

## How to Pray: Deliver Us

Hillsboro Presbyterian Church

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March 21, 2010

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**Matthew 6:9-13** *“This, then, is how you should pray: ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION, BUT DELIVER US FROM THE EVIL ONE.’”*

Pop quiz. Which of these temptations apply to you?

- y n The temptation to do what works...not necessarily the right thing, but what works.
- y n The temptation to do what is easy...like using the television as a babysitter.
- y n The temptation to do what is quick.
- y n The temptation to do what works in the short run.
- y n The temptation to do what is self-serving or best for *me*.
- y n The temptation to do what is unimportant...procrastinating and doing the unimportant.
- y n The temptation to do what you have always done.
- y n The temptation to do what is right for the wrong reason.
- y n The temptation to do nothing...when you know you could help someone.

Temptation is more subtle than we think. Protection and deliverance are what Jesus teaches his disciples to pray for next – and will be the focus of this message. 1 Corinthians 10:13 says **“No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful: He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.”** The temptations we have are no different from what others experience. Some of your temptations are more unique but temptation is not unique. God tests us to help us mature. God’s adversary tempts us to lead us astray. As humans, we get both as they are the choices we make to do right or to do wrong. Step by step, we walk by faith as Christians.

**Step 1 \* Identify what makes you vulnerable.** Matthew 26:41 **“Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing but the body is weak.”**

You already know what tempts you. What you may have never really thought through is what causes you to be tempted. What makes you vulnerable to that temptation? If you are serious about permanent life change – then know the when, why, how, where, and all the other factors that go into your temptations. Will power is not enough. You can force yourself for a time, but as soon as you get tired, the will weakens. Jesus says pray and watch for what makes you vulnerable.

5 questions you need to ask yourself: 1) When are you most tempted? 2) Where are you most tempted? 3) Who is with you when you get tempted? 4) What temporary benefit do you get if you give in to the temptation? 5) How do you feel right before you are tempted?

**Step 2 \* Plan to avoid it.** Proverbs 4:26-27 (LB) **“Watch your step. Stick to the path and be safe. Don’t sidetrack; pull back your foot from danger.”**

Any good God-given desire out of control becomes a sin. So you to plan in advance to avoid it. “Tempted in bars?” Don’t go to bars. By food? Buy and stock only healthy stuff. Computer? Put on filters or turn it off. TV? Change the channel. You make the decision before you get in danger.

**Step 3 \* Guard your heart.** James 1:14 **“We are tempted by our own desires that drag us off and trap us. It is inside you, out of a person’s heart come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, the desire to kill people, adultery, greed, wickedness, deceitfulness, lust, envy, slander, arrogance, and foolishness. All these vile things come from not outside, but inside.”**

Temptation always starts in the heart. The trigger is on the outside but the temptation is inside. Do a spiritual EKG...are you: Exhausted or energetic? Pessimistic or hopeful? Bored or contented? Empty or alive inside? Distant or connected? Insecure or Secure? Wounded or whole? Sad or happy? Failure or success? Unappreciated or valued? Multiple first answers mean you are at risk.

**Step 4 \* Ask for God’s help.** Psalms 50:15 **“Call upon me in your day of trouble. I will deliver you and you will honor me.”**

The Prayer of Deliverance is often just one word: *help!* David, Daniel, Peter, Paul...they all prayed and received God’s help. God provides assistance for anybody who asks. The Holy Spirit is called the helper...so ask God’s power at work within you to help you with your inner conflicts.

**Step 5 \* Turn your attention elsewhere.** Romans 12:21 **“Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”**

Here is the secret to temptation: refocus. Whatever you resist persists. You say: “I’m not going to...” - and it’s got you. Instead, change your focus. Whatever gets your attention gets you. Whatever you focus on is going to pull you in that direction. Temptation always follows a predictable pattern. Attention, Arousal, Action. Attention – your mind gets hooked. Arousal – your emotions kick in. Action – you do something. You can not always control the way you feel, but you can control what you think about. Changing what you chose to think, changes the way you feel, which changes the way you act. When Jesus was resisting temptation in the wilderness (Luke 4), Satan said *“turn these stones to bread”*...Jesus didn’t say “I’m not hungry.” Jesus was hungry...he had been fasting 40 days. Instead, Jesus quoted Scripture... he turned his mind to something else. Paul said much the same thing...*“think about these things”* (Philippians 4:8). Replacement. Diversion. Refocus.

**Step 6 \* Get a group and a partner.** Galatians 6:1-2 **“Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.”**

This is the starting point for any 12 step program...find a group, get a sponsor. Every church is Sinners Anonymous. Jesus joins us together because we need each other. As your pastor, I would like to see everyone in a group or with a person that you can be totally honest with on the things that you think you don’t want to tell anybody about. You are never going to break free until you share them. If we were more consistent in confessing our temptations to each other then we wouldn’t have to spend so much time confessing our sins to each other.

What is the law of Christ? “Love your neighbor as yourself.” How? By helping each other by restoration and assistance.. By helping them break bad habits and start good habits. Through listening love, the light of Christ presses out our darkness...it enables us to see and be lead from temptation...and it delivers us from all that would rob us of the life that God has for us.

Jesus teaches us 4 things to pray about with our Heavenly Father: for God’s kingdom and will, for daily bread, for forgiveness, and for protection and deliverance...it is that vital for our well-being.