

HELP US!

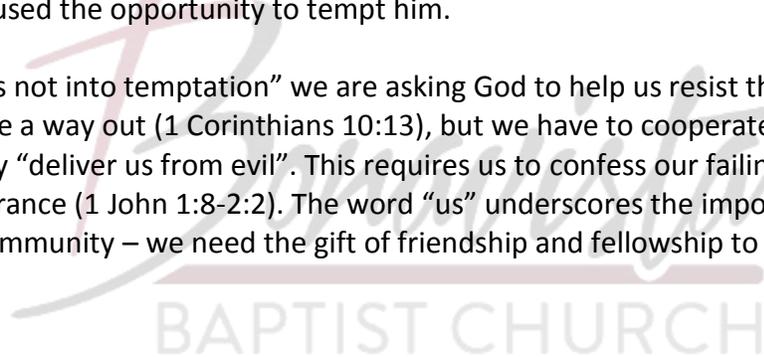
“Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil” (Matthew 6:13)

OBSERVATIONS

The phrase ends with the word “diabolos”, translated as “evil” or “evil one”. In Greek, diabolos literally means “slander”. The evil one always uses untruth or lies to confuse and tempt us; he twisted scripture to lure Jesus into disobeying his Father while Jesus fasted for forty days. Jesus described him as the “father of lies” (John 8:44).

It is important to distinguish between *testing* and *temptation*. Testing (or “trials”) is a natural part of life and the spiritual journey. Paul even encourages us to test our faith (2 Corinthians 13:5). Being able to meet tests will strengthen and refine us (James 1:2-4, 12). Temptation, however, is when we come under attack from one of three sources – the world, the flesh (unhealthy human cravings), or diabolos (1 John 2:15-19). The Bible teaches that temptation *never* comes from God (James 1:13-14). Jesus illustrated the difference between testing and temptation, when the Spirit sent him into the desert for 40 days (Luke 4:1-13) to test and refine his calling. Diabolos then used the opportunity to tempt him.

When we pray “lead us not into temptation” we are asking God to help us resist the world, flesh, and devil. God will always provide a way out (1 Corinthians 10:13), but we have to cooperate. Because we all succumb at times, we can also pray “deliver us from evil”. This requires us to confess our failings, and ask God’s forgiveness and deliverance (1 John 1:8-2:2). The word “us” underscores the importance of spiritual companionship and community – we need the gift of friendship and fellowship to live a life of obedience to Christ.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is the truth in this phrase that is most helpful? What is most challenging?
2. How easy or difficult is it for you to ask God for help? Why is this so?
3. Think of a time you were tested in your faith – how were you tested and how did God help you?

MOVING FORWARD

If you have not done so already, consider a partnership with one or two trusted Christians with whom you can share your tests and temptations. Pray for protection and deliverance, and also confess your sins to one another, assuring one another of God’s forgiveness (Galatians 6:2; James 5:16).