Avoiding Temptations
Code: DN456

"Do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil" (Matt. 6:13).

When we hear the English word temptation, we usually think of a solicitation to evil. But "temptation" in Matthew 6:13 translates a Greek word that can refer either to a trial that God permits to refine your spiritual character (James 1:2-4), or a temptation that Satan or your flesh brings to incite you to sin (Matt. 4:1; James 1:13- 15). Both are valid translations.

I believe "temptation" in Matthew 6:13 refers to trials. Even though we know God uses trials for our good, it's still good to pray that He won't allow us to be caught in a trial that becomes an irresistible temptation. That can happen if we're spiritually weak or ill-prepared to deal with a situation.

God will never test you beyond what you're able to endure (1 Cor. 10:13), but resisting temptation requires spiritual discipline and divine resources. Praying for God to deliver you from trials that might overcome you is a safeguard against leaning on your own strength and neglecting His power.

God tested Joseph by allowing him to be sold into slavery by his brothers, falsely accused by an adulterous woman, and unjustly imprisoned by a jealous husband. But Joseph knew that God's hand was on his life. That's why he could say to his brothers, "You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to . . . preserve many people" (Gen. 50:20). Joseph was ready for the test and passed it beautifully!

Jesus Himself was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil (Matt. 4:1). God wanted to test Him to prove His virtue, but Satan wanted to tempt Him to destroy His virtue. Jesus, too, was victorious.

When you experience trials, don't let them turn into temptations. Recognize God's purposes and seek His strength. Learn from the example of those who have successfully endured the same trials. Be assured that God is in control and is using each trial to mold your character and teach you greater dependence on Him.

Suggestions for Prayer:

- Thank God for the trials He brings your way.
- Ask Him to help you see your trials as means by which He strengthens you and glorifies Himself.

For Further Study:

Read Psalm 119:11, Matthew 26:41, Ephesians 6:10-18, and James 4:7. What do those verses teach you about dealing with temptation?

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