

July 14, 2013

## The Sixth Petition

Lead us not into temptation.

What does this mean?

God surely tempts no one to sin, 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 or lead us into false belief, despair, and other great and shameful sins; and though we are tempted by them, we pray that we may overcome and win the victory.

1. Martin Luther defined temptation as any situation in which a person is led “into false belief, despair, and other great and shameful sins.” Review the following familiar accounts from the Bible. In each account, identify the temptation, its source, and its result.

Satan through the serpent speaks to Eve in the Garden of Eden.

King David sees Bathsheba from his rooftop.

Judas Iscariot feels the guilt of betraying Jesus.

2. What common temptations, from within and without, do we encounter today? What special challenges do we face because we live in a materialistic society? a humanistic society?

3. God’s Word tells us that it is the unholy trinity—the devil, the world, and our sinful flesh—that deceives us and leads us astray by temptation. What do the following passages impress on us concerning ourselves and the temptations of the unholy trinity?

“Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak” (Matthew 26:41).

“If you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall! No temptation has seized you except what is common to man” (1 Corinthians 10:12,13).

4. The devil, the world, and our sinful flesh are formidable enemies who can destroy our faith. God, however, fills us with comfort and peace. What comfort do you receive from the following passages?

“Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted” (Hebrews 2:18).

“We have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin” (Hebrews 4:15).

“God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it” (1 Corinthians 10:13).

5. Evaluate the following statements:

Some of the best advice for overcoming Satan and the sinful world is simply: “Flee temptation!”

Sometimes God will allow us to deal with temptation so that our faith may be tested and exercised.

We should commend monks and nuns for voluntarily living in secluded places where they can avoid temptation.

6. Saint Paul gave the Ephesian Christians instruction for battling the devil and his temptations. Paul wrote: “Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God” (Ephesians 6:10,11). Among the weapons we receive from God is “the sword of the Spirit . . . the word of God” (Ephesians 6:17). Recall how Jesus used this weapon to battle Satan and temptation. Recall how Joseph used this weapon. How may we become more adept in using the sword of the Spirit?

Luther said:

“A mighty fortress is our God, a trusty shield and weapon; he helps us free from every need that has us now overtaken. The old evil foe now means deadly woe; deep guile and great might are his dread arms in fight; on earth is not his equal. With might of ours can naught be done; soon were our loss effected. But for us fights the valiant one whom God himself elected. You ask, “Who is this?” Jesus Christ it is, the almighty Lord. And there’s no other God; he holds the field forever. Though devils all the world should fill, all eager to devour us, we tremble not, we fear no ill; they shall not overpower us. This world’s prince may still scowl fierce as he will, he can harm us none. He’s judged; the deed is done! One little word can fell him. (CW 200:1-3.)

Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus, protect us from every temptation that would harm or destroy our faith in you and rob us of salvation. Amen.

At home

- Memorize the Sixth Petition and its meaning.
- Read Ephesians 6:10-18.

See answers below:

## Helps

(1) Satan tempted Eve to believe his lies rather than God's truth; the result was the fall into sin and mankind's condemnation. King David was tempted by and gave in to the sin of adultery; this led to further sins and estrangement from God. Judas was led by his sin to despair of God's forgiveness; this resulted in his suicide and eternal damnation.

(2) Examples of temptations are many. Materialism and humanism can easily tempt people to seek security and happiness in their wealth and possessions or in themselves, leading them away from the Lord.

(3) The Bible teaches us to be on guard and to recognize our weakness and the possibility that we can fall from faith, even if we have a desire not to fall.

(4) Jesus not only knows from experience what struggles we encounter, but he is also willing and able to help us. We can count on God's guiding and helping hand to bring us safely through temptations.

(5) The Bible tells us to recognize sinful situations and to flee from them. At times, God will, indeed, allow temptation to touch our lives; when he allows this, God is testing and exercising our faith in order to strengthen and bless us (remember Job). While we may be able to avoid certain of the sinful temptations of Satan and the world, we, none-theless, can not run away from the temptations of our own sinful nature.

(6) Jesus consistently and successfully battled the temptations of the devil by quoting God's Word (see Matthew 4:1). Joseph, likewise, won the victory over the temptation to commit adultery with Potiphar's wife by remembering God's will. God promises that through faithful use of and instruction in his Word, he will strengthen our faith and enable us, more and more, to overcome temptation.