

FAMILY WORSHIP HELPS

WEEK 102

THIS WEEK'S FOCUS

QUESTION 106: *What do we pray for in the sixth petition?*

ANSWER: In the sixth petition (which is, And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil) we pray, that God would either keep us from being tempted to sin, or support and deliver us when we are tempted.



MONDAY



Praise: Sing Psalm 19B

Scripture: Read Isaiah 45:5-7; James 1:13; Psalm 66:10-12

Key Thought: *In the sixth petition we acknowledge God's sovereignty over all things.*

Questions:

- ☞ What is meant by God's "sovereignty"?
- ☞ Is God sovereign over everything, including the devil?
- ☞ Is there a difference between "tempting us" and "leading us into temptation"?

Prayer

Notes: The sixth petition of the Lord's Prayer concerns our need to be kept and delivered from sin. It begins by acknowledging that God is absolutely sovereign over all of His creatures and all of their actions. For this reason, we are taught by Jesus to pray that God would not lead us into temptation. This, of course, immediately raises a difficult question in the mind of the attentive reader. Doesn't James plainly tell us that God does not tempt anyone with evil? Why, then, are we told to pray that God would not lead us into temptation? The answer to this question lies in a proper understanding of the sovereignty of God and the place of "second causes" in the outworking of God's eternal purposes. It must be admitted at the outset that the human mind, limited as it is both by nature and by the corruption of sin, is not able to fully reconcile every intellectual difficulty concerning the nature and actions of God. He tells us in no uncertain terms that His ways are above our ways and His thoughts are above our thoughts. And yet, though we may not fully understand it, we can certainly grasp the idea that God is able to exercise absolute sovereign control over the universe and everything in it, while at the same time preserving the individual activity and responsibility of His creatures. The Puritans used the phrase "second causes" to identify the actual personal activities of created beings—for which they alone were accountable—and yet which were ordained by God Himself in order to accomplish His purposes in the world (see *Westminster Confession of Faith*, chapter 3, paragraph 1). When it comes to temptation, we must understand this truth. God does not tempt

us. He who is perfectly holy does not entice men to do what is abhorrent to His nature. Yet He is sovereign over all of our temptations, sometimes allowing us to be tempted (whether by the devil, or our fellow men, or by circumstances), in order to further His glory through the use of second causes. God will never tempt man to do evil, but He may (in His sovereign providence) place a man in the path of temptation. By acknowledging God's sovereignty in the sixth petition, we are directed to the best remedy in all temptation: Seek God's will and rely constantly upon His grace.



TUESDAY



Praise: Sing Psalm 19B

Scripture: Read James 1:13-16

Key Thought: *In the sixth petition we acknowledge our own weakness.*

Questions:

☪ Where does James place the accountability for temptation?

☪ Why is it important to be conscious of our weaknesses?

Prayer

Notes: Instead of blaming God for our shortcomings, as if He Himself tempted us to sin, James shows us who is to blame: Each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. So corrupt is the heart of man that there is no need for a positive force to move him to yield to temptation. If God simply ceases to hold back the natural desires of a man, he will run headlong after the objects of his lust. This is why Scripture commonly refers to sin as God “giving men over to their own lusts.” We are instructed to pray that we be not led into the way of temptation in order to remind us of our weakness. This reminder is essential. Without it we would surely become overconfident and fall into the snare of the devil and of our own hearts. “Here is matter for humiliation,” writes Thomas Watson, “that there is in us such an aptitude and proneness to yield to temptation. We are as ready to swallow a temptation as the fish to swallow the bait. . . . Like a woman that has a suitor, and does not need much wooing, but readily gives her consent, Satan comes wooing by temptation, and we soon yield; he strikes fire, and we are as dry tinder that catches the first spark; he knocks by temptation, and it is sad to think how soon we open the door to him, which is as if one should open the door to a thief” (commentary on the *Catechism*). Because of our susceptibility to temptation, we are directed to be daily in prayer that God would keep us from circumstances which, apart from His grace, would surely lead to our destruction. How little we comprehend the dangers inherent in our own hearts! John testifies of Jesus that “He knew what was in man” (John 2:25). It is for this reason that He taught His disciples to pray this petition.



