

LORD'S DAY 52

127. Q. What is the sixth petition?

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

That is:

In ourselves we are so weak

that we cannot stand even for a moment.¹

Moreover, our sworn enemies -

the devil², the world³, and our own flesh⁴

do not cease to attack us.

Wilt Thou, therefore,

uphold and strengthen us

by the power of Thy Holy Spirit,

so that in this spiritual war⁵

we may not go down to defeat,

but always firmly resist our enemies,

until we finally obtain

the complete victory.⁶

- Psalm 103:14-16** For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust.¹⁵ As for man, his days are like grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourishes.¹⁶ For the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more.
John 15:1-5 I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.² Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.³ You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.⁴ Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.⁵ I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.
- 2 Corinthians 11:14** And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.
Ephesians 6:10-13 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.¹³ Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.
1 Peter 5:8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.
- John 15:18-21** If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you.¹⁹ If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.²⁰ Remember the word that I said to you, "A servant is not greater than his master." If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also.²¹ But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me.
- Romans 7:23** But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.
Galatians 5:17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.
- Matthew 10:19-20** But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak;²⁰ for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.
Matthew 26:41 Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.
Mark 13:33 Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is.
Romans 5:3-5 And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance;⁴ and perseverance, character; and character, hope.⁵ Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.
- 1 Corinthians 10:13** No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.
1 Thessalonians 3:13 so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.
1 Thessalonians 5:23 Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

128. Q. How do you conclude your prayer?

A. *For Thine is the kingdom,
and the power,
and the glory, for ever.*
That is:
All this we ask of Thee
because, as our King,
having power over all things,
Thou art both willing and able
to give us all that is good, ¹
and because not we
but Thy holy Name,
should so receive all glory
for ever. ²

1. **Romans 10:11-13** For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame." ¹² For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. ¹³ For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved."

2 Peter 2:9 then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment,

2. **Psalm 115:1** Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but to Your name give glory, BECAUSE of Your mercy, because of Your truth.

Jeremiah 33:8-9 I will cleanse them from all their iniquity by which they have sinned against Me, and I will pardon all their iniquities by which they have sinned and by which they have transgressed against Me. ⁹ Then it shall be to Me a name of joy, a praise, and an honor before all nations of the earth, who shall hear all the good that I do to them; they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness and all the prosperity that I provide for it.

John 14:13 And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

129. Q. What does the word *Amen* mean?

A. *Amen* means:
It is true and certain.
For God has much more certainly
heard my prayer
than I feel in my heart
that I desire this of Him.¹

1. **Isaiah 65:24** It shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear.

2 Corinthians 1:20 For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us.

2 Timothy 2:13 If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.



Each of the individual words of this petition is easy enough to understand. But the petition is not so easy to understand when we consider the combination of these words. The meaning of this petition has puzzled successive generations of Christians, and has different interpretations.

There are two parts to this last petition. "Lead us not into temptation" and "Deliver

us from the evil one." Many understand these two parts to be synonymous. The second part, they say, is merely a repetition of the first, or a clarification or explanation of the first. Thus they interpret the first in light of the second and deal with it as though it were only one petition. I doubt that this is correct. These are two petitions, related to each other, yet each having its own meaning, as I will endeavour to show.

Lead us not into temptation

We all understand what a temptation is. ***A temptation is a lure to do what is forbidden, an enticement to sin.***

What is not so clear is the meaning of the words, “*lead us.*” The subject of the phrase is the Father. The verb is active. That means that it is the Father who is acting. In the first part of this petition, the Father is portrayed as one who leads people into temptation.

Here we encounter some difficulty. For this phrase seems to imply that God tempts people. But we know Scripture well enough to realise that God does not tempt anyone. “*Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am tempted by God’; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone*” (James 1:13).

There are various attempts to solve this problem. There are some who translate the word *temptation* into *test*. The New English Bible, for instance, translates this petition as: “*Do not bring us to the test.*”

Those who translate this petition in this way, appeal to the fact that in the original there is only one word for *tempt* and *test*. In one place, it is translated as *temptation*, while in another it is translated *test*. For example we read in John 6:5,6: “*Then Jesus lifted up His eyes, and seeing a great multitude coming toward Him, He said to Philip, ‘Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?’ But this He said to **test** him, for He Himself knew what He would do.*” Christ wanted to test Philip, to see whether he believed in His divine power.

