

Prayer can bring about a future
that otherwise may not exist!



Ivelchester Deanery 2026

The Lord's Prayer

Session 6 'Lead us not to the time of trial'

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'Lord teach us how to pray'. Jesus gave his answer to the request from his disciples, in the form of the Lord's Prayer. I find this month's phrase challenging.

I cannot read the words 'lead us not to the time of trial' without remembering my Great Uncle Bert. He was a clerk at the Old Bailey a long time ago. I met him when I was a child. He constantly exhorted us to 'steer clear of the Law'. Long after Uncle Bert died a family found out where not heeding that advice could lead. The family member attended the Old Bailey for committal proceedings. The stress and damage this caused to our family was upsetting, even though the person involved was not committed to trial.

The New Testament Greek phrase (peirasmos) can imply a "time of trial" or "ordeal" that can test or refine our faith. Translations of the phrase vary, and we find some alternative wording e.g "lead us not into temptation." or "save us from being tempted".

Surely God does not tempt us! We are asking God to protect us, so why is it that we continue to face temptations in life? If the word is better translated to be tested rather than to be tempted. "Save us from the time of trial" captures that meaning, more than other translations. It is an important difference. We are stronger in our faith when we resist.

Jesus had his own understanding of being tested (Luke 4:1-13), Jesus experienced life as fully human, perhaps this wasn't the only time he was tested but this sounds like the kind of experience that would stick in your memory, so it must surely have been in his mind when he gave the Lord's Prayer to his disciples.

We are shown that we cannot stand on our own strength and that we need God to help us avoid situations where we might succumb to sin, yet Jesus was led into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit. He was tested but he trusted God.

James 1:13, addresses this when he says that God does not tempt anyone with evil. He implies Instead, this prayer is a plea to God for help and protection. It asks God to prevent us from entering scenarios where we are enticed by our own desires or tested beyond our strength.

Our daily request for guidance to make choices that steer us away from compromising situations means that we trust in God's protection to keep us safe amid trials. We are reminded to walk humbly and rely on God's grace rather than overconfidence in our own willpower.

We are encouraged to look deeper into the world in which we have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3.23)

We recognise that we are vulnerable to both temptation and testing, to being economical with the truth when it suits us, to scapegoat others, to pick on people or groups who can be blamed. We might nurse resentment or jealousy. We do not recognise our own weakness.

Peter in his first letter speaks of faith being tested by the difficulties life puts in our way. (1 Peter 1.7) He makes the comparison with the way that gold is tested in the assayer's fire for its purity. Faith through suffering comes out as proved genuine (The Message translation)

We will all be tempted or tested from time to time, and we need to remind ourselves of the terrible consequences of succumbing. Let's pray this phrase with fervour each day.

Questions for further reflection.

1. How can we find ways of avoiding temptation?
2. Can we avoid being tested?
3. Is there a difference between temptation and testing?
4. How might we bind ourselves to God's protection?
5. Where do we experience conflict in our lives that could lead us into temptation?
6. For ongoing reflection and prayer read Ephesians 6. 13-18; consider the following;
7. Does the idea of putting on the armour of God help us in our daily battle against the time of trial?
8. Is it right to refer to the armour of God in the way that Paul does, or do we flinch at this wording when we see in the world the reliance on weapons of destruction?

