

# Prayer Works Workshop: Deliver us from Evil

**ARTICLE:** In the previous modules, we have explored a number of different ways to pray through the Lord's Prayer. It's not meant to be a trite, formulaic kind of prayer. Rather, it is a model or template that we can use to have extended times of prayer before our heavenly Father. God wants us to experience all of the fullness of what it means for Him to be our Father. He desires closeness and authenticity with each of His children. Secondly, we focused on unique ways that we can declare "hallowed be Your name" as we consider the character and reputation of God. The third module injected the idea of prayer walking as a creative way to pray that God's kingdom and will be established in our lives and communities.

The section on "Daily Bread" helped us to see that God is interested in meeting our daily needs and that He wants us to bring those petitions before Him. The fifth module challenged us to carefully consider our critical need for forgiveness of sin. God wants us to deal with "grit" in our lives and to also extend forgiveness to those that have sinned against us.

"We ask in this inclusive prayer that our heavenly Father would save us from every evil to body and soul, and at our last hour would mercifully take us from the troubles of this world to himself in heaven." (from *The Small Catechism*, Dr. Martin Luther, part three, p. 11)

In this section, we will explore the portion of the Lord's Prayer that centers on the phrase "deliver us from the evil one" from Matthew 6:13. Throughout this series, prayer is likened to the dynamic experience of an artisan working a piece of clay on a potter's wheel. Once the raw material has been shaped by the potter, it is set aside for a time before it is placed in a kiln to be cured. In Jeremiah 17:7-8 we find these words: But blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in Him. He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.

Heat and drought are a part of the human experience. We live in a broken world which is in active rebellion against our Lord. One of the consequences of the Fall is that pain and difficulty intersect all of our lives. It is not a question of "will the heat and drought come?" as it is "when will the heat and drought come?" How will you respond to the trial, the pressure, the temptation, or the flaming arrow from the enemy? All pieces of clay eventually find their way into the kiln...it is a part of the process of becoming a useful instrument for the will and pleasure of the potter. Some works of clay do not respond favorably to the heat of the kiln. The blast from the furnace overwhelms some pieces of pottery and they crack under the oppressive pressure. Other cups, jars, and dishes are able to successfully withstand the experience and emerge as a useful instrument.

When we get to this portion of the Lord's Prayer we are simply asking the Lord to help us not to crack. It is as if we are saying, "I know that the heat is coming...I know that the pressures of life are coming my way...help me to respond well and to hold up under the blast of heat." Being placed in the kiln then is your lot in life. Your Father in heaven wants to give you the supernatural help and strength to endure the fiery ordeal. He wants to help you see the way of escape (1 Corinthians 10:13) and to choose to take

that route. Sometimes we see the kiln coming, and we can ask the Lord for His protective strength to be a “heat shield.” Still other life experiences simply creep into our lives with the forcefulness of a tornado that has gone undetected. We desperately need His strength to not crack when life throws us a curveball.

The Lord’s Prayer is a reminder that God wants us to bring all of our “kiln” experiences to Him. Asking for His help is a way to admit our weakness and our frailty. Many believers are intimidated to discuss the reality of Satan. C.S. Lewis claimed that most Christians either give Satan too much credit and attention or completely ignore his existence. Peter reminds us though in 1Peter 5:8-9 that: Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

Some of the trials and difficulties that come our way in life are attacks of the enemy. And we are given the biblical command to resist him by standing firm in our faith. James 4:7 instructs us to “Submit yourselves, then to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” The Lord’s Prayer is a fantastic reminder about where the strength and courage must come from to resist the evil one. The power to resist and to stand firm must come from God and it is ours to grab a hold of if we will only pray.

We need to regularly and consistently ask the Lord to deliver us from evil. We can ask God to be a hedge of protection, a fortress for our defense, a rock in the midst of the storm, our defender in the battle, and our shield from flaming missiles.

**Bible Activity:** Ephesians 6:10-18 [10] Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. [11] Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. [12] For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. [13] Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. [14] Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, [15] and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. [16] In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; [17] and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, [18] praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, (ESV)

1. What does Paul want us to understand in verse 12?
2. Why does Paul want us to put on the full armor of God (vs. 11)?
3. Why do you think Paul uses the word “stand” so often in this passage?
4. What might be some examples of a flaming arrow of the evil one (vs.16)?
5. How do you interpret the six pieces of armor mentioned in this passage?
6. What role does prayer play in “standing firm?”
7. What are you personally most challenged by in this passage?