
RELATED SCRIPTURES

Matthew 26:36–46 | Psalm 23:4 | 1 Peter 5:6–11

STUDY FOR SERMON FROM 5.12.24

SUMMARY

It may feel alarming to hear Jesus tell his disciples to pray, “lead us not into temptation.” Does God lead us into temptation? This petition has a few things to consider: Firstly, the Bible often utilizes parallelisms as a poetic device. “Lead us not into temptation” is a parallel thought to “but deliver us from evil.” They are two phrases that carry a singular meaning. However, we must also account for the mysterious nature of God’s sovereign will. In the original language of this passage, the word “temptation” is synonymous with the word “test.” We petition the Lord to lead us not into a *test* or *trial*. But the reality is testing and trials are *unavoidable* for the one who is in Christ. God will often test the believer as a measure of faith—a validation of what is true in us—the active presence of God to lead us “through the valley of the shadow of death” (Psalm 23:4). However, we must note an important distinction: God will test us for good; Satan will try to exploit the situation for our ruin (1 Peter 5:8). This is why James says, “each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire” (James 1:14). So, yes, we petition the Lord to avoid tests; they are uncomfortable and disorienting to say the least! But as Jesus prayed, “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me,” we should pray this, too. Yet we should also pray as Jesus, “not as I will, but as you will” (Matthew 26:39). Asking God to avoid tests is an acknowledgment to him that we are weak and prone to giving into our sinful desires. So, we pray, “Lord, please don’t test us according to our weakness; test us to rely on your strength.” Ultimately, the Lord will undoubtedly steer us in a manner that works for our sanctification and his glory. The Lord will permit us to be tested, but he also promises those in Christ that he will “deliver us from evil” (Matthew 6:13b).

GROUP QUESTIONS

Share something that surprises, encourages, or troubles you from the sermon or your direct reading of Matthew 6:13a and James 1:12–15.

How can you explain to a non-believer what God is doing when he allows us to walk through temptation or tests? Describe how these circumstances could grow or strengthen someone’s faith.

Can you detail a time when you earnestly prayed for God to avoid a situation, be it a test or a temptation, but he chose for you to face it anyway? How did that impact your faith? Did you experience growth because of it, or do you still have questions as to why it happened?

If there’s one thing Jesus would want you to walk away believing and receiving as a result of this portion of Scripture, what is that thing?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

As you pray, be sure to include today’s themes in what you bring before God.