WEDNESDAY



Praise: Sing Psalm 19B

Scripture: Read 1 Peter 5:8-9; 2 Corinthians 2:11

Key Thought: *In the sixth petition we acknowledge Satan's subtleties.*

Questions:

- ☞ To what animals is Satan compared in Scripture? Why?
- ☞ Does the devil ever give up trying to tempt us?
- ☞ What are some of the devices that Satan uses to tempt us?

Prayer

Notes: When we pray “lead us not into temptation,” we are reminded of our need to be watchful in prayer against the snares of our greatest enemy. Satan is called “the tempter” because of his constant efforts to lead men further and further into sin. Nor is his skill in this endeavor to be underestimated. Scripture compares him to a serpent because of his subtle ability to twist the truth and catch his victims unawares. Peter (no doubt writing from painful personal experience) warns, “your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Pet. 5:8). He is an insatiable predator. To discount his formidable power would be as dangerous as turning one’s back on a ravenous lion. In teaching us to watch and pray against temptation, our Lord would have us to be alert to the schemes of Satan. Paul also exhorts the Corinthians to be watchful, “lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices” (2 Cor. 2:11). The problem is that many Christians today, due to a lack of prayer and a disturbing ignorance of the Bible, are ignorant of Satan’s devices, and as a result they are easy prey. A great student of the Scriptures and a keen observer of the human condition, Thomas Watson listed no fewer than twenty-seven distinct subtle schemes commonly employed by the devil against men. How many can you think of? It is hard to pray “lead us not into temptation” if you don’t know how to recognize it when it comes.



THURSDAY



Praise: Sing Psalm 19B

Scripture: Read 1 Corinthians 10:1-14

Key Thought: *In the sixth petition we acknowledge God's grace.*

Questions:

- ☞ Can God use even temptations for our good? How?
- ☞ What comfort and defense does God give us in temptation?

Prayer

Notes: We began our consideration of this petition with the understanding that God is sovereign over all things, including our temptations. It follows that our heavenly Father is able to overrule Satan’s wicked schemes in order to demonstrate His power and grace in the lives of His people. Though Satan is permitted to buffet the children of the Lord with various temptations, yet God uses them to their benefit (not to mention, the greater condemnation of the old serpent). Saul persecuted Christians in Jerusalem by God’s permission, and the scattering of the saints

sent the seed of the gospel flying into Samaria and beyond. In the same way the Lord turns our temptations (which are inward persecutions) to the good in many marvelous ways. Through permitting us to be tempted, God tests and tries our sincerity, love, courage, and faith, strengthening them as silver is purified in a furnace. God permits His children to face temptation in order to humble their pride, or to prepare them to comfort others in similar temptations, or to give them a more fervent longing for heaven and a more heated abhorrence of this world. Not only this, but God supplies His people with much comfort and defense in the face of temptation (see Heb. 4:15; 1 Cor. 10:13).



FRIDAY



Praise: Sing Psalm 19B

Scripture: Read Romans 6:1-23

Key Thought: *In the sixth petition we call out for deliverance.*

Questions:

☞ How have the death and resurrection of Christ delivered us from sin?

☞ What means has God provided for our daily deliverance from evil?

Prayer

Notes: In the first part of the sixth petition we ask the Lord to keep us from temptation. In the second part, we seek to be delivered from the power of evil. This deliverance has been accomplished definitively through the death and resurrection of Christ, as Paul makes clear in Romans 6. Just as death does not have dominion over Him, so His indwelling presence in the hearts of those who have been born again means that sin does not have dominion over their hearts and bodies any longer. Yet this deliverance is worked out progressively in the life of the Christian through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. This progressive deliverance is accomplished through several means that God has appointed. The sixth petition exhorts us to seek out those means with all diligence, relying upon God's grace. These means include such obvious things as prayer and the reading of the Word. In addition to these, God exhorts us to fellowship, hopefulness, seriousness of mind, diligence, submission to godly authority, self-examination, avoidance of occasion and appearance of sin, and the cultivation of humility. In the use of such means, in the power of the Living Christ, God will "deliver us from evil."



Note: Only five lessons per week are included. You are encouraged to lead your family in worship seven days a week. On weekends, you may want to review or build upon the lessons from the previous week, discuss the sermon from Sunday morning, or work on questions from the Catechism or memory verses. These lesson suggestions are intended to provide a simple framework for parents to build upon. You are not limited to this content. The habit of morning and evening family worship is the biblical ideal. We hope you can use these lessons as a starting point for the development of a blessed practice of family worship in your home.