

The Lord's Prayer: The Sixth Petition

And lead us not into temptation.

What does this mean? God, indeed, tempts no one; but we pray in this petition that God would guard and keep us, so that the devil, the world, and our flesh may not deceive us, nor seduce us into misbelief, despair, and other great shame and vice; and though we be assailed by them, that still we may finally overcome and gain the victory.

1. Temptation is a serious matter, seriously dealt with in Scripture (Matthew 18:7–9). What does Jesus mean to imply by the drastic measures suggested there (which, in truth, don't go nearly far enough)? What do we learn about our human nature in temptation (Matthew 26:41; Matthew 15:19)
2. Yet there is a "way of escape" (1 Corinthians 10:1–16). Who has defeated temptation on our behalf (Matthew 4:1–11)? What do we have in Him that "transfers us from the realm of darkness" (Colossians 1:11–14)?

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

¹⁰⁷ To feel temptation is therefore a far different thing from consenting or yielding to it. We must all feel it, although not all in the same manner, but some in a greater degree and more severely than others; as, the young suffer especially from the flesh, afterwards, they that attain to middle life and old age, from the world, but others who are occupied with spiritual matters, that is, strong Christians, from the devil.

¹⁰⁸ But such feeling, as long as it is against our will and we would rather be rid of it, can harm no one. For if we did not feel it, it could not be called a temptation. But to consent thereto is when we give it the reins and do not resist or pray against it.

¹⁰⁹ Therefore we Christians must be armed and daily expect to be incessantly attacked, in order that no one may go on in security and heedlessly, as though the devil were far from us, but at all times expect and parry his blows. For though I am now chaste, patient, kind, and in firm faith, the devil will this very hour send such an arrow into my heart that I can scarcely stand. For he is an enemy that never desists nor becomes tired, so that when one temptation ceases, there always arise others and fresh ones.

¹¹⁰ Accordingly, there is no help or comfort except to run hither and to take hold of the Lord's Prayer, and thus speak to God from the heart: Dear Father, Thou hast bidden me pray; let me not relapse because of temptations. Then you will see that they must desist, and finally acknowledge themselves conquered.

¹¹¹ Else if you venture to help yourself by your own thoughts and counsel, you will only make the matter worse and give the devil more space. For he has a serpent's head, which if it gain an opening into which he can slip, the whole body will follow without check. But prayer can prevent him and drive him back.