

Day Eleven

"Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name, Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.' -Matthew 6:9-13

'And do not lead us into temptation...'

One person quipped, "Do not lead me into temptation, I can find it all by myself." The New Testament writer, James gives us a clear picture of the process by which temptation progresses in us. *Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. -James 1:13-15.*

The process goes something like this;

A: Testing>Temptation>Enticement>Lust>Sin>Death.

B: Testing>Endurance>Proven Character>Hope>Perfection

However, the process of temptation begins just as testing does. The paths part when our fleshly desires take over. Then, testing becomes temptation. One brings perfection, one leads to death. The difference is our choices we make. One is built upon strength and one upon weakness. It is not easy in the midst of the battle to know which is which. It is far easier at times to look back with 20/20 hindsight once the dust settles and sort out the details.

However, our concern here is not to see it from the back end of temptation, but to be aided by God to lead us from temptation. In His divine providence, God will have our best interest in His will.

David seeks God's guidance to protect him from wayward acts. *Set a guard, O LORD, over my*

mouth; Keep watch over the door of my lips. Do not incline my heart to any evil thing, To practice deeds of wickedness With men who do iniquity; And do not let me eat of their delicacies. -Psalms 141:3-4. His prayer is for God to keep him from such things as would lead to sin. David's trust is not in his own strength, but that which God will give him.

The apostle Paul gives us assurance in our time of tribulation. *Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall. No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it. -1 Corinthians 10:12-13.* The way of escape is what we so often need, but fall short of.

Our tribulation, or trial need not be about crushing defeat. We need to see the positives that come from such trials, even victories that may be had at the expense of these when we endure. *And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us. -Romans 5:3-5.*

In fact, James tells us there is a joy that we should have in times of trial. *Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. -James 1:2-4*

Peter tells us that same sentiment of rejoicing in our trials. *In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ; -1 Peter 1:6-7.* Our help is in the Lord as we lean upon Him for help to lead us from temptation. *Many are the afflictions of the righteous; But the LORD delivers him out of them all. -Psalms 34:19*
Prayerful Thoughts: Our Father, keep us safe from those things that lead us astray. Give us strength in our trials.