

HOW TO PRAY: PART VI

Lead Us NOT INTO TEMPTATION.

MATTHEW 6 / PSALM 51 / 1 CORINTHIANS 10

Matthew 6:13 | Always read these two petitions (another word for “prayer request”) as ONE. Even in Luther’s Small and Large Catechisms, he sees them as two units that go together: temptation isn’t about too much chocolate or even looking at a website you shouldn’t, **this is about battling the evil one**. Because if he can convince you to find your fulfillment in such things, then you won’t hear Hear Jesus, you won’t participate in His restoration of all things. You will learn to despise yourself and others. You will *want* the darkness. See **John 3:16-21**. To be sure: God tempts no one (see **James 1:13-15**), but we WILL face temptation in this world! It is the reality of our world! Not only does the devil prowl around looking to destroy us (see **1 Peter 5:8-11**), but we encounter countless demons, powers and rulers in this dark world (see **Ephesians 6:10-18**)!

This is the reality of the world we live in: a world in a struggle between good and evil, a world that has been invaded by **the Rescuer** who was born in a feeding trough, battled the prince of this dark world by quoting Scripture, eating with sinners, loving the unlovable, and seeking and saving what was lost by His very blood; dying upon the cross to rescue us from the evil by taking it upon Himself, taking it all the way into the ground where he lay for three days and then ROSE AGAIN to begin the NEW CREATION which started then, continues today and will continue to advance through you and me! And so: we pray for that battle in each of our lives, every single day.

Psalm 51:11-12 | A powerful example of the Hebrew idiom of a strong “*dialectical negation*” (where a seemingly negative statement is related to an ultimate positive to establish extreme emphasis), just as we have in the Lord’s Prayer! In our language, we would say it like: **“Not just this...but especially that!”** Others: **Hosea 6:6; 1 Samuel 8:7; Isaiah 1:11 & 16-17; Matthew 18:22; Mark 9:37; John 7:16; 1 Corinthians 1:17.**

Special thanks to scholars Andrew Bartelt and Jeffrey Gibbs, see their respective works for more on this topic!

1 Corinthians 10:13-17 & 11:26 | **This is about battling the evil one and all those spiritual creatures which serve him!** When we face temptation, the Lord is right there with us, facing it with us, helping us to overcome! He has provided a way: HIS VERY BODY AND BLOOD! His Body: present in the bread, present in His people! His Blood: the power of New Covenant in our very bodies, bringing forgiveness and complete restoration not to us just as individuals, but to us as COMMUNITY.

Dig Deeper: Matthew 26:40-46; Romans 6:1-14; Galatians 6:1-18; 1 Peter 4:1-5:11; Hebrews 2:5-18 & 4:14-16; Revelation 2:8-11 & 3:7-13