

The Lord's Prayer: The Seventh Petition

But deliver us from evil.

What does this mean? We pray in this petition, as in a summary, that our Father in heaven would deliver us from all manner of evil, of body and soul, property and honor, and at last, when our last hour shall come, grant us a blessed end, and graciously take us from this vale of tears to Himself into heaven.

1. We pray "lead us not into temptation, *but* deliver us from evil" (or "the Evil One"). Much of the evil that befalls us is a result of our faltering in temptation. Yet Jesus would make us bold to pray that *our* Father (His and ours) deliver us anyway. Why can we pray so? Who was tempted for us, in our place, and overcame? (Matthew 4:1–11) What is His prayer for His own? (Luke 22:31–34)
2. In a battle of you, yourself, versus the Evil One, who will win? Who must fight for us, and how? (Colossians 1:13–14, 15–20)

From Luther's *Large Catechism* (III: Lord's Prayer)

¹¹³ In the Greek text this petition reads thus: Deliver or preserve us from the Evil One, or the Malicious One; and it looks as if He were speaking of the devil, as though He would comprehend everything in one, so that the entire substance of all our prayer is directed against our chief enemy. For it is he who hinders among us everything that we pray for: the name or honor of God, God's kingdom and will, our daily bread, a cheerful good conscience, etc.

¹¹⁴ Therefore we finally sum it all up and say: Dear Father, pray, help that we be rid of all these calamities.

¹¹⁵ But there is nevertheless also included whatever evil may happen to us under the devil's kingdom—poverty, shame, death, and, in short, all the agonizing misery and heartache of which there is such an unnumbered multitude on the earth. For since the devil is not only a liar, but also a murderer, he constantly seeks our life, and wreaks his anger whenever he can afflict our bodies with misfortune and harm. Hence it comes that he often breaks men's necks or drives them to insanity, drowns some, and incites many to commit suicide, and to many other terrible calamities.

¹¹⁶ Therefore there is nothing for us to do upon earth but to pray against this arch-enemy without ceasing. For unless God preserved us, we would not be safe from him even for an hour.

¹¹⁷ Hence you see again how God wishes us to pray to Him also for all the things which affect our bodily interests, so that we seek and expect help nowhere else except in Him.

¹¹⁸ But this matter He has put last; for if we are to be preserved and delivered from all evil, the name of God must first be hallowed in us, His kingdom must be with us, and His will be done. After that He will finally preserve us from sin and shame, and, besides, from everything that may hurt or injure us.