Those who translate this petition as, “*Do not bring us to the test,*” also have this in their favour—that the test and the temptation are bound together. What I mean is that whenever God tests us in some matter, Satan is there and tempts us in that very same matter. Think only of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil which stood in the Garden of Eden. God put that tree there to test Adam and Eve. God wanted to see whether they would be faithful. But God did not want them to sin. In fact, God warned them that they must

not eat of it, for if they did they would surely die.

Satan took that very same test and turned it into a temptation. He pointed out how delicious the fruit looked. He told them that they would not die. Rather, they would actually become like God, knowing good and evil. Thus Satan turned God’s test into a temptation. And so it is all through life. If God tests us with poverty to see whether we will trust Him, Satan will take that same test and tempt us to steal. If God tests us with prosperity, Satan will take that same test and tempt us to think that we are self-reliant and do not need God.

While there is something very appealing in this interpretation, there is one fact which prevents us from accepting it as correct. That is the fact that Scripture elsewhere tells us that the testing of our faith is good for us, and that we are to rejoice when we meet with fiery trials (cf. 1 Peter 4:12,13). Trials serve to test and refine our faith, as gold is refined in the furnace (cf. I Peter 1:6-7). It hardly seems correct, then, to ask God not to bring upon us these trials that serve for our benefit, and which we should receive with joy. It hardly seems correct, then, to read this petition as: “*Do not bring us to the test.*” We should retain the word *temptation*.

Some who retain the word *temptation* interpret this petition as a plea whereby we ask God to ***keep us from temptation.*** But this hardly seems correct. If it was God’s will that we should be kept from all temptation, then He would need to take us out of the world. For in this life we meet all kinds of stumbling blocks, all kinds of temptations. In Matthew 18:7 (NIV) we read: “*Woe to the world because of the things that cause people to sin! Such things must come...!*” Elsewhere Christ said, “*I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one*” (John 17:15). It does not seem correct, then, to interpret this petition as one whereby we ask the Father to spare us from all temptation.

Another explanation is that we ask the father to **preserve us in temptation**. They read this petition as if it read: "*Father, if it is Your will that we be tempted, please preserve us in this temptation.*" But that is not what this petition reads. We pray that the Lord may not lead us into temptation.

The words "*lead us*" are the critical words. In the original the word *lead* has the idea of carrying something and depositing it somewhere. We must take these words literally. We ask God not to deposit us into the sphere of temptation. We ask God not to carry us and hand us over to our enemies who will entice us and lure us to sin.

To understand these words we should return to the Old Testament. In the Old Testament God promised His people that if they were faithful, then the LORD would deliver Israel **from** the hands of their enemies (cf. Deuteronomy 21:10). But if His people were unfaithful, and if they sinned against God and aroused His wrath, God would deliver them **into** the hands of their enemies (cf. Leviticus 26:25, 1 Kings 8:46). That happened in the time of the exile. God gave His people into the power of the Assyrians and the Babylonians.

What God did physically to the nation of Israel He also does spiritually to His people. If God's people rebel against Him and harden their hearts, then God gives them over to the power of Satan.

King Ahab had constantly rebelled against God and refused to listen to the LORD's prophets. Thus God invited an evil spirit to tempt Ahab, so that Ahab might fall into the power of His enemy and allow the enemy to kill him. In 1 Kings 22:20-22 we read "*And the LORD said, 'Who will persuade (entice) Ahab to go up, that he may fall at Ramoth Gilead?' So one spoke in this manner, and another spoke in that manner. Then a spirit came forward and stood before the LORD, and said, 'I will persuade (entice) him.'* The LORD said to him, '*In what way?*' So he said, '*I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.'* And the LORD said, '*You shall persuade (entice) him, and also prevail. Go out and do so.*"

We find another example of this in 2 Samuel 24:1, "*Again the anger of the LORD was aroused against Israel, and He moved (incited) David against them to say, 'Go, number Israel and Judah.'*" In His wrath, God incited David against Israel. How did He do this? Through Satan. In the parallel passage (1 Chronicles 21:1) we read, "*Now Satan stood up against Israel, and moved David to number Israel.*" Because of Israel's sin, God led David into temptation by inviting Satan to tempt David.

