

July 21, 2013

The Seventh Petition

But deliver us from evil.

What does this mean?

In conclusion, we pray in this petition that our Father in heaven would deliver us from every evil that threatens body and soul, property and reputation, and finally when our last hour comes, grant us a blessed end and graciously take us from this world of sorrow to himself in heaven.

1. When we speak of evil, we mean all the bad things that are part of our lives on earth as a result of Adam's and Eve's fall into sin. List ten (or more) examples of evil common to our lives on earth.

2. In Psalm 31, King David wrote about the sad effects evil has on our lives. Read the following passage. Underline the words or phrases in the passage that reflect the sadness and sorrow caused by evil.

"Be merciful to me, O LORD, for I am in distress; my eyes grow weak with sorrow, my soul and my body with grief. My life is consumed by anguish and my years by groaning; my strength fails because of my affliction, and my bones grow weak. Because of all my enemies, I am the utter contempt of my neighbors; I am a dread to my friends. . . . I have become like broken pottery. . . . There is terror on every side; they conspire against me and plot to take my life" (Psalm 31:9-13).

3. According to the following passages, what does God do about the evil in this world?

"No harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent" (Psalm 91:10).

"The God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast" (1 Peter 5:10).

"We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him" (Romans 8:28).

4. God promises that when he permits evil to touch our lives, he will have it serve our good. List six possible good things that God may have in mind when he allows someone to be hospitalized for several weeks with serious heart problems.

5. What ultimate promise regarding evil do we find in the following passage? How can we be certain that this will happen?

"The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom" (2 Timothy 4:18).

6. Agree or disagree:

Evil in one's life is a clear sign of God's punishment.

Experiencing evil can be harmful to a Christian's faith.

Christians look forward to death.

We don't even know about all of the evil from which God delivers us.

Luther said:

"In the Greek this petition reads, 'Deliver us from or protect us against the Evil One, or the Wicked One.' It seems that the petition is speaking of the devil as the sum of all evil. . . . This short petition is nevertheless also directed against specific evils that emanate from the devil's kingdom and may befall us: poverty, dishonor, death, in short, all the wretched miseries and heartaches of which there are so innumerable many on earth." (Tappert, p. 435.)

Closing Prayer (may be sung)

Let us gladly live with Jesus; since he's risen from the dead, death and grave must soon release us. Jesus, thou art now our head. We are truly thine own members; where thou livest, there live we. Take and own us constantly, faithful Friend, as thy dear brethren. Jesus, here I live to thee, also there eternally. Amen. (CW 452:4.)

At home

- Memorize the Seventh Petition and its meaning.
- Alone or with your family, recall instances in which God has made evil serve for your or your family's good.

See answers below:

Helps

(1) Answers will vary (sickness, arguments, loss, pain, divorce).

(2) "Be merciful to me, O LORD, for I am in distress; my eyes grow weak with sorrow, my soul and my body with grief. My life is consumed by anguish and my years by groaning; my strength fails because of my affliction, and my bones grow weak. Because of all my enemies, I am the utter contempt of my neighbors; I am a dread to my friends. . . . I have become like broken pottery. . . . There is terror on every side; they conspire against me and plot to take my life."

(3) God either takes evil away from us or, when he permits evil to come into our lives, he strengthens and supports us so that we are able to bear it, and he has it serve for our good.

(4) Answers will vary (leads to repentance, makes a person more patient, deepens a person's trust, makes him be an example to others, makes a person more sympathetic, makes a person more heavenly minded).

(5) Because of Jesus our Savior, we can be certain that God will finally deliver us from all evil when he takes us from this world of sorrow to himself in heaven.

(6) God may use evil as a way to punish the unbeliever already in this life. Christians, however, can be certain that they will never be punished for their sins; Christ has already taken the punishment in their place. The evil in this world is a tool of Satan and will be used by him in an attempt to weaken and destroy our saving faith. Christians look forward to death, knowing that God will use death to free them from all of the evil in this life. At the same time, Christians rejoice over the gift of life on earth and the blessings that come with it and are eager to use their time of grace to serve in God's kingdom. It is true that we don't know about much of the evil from which God delivers us because we simply don't encounter it. Yet we know God is working behind the scenes.