

**Week of May 5, 2024**

**“Teach Us to Pray: A Six Week Exploration of The Lord’s Prayer”**

**Week # 5 Participant Materials: Deliver Us From Evil – *Matt. 6:13; James 1:12-16***

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**Connecting – What kind of test would you find easiest and why:** a written test (such as on a subject or book), an oral test (like with a second language or having to answer through public speaking), a physical test (such as a workout with a personal trainer or a long hike, bike ride, or swim), an ethical test (when you face a real life dilemma and you have to choose between doing the right thing or shading ethics or truth because you’d benefit or because someone is pushing you to do so) or a mechanical test (like fixing your lawn mower or car when it won’t start)?

**Background –** Today, we’re discussing the fifth part of The Lord’s Prayer, which deals with evil, temptation, and testing. We could easily do a six-week series on those topics alone! Be respectful of the other members of the group, and understand that these subjects can touch us in places that are deeply personal and can be painful because of what some members have experienced or are currently going through.

**Have someone in the group read these verses from *Matthew 6:13a* (King James Version) and *James 1:12-16* (NRSV):**

“And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil:”

*“<sup>12</sup> Blessed is anyone who endures temptation. Such a one has stood the test and will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him. <sup>13</sup> No one, when tempted, should say, “I am being tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil and he himself tempts no one. <sup>14</sup> But one is tempted by one’s own desire, being lured and enticed by it; <sup>15</sup> then, when that desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin, and that sin, when it is fully grown, gives birth to death. <sup>16</sup> Do not be deceived, my beloved.”*

## Discussion –

1. “Test” means *“to test one’s strength, loyalty, and ability for service.”* Honestly, how much do you think you would have learned if you were never tested? Do you think you would have learned, remembered, and retained more or less? What do you think is the purpose of testing in life (such as in school, the military, at work) and in spiritual matters?
2. Currently, the word “tempt” means something like, *“to seek to seduce into evil or sin.”* Do you think it’s true that temptation can come from within or from without? As a group, talk about how you think the dynamics of temptation work – how do we fall prey to it, how does it get us? How can we successfully defend ourselves against temptation? What works for you?
3. *1 Corinthians 10:13* is a difficult verse: *“No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it.”* Have you ever experienced what Paul writes about here? Have you gone through a difficult test and seen God provide you a way out and a way forward through it?

4. The question is not whether we will face trials, we will. The question is not, “*Why me?*”, because trials come to all of us. The question is “*What will I do when I face a trial – what will my response, my attitude, my approach, be?*” As a group, talk together about things you do, or can do, that are helpful when going through a time of trial or testing.
  
5. Read *Ephesians 6:10-18*: “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power. <sup>11</sup> Put on the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. <sup>12</sup> For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. <sup>13</sup> Therefore take up the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to withstand on that evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. <sup>14</sup> Stand therefore, and fasten the belt of truth around your waist, and put on the breastplate of righteousness. <sup>15</sup> As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace. <sup>16</sup> With all of these, take the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one. <sup>17</sup> Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. <sup>18</sup> Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints.”
  
6. Identify all the things in the verses above that Paul says we’re to do so that we can “ace” tests and stand firm against temptation and evil.

**Any final comments:**

**Closing Prayer:**

Almighty God, help us to be strong in the Lord and in the strength of your power. Do not bring us to the time of trial and rescue us from the evil one. Help us every day to resist temptation from within and without. Enable us to face trials and tests with faith, prayer, and courage so that we learn from them, and, rather than being defeated, we may in fact grow stronger as disciples of Christ in whose name we pray.