There is also an incident in the New Testament which we should consider. In the church of Corinth there was a young man who was living in adultery with his father's wife (his step-mother). This man was arrogant of his sin and hardened his heart. Paul told the elders, "*In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus*" (1 Corinthians 5:4-5). Excommunication from the communion and supervision of the church is equated with delivering a person to Satan. In this instance God led this man into temptation.

There are times when instead of leading His people **out** of temptation, God actually leads them **into** it. Rather than deliver them **from** temptation, He deliberately leads them **into** temptation. This happens when God's anger is aroused because of the pride of His people, or because of their stubbornness in heeding His warnings. This also happens when His people flirt with sin instead of fleeing from it.

When God leads His people into temptation, He leaves them to their own power. They must stand alone. And because they are far weaker than the Tempter, their fall is certain. Thus God said to the evil spirit who was to tempt Ahab, "*You shall persuade (entice) him, and also prevail. Go out and do so*" (1 Kings 22:22).

This is the horrible situation which the Catechism envisions. The authors connect the Father leading us into temptation with

standing alone. And that thought makes us shudder! *Father, do not bring us into temptation, "for in ourselves we are so weak that we cannot stand even for a moment."* All our strength in fighting sin and resisting temptation is derived from God, and without the LORD's sustaining power we will surely fall. If the LORD should lead us into temptation, who is there who will enable us to resist it? If the LORD should lead us into temptation, then we will surely fall.

What we pray, then, in the first part of this petition is that we may never harden ourselves against God in stubborn pride, but always walk in humble faithfulness, that we may never flirt with sin, but always flee from it, lest our Father should ever deliver us into the power of the Tempter and we fall.

...But deliver us from the evil one.

In the first petition we pray that the occasion may never arise when the Father delivers us *into* the power of our enemy, the devil. In the second petition we pray that the opposite may happen. We pray that we may be delivered *from* the power of our enemy.

When we pray "*Deliver us from the evil one,*" we do not pray that we may be spared from all temptation. For as the Catechism teaches us, "*our sworn enemies—the devil, the world and our own flesh—never cease to attack us*" (Q&A 127). We are not asking to be excused from this war, so to speak. Rather, we are praying that we may be victorious in this war. We pray that the Holy Spirit may equip us with the whole armour of God so that we may withstand the wiles of the devil (cf. Ephesians 6:11). "*Wilt Thou, therefore, uphold and strengthen us by the power of Thy Holy Spirit so that we may not go down to defeat, but always firmly resist our enemies.*"

We pray this petition because we know that we cannot withstand our enemies alone. We are weak and the power of our enemies is very great.

We realise and confess our unworthiness to receive an answer to this petition. For

when we sinned against God, we were rightfully placed under the tyranny of the devil. We were justly subjected to His power and made slaves of His will.

It is only because of the grace of God in Jesus Christ that God is able to answer this petition. In Luke 4:1-2 we read that Jesus Christ "*was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being tempted for forty days by the devil.*" Christ was led into temptation, for He bore the curse that lay upon us. In every respect He was tempted as we are, but He remained faithful (cf. Hebrews 4:15). Though He was innocent of ever giving into temptation, He was nevertheless delivered into the hands of His enemies through whom He suffered and died (cf. Luke 24:7). He was innocently delivered into their hands, in order that we sinners might be delivered from their hands. It is only because of Christ's sacrifice that we have any hope of God hearing our prayer.

It is also through Jesus Christ that God answers this petition. Because of His sacrifice He has received all power in heaven and on earth. By this power Christ has broken the power of our three mortal enemies and set us free. He has destroyed and continues to destroy the works of the devil (cf. 1 John 3:8). He has overcome the world (cf. John 16:33). And through His Spirit He condemned sin in the flesh so that we might walk in newness of life (cf. Romans 8:3).

