

Ask: Lead Us Not Into Temptation OK Prayer: Session 7

QUESTION: What comes to mind when you hear the word “devil”?

ASK: LEAD

The Reality of Spiritual Warfare Living In the Enemy's Territory: (Jn 10:10)

“evil one”: Mt 13:19, Eph 6:16, 1 Jn 2:13-14

“the god of this age”: 2 Cor 4:4

“the ruler of the power of the air”: Eph 2:2

“the ruler of this world”: Jn 12:31

“the tempter”: Mt 4:3, 1 Thes 3:5

“the spirit who is now at work in the sons of disobedience”: Eph. 2:2

“Satan” – the Adversary, the Accuser: Rev 12:9-10

“the Devil” – the Slanderer, “father of lies”: Jn 8:44

“Beelzebub” – “prince of demons”: Mt 12:24

God's Leadership vs the Methods of the Evil One:

The Evil One: (Ephesians 2:1-3)

1. The devil
2. The flesh
3. The “world”

“The world brainwashes people with ideas and philosophies counter to God's, which make them resistant to the true ideas from God when confronted with them.”¹ William Baker

God: (James 1:13-15)

- Leads people to Himself: Exodus 19:4, Ephesians 1:5
- As a Shepherd: Psalm 23, Ezekiel 34:11-16 (+ many others)

➤ Jesus The Good Shepherd: John 10

Living As Light in a Dark World:

1. Those who hold to _____ about Christ will be attacked.

a. Deceitful tactics of the evil one: (Jn 8:44) Example: Jn 10:28 & Gen 2:17 vs 3:4

2. This life isn't the _____ life.

3. We must be _____ as we engage the world. (Jn 10:39-40; Ps 116:15)

4. Even _____ evil triumphs for a moment, it doesn't win.

“[Evil] does not intrinsically belong to creation as God originally made it nor will it belong to creation as God will ultimately redeem it. . . Evil is not there to be understood, but to be resisted and ultimately expelled.”² Christopher Wright

¹ William Baker, *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians*, (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale, 2009), 17.

² Christopher J. H. Wright, *The God I Don't Understand: Reflections on Tough Questions of Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008), 42.

➤ The Master Gardener and Jesus, The True Vine: John 15 (OT reference: Isa 5:7)

- Cutting Off/Out: example = Judas (Jn 12:6, Mk 14:10-11; Jn 13:27)

- Pruning to Produce *More* Fruit:

1. _____: (Dt 8:5, Ps 94:12, Prv 3:11-12; Heb 12:10-11)

2. Experience _____: (Prv 6:27)

"...God, precisely because He is treating us as sons and daughters, will refuse to spoil us or ignore us, will refuse to let us get away for ever with rebellion or folly, with sin or stupidity. He has His ways of alerting His children to the fact that they should either pause and think again, or turn round and go in the opposite direction, or get down on their knees and repent."³ Tom Wright

3. _____

"A life filled with pain is perhaps meant by God to be a life filled with prayer. However blank and unintelligible it may be to men, its Godward aspect may be full of meaning."⁴ Dora Greenwell

- The Disciples' Responsibility:

- To remain in the Vine [Jesus] (Ps 33:11, 111:3, 117:2; Isa 40:8; Dn 6:26)

1. Receive the abiding presence of God and be conformed to His image

"Our whole destiny seems to lie . . . in being as little as possible ourselves, in acquiring a fragrance that is not our own but borrowed, in becoming clean mirrors filled with the image of a face that is not ours."⁵ C. S. Lewis

2. Actively pursue intimacy

➤ The Disciples' Failure: Matthew 26:31-56

➤ Jesus's Intercession: Luke 22:31-32 & Romans 8:34

➤ Encouragement to Persevere in Faith as We Continue to Live in a Dark World: Psalm 37

³ Tom Wright, *Hebrews for Everyone*, (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2004), 153. (capitalization added)

⁴ Dora Greenwell, "Prayer as Will", *The Power of Prayer*, ed W. Robertson Nicoll (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1910), 21.

⁵ C. S. Lewis, "Christianity and Literature", *Christian Reflections*, ed. Walter Hooper (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1967, 1995), 7.

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER THOUGHT / GROUP DISCUSSION:

1. Pastor John Stott explains that a *presumptuous* Christian fails to recognize the wickedness and power of the devil so downplays the problem of temptation, whereas the *despairing* Christian ascribes too much power to the devil. In contrast, the *believing* Christian “knows the temptation is for real because he [or she] has a healthy respect for the power and subtlety of the devil.”⁶
 - When you consider the power of the devil as a tempter in your life, do you tend more towards *despairing*, *presumptuous*, or *believing*? Or are you more like C. S. Lewis’ materialist, altogether “disbelieving in their existence”?⁷
 - What practical ways can you cultivate a “healthy respect for the power and subtlety of the devil”?
2. In 1902, an English minister wrote: “We stand . . . amid dangerous currents in which the strongest have been swept away; face to face with the personal spirit of evil, whose unwearied antagonism involves any true child of God in a struggle which forbids the idea of a comfortable, easy life.”⁸
 - Do you think this applies to our 21st century life in the United States? Why or why not?
 - Read Psalm 23. How does God’s Shepherding leadership enable us to persevere against the “dangerous currents”?
3. Sometimes people, from a sincere desire to honor God, become reckless and passive in refusing to protect themselves from harm without clear direction from God. How does Jesus’s example in leading His disciples away from the threats in Jerusalem *until the right time* encourage you to not be passive about your life?
4. Which “pruning” method (*discipline*, *consequences*, or *pain*) has God used most effectively in your life (or in the life of someone you know) to produce more fruit?
5. What practical steps can you take to be more intentional to “abide” or “remain in the Vine”?

⁶ John Stott, “Temptation is For Real” sermon preached 07/07/1974, (series: “Power in the Fellowship”) 1. Cor. 10. At: www.allsouls.org/Groups/320707/ZC001_Power_in_the_Fellowship.aspx

⁷ C. S. Lewis, Preface to *The Screwtape Letters* (New York, NY: HarperOne, 1961, 2001), ix.

⁸ A. J. Worlledge, *Prayer*, eds. W. C. E. Newbolt and Darwell Stone (New York, NY: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1902), 180.