep in with both sides. They are endeavoring to please God and please man, to serve Christ and serve the world at the same time. Let us not commit this mistake. Let us be decided, thorough-going, uncompromising followers of Christ. Let out motto be that of Paul, "One thing I do." ([Phil. 3:13](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Phil.%203.13).) Then we shall be happy Christians. We shall feel the sun shining on our faces. Heart, head, and conscience will all be full of light. *Decision* is the secret of happiness in religion. Be decided for Christ, and "your whole body will be full of light."