As a result of the work of our Saviour, we have this wonderful promise from God: "*No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it*" (1 Corinthians 10:13). As a result of this promise, we have no excuse if we give into temptation. We cannot excuse our sin because of the strength of our enemy, nor because of our own weakness and depravity, for God promises to provide the way of escape. If we give into temptation, it is because at that moment we did not cling to this promise in faith.

For Thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory

The Lord's Prayer is concluded with what is called a *doxology*, which means *words of praise*.⁶ These words praise God as the all-powerful and glorious king.

"Thine is the kingdom." God alone rules as the Sovereign King of all creation. Though there is another kingdom on earth, namely, the kingdom of darkness, it is God's kingdom which triumphs and endures for ever.

"Thine is the power." Though there are other powers in the world, they have received their power from God. As such, God's power is far greater than any other power, and without God's permission these powers can do nothing.

This doxology does not only give praise to God. It also expresses our **assurance** or **confidence** concerning the six petitions that have been offered in this prayer:

1. Through the doxology we express our assurance or confidence in God's **ability**. As the all-powerful King, God is able to grant us all that is good. Nothing of what we have asked in this prayer are too difficult for God (cf. Mark 9:23).
2. Through the doxology we express our assurance or confidence in God's **willingness** to answer our prayer. A good and faithful king will certainly seek the well-being of his subjects. This is even more true of God, who is a perfect king. We may be sure that our heavenly King is willing to provide the citizens of His kingdom with all that is necessary for body and soul, for this life and for the next, as we have asked in this prayer.

"Thine is the glory." God is glorified when we turn to Him for the things that we

need. For then we acknowledge Him as the powerful and benevolent Father who loves His children and will provide them with all they need. On the other hand, God is greatly dishonoured if His children fail to turn to Him for their needs. You could imagine God saying, *"Why didn't you come to Me and ask for the things you need? Did you doubt My love for you, as though I would withhold any good from you? Or did you doubt My ability to provide?"* When God's children bring their petitions to God, He is glorified before men. Thus we ask all these things from God so that His holy Name might receive all glory and honour.

Amen

Little children associate the word *Amen* with the end of a prayer. They don't know what it really means, but to them it means something like, *"The End."* When they hear this word they know that the prayer is finished. Often first impressions are lasting impressions and it is difficult to change this impression.

The word *Amen* is derived from a Hebrew word which refers to what is faithful and trustworthy, what is firm and sure. Christ often used this word when He said literally, *"Amen, Amen, I say to you..."* (cf. John 3:3,5,11; John 5:24,25,26).¹⁰ This meant that the statement which He made was trustworthy and true, and worthy of full acceptance.

At the end of our prayer, *Amen* means *"It is true and certain."* What is true and certain? That the kingdom and the power and the glory belong to God. By using the word *Amen*, we confirm with full assurance our faith in God's willingness and ability to grant us all that is good. We conclude our prayer with a word of confidence in God. As our all powerful and glorious King He will hear our prayer and provide.

9. Some ancient manuscripts do not contain this doxology. Because various English versions of the Bible rely more heavily on different manuscripts, there are some English versions which lack this doxology as well. It is found in a footnote in the Revised Standard Version and New International Version. The New American Standard Version has them in the text itself, but puts them in brackets. The King James Version and the New King James Version include it in the text, with a footnote indicating the absence of these words in some manuscripts.

10. This is translated "Most assuredly I say to you" (NKJV) or "I tell you the truth" (NIV) or "Truly, truly I say to you" (RSV, NASB).

This confidence or faith is required in prayer. James wrote, "**But let him ask in faith, with no doubting**, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways" (James 1:6-8). Doubting is an insult to God. It is a denial, either of God's ability or God's willingness, to answer prayer. It is a denial either of God's power, His love or His grace.

