

“In this manner, therefore, pray: ... *And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.*”

Dear Fellow Redeemed,

This is a petition I know you all hold dear and use regularly. I think especially mothers and grandmothers pray this for their children and grandchildren on a regular basis. We do so because we know, as we just sang, “The world is very evil.” There are so many things that can happen that inflict physical harm to our bodies or our possessions. This includes every kind of disease, accidents, natural disasters, other people. So we pray for God to protect us and our loved ones from such troubles. And when someone we love and care for is sick or injured, we pray that God will deliver them from that and grant them healing. God invites us to pray about these things.

But more than that, we all know that this evil world is full of dangers and snares for our faith. These are far more dangerous because they can cause us to lose our life with God. Evolutionists and humanists try to do away with the belief in God all together. They are masters at making it sound ridiculous to believe in God or the Bible. As if that contradicts proven scientific facts. Others promote the sins of the flesh and make them sound good and right and they vehemently oppose anyone who says they are a sin. All the treasures and pleasures of the world seek to draw our attention away from God. Satan doesn’t have to get us to deny God if he can simply lead us to focus on worldly things and not nurture our faith with God’s word. Then there are those who try to undermine the faith from within. False teachers change parts of God’s simple word to suit their own liking. In doing so, they undermine the gospel of salvation by faith alone through grace alone.

With all these evils in the world isn’t it wonderful that we have the Almighty God—the one whom Jesus says “is greater than all,” (John 10:29) so close to us that we can call upon Him in every trouble? Jesus doesn’t tell us to shiver in our boots for fear of these dangers. Instead He teaches us to pray to the Father,

“Deliver Us from Evil.”

What a great blessing to be able to turn to the one who has power over all our enemies, both physical and spiritual. God also encourages our prayer by promising to deliver us. For example Psalm 121:7 - “The LORD shall preserve you from all evil; He shall preserve your soul.” The Apostle Paul passes on the assurance, “For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 8:38-39. Jesus promises, “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father’s hand.” John 10:27-29

These are great promises, but it is possible to gain a false sense of security. It is a mistake to think that God just does that automatically without our involvement. Let’s consider a few common abuses which can cause us to lose the benefit of God’s protection to deliver us from evil.

The first one is to **Over estimate our own Strength**. I just heard about a survey taken of over 200 spiritual leaders. These were all pastors, priests and ministers of some sort who had all become involved in an adulterous relationship. Every one of them admitted in this survey that they thought “That will never happen to me.” They never prayed, Lord, deliver me from that evil, because they couldn’t imagine that they would ever fall for it. It is dangerous to think that we are strong enough

or that we are not vulnerable to some evil. We need to understand that we are weak. We all have a sinful nature that is capable of any sin. When we understand our own weakness, we will turn to God and pray, "Deliver me from evil." Don't let me fall prey to any evil. Strengthen me to stand firm in the faith.

Secondly, we need to **Heed God's Warnings**. That is one of the ways in which God does deliver us from evil. He warns us about the many kinds of evil in the world so that we can avoid them. It does no good to pray, "Deliver me from evil," and then go and play among the wolves. For example God warns us again and again about the serious danger of false teaching. He tells us to "Beware of false prophets," for even though they may seem very friendly and sincere, they are like ravenous wolves. Matt. 7:15 He tells us to "Watch out for those who are causing divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which you have learned, AND AVOID THEM!" Rom. 16:17. Stay away from them. They are dangerous. Can we count on God's preservation if we ignore these warnings and let our children go to camps conducted by false teaching churches or attend a Bible study with a friend? Or if we know the danger our children face in the world and don't do anything about it; to just say, I know God will keep them, and not do anything to protect them, is to let them play among the lions and wolves. If we don't take God's warnings seriously we leave ourselves and our children vulnerable to those evil's.

The third thing to remember is that **God's strength and protection from evil comes through His Word**. His Word is the armor that we need to put on to protect us. If we know the danger, but don't take up the armor of God in His word we are still vulnerable. We can't just pray, "Deliver us from evil" and think now God will protect me. God gives us the protection, let's put it on.

On the other hand, when we recognize our own weakness and take God's warnings to heart and equip ourselves with the protection that God gives us, but we still worry what if it isn't enough. We have another comfort and reassurance to know that Jesus also prays this petition for us.

We see an example of that the night before Jesus was crucified for us, He prayed: "While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth." John 17:12-17. Peter foolishly relied on his own strength and thought he would never deny Jesus. He of course fell. But Jesus had prayed for him that his faith would not fail. Jesus did restore him.

May we pray this petition every day for ourselves and for our loved ones. May we also heed God's warnings and arm ourselves with His powerful word. And know that Jesus also prays for us with His Father. Then we can have the utmost confidence that the Father will deliver us from all evil throughout this life and one day He will deliver us from all evil of any kind as He delivers us to our eternal home in heaven. We know that God will hear and answer these prayers because to Him belongs the Kingdom, and the power and the glory forever. That is why we can close each of these prayers with a confident AMEN, Yes, Yes, it shall be so!

Amen.