This confidence is bound up in Christ Jesus. For although we do not deserve anything for which we pray, yet God will hear and answer our prayer for Christ's sake. Christ assured us of this when He said, "And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it" (John 14:13,14). As Paul wrote, "For all the promises of God in Him [Jesus] are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us" (2 Corinthians 1:20).

It should be stated that our confidence in prayer depends also upon the content of our prayer. We cannot confidently expect God to grant us what He has not promised.

This must be stated in light of the *Faith Movement*, which propagates the idea that you may pray for whatever you wish and God will grant it to you, providing you pray with enough faith, enough confidence. Their motto is "Name it - Claim it." You can ask God to give you a new car for each week of the year, and if you pray with enough faith, you will receive it. This is a false gospel, and their confidence is a false confidence. We may confidently expect all that, and only that, which God has **promised** in His Word, namely, what we need for body and soul.

The promises of God are beautifully summarised in the Form for Baptism. If you have received the sign and seal of the covenant, then reflect upon these promises which God has made with you.

When we are baptised into the Name of the Father, God the Father testifies and seals to us that he establishes an eternal covenant of grace with us. He

adopts us to be His children and heirs, and promises to provide us with all good and avert all evil or turn it to our benefit. When we are baptised into the Name of the Son, God the Son promises us that he washes us in His blood from all our sins and unites us with Him in His death and resurrection. Thus we are freed from our sins and accounted righteous before God.

When we are baptised into the Name of the Holy Spirit, God the Holy Spirit assures us by this sacrament that He will dwell in us and make us living members of Christ, imparting to us what we have in Christ, namely, the cleansing from our sins and the daily renewal of our lives, till we shall finally be presented without blemish among the assembly of God's elect in life eternal. (Book of Praise—Anglo-Genevan Psalter, Premier Printing, 1984, p. 584).

My prayer is that the Spirit of God may work this confidence of God's promises in you, the covenant youth, so that you may voice your "Amen" before God and His church by making public profession of faith.



Questions:

1. How many parts are there to the last petition in the Lord's Prayer? Is the second part a mere repetition or clarification of the first part?
2. What is temptation?
3. What is the first part of this petition? What does this portray? With what words do we have difficulty? Why?
4. How does the New English Bible translate the first part of this petition? To what do they appeal? What else favours this translation? Explain what this means.
5. Why does it not seem correct to read this petition: "*Do not bring us to the test*"?
6. What do we mean if we ask God to keep us **from** all temptation? Is this what we ask God in this petition? Why (not)?
7. What do we mean if we ask God to preserve us **in** temptation? Is this what we ask God in this petition? Why (not)?
8. What do the words "*lead us*" mean in the original language of Scripture? Should we take these words literally here? What are we asking God, then?
9. Would God ever give his people into the power of the devil? Why?
10. In your own words, recount briefly the events of 1 Kings 22:20-22, and explain why this happened.
11. In your own words, tell how God led David into temptation.
12. When does God lead His people out of temptation? When does He lead them into temptation?
13. What happens when God leads His people into temptation? Why is it such a horrible thing to be led into temptation? If God leads us into temptation, what is sure to happen?
13. What is the difference between the first part and the second part of this petition?
14. When we pray "*Deliver us from the evil one,*" are we asking to be excused from this spiritual war? If not, what are we asking?
15. Why do we pray this petition?
16. According to Luke 4:1-2 who led Christ into temptation? Who tempted Him? Why was He led into temptation? What does Hebrews 4:15 teach us?
17. Though Christ never gave into temptation, what happened to Him? What comfort does this give us?
18. What has Christ received as a result of His sacrifice? What has He done with this power?
19. What wonderful promise do we read of in 1 Corinthians 10:13? What is the result of this promise? Why is it that we give into temptation?
20. With what do we close the Lord's Prayer? What does this mean?
21. What do we declare concerning God in this doxology?
22. What do we express through this doxology? In what two things?
23. What does the word *Amen* mean? What do we confirm by using it at the end of our prayer? Is this so important? Why?
24. What does the *Faith Movement* teach concerning prayer?
Can we be confident that God will provide us with everything that we ask of Him? What may we confidently expect from God?