

Lord's Prayer # 7
**And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

Although I fly a lot, I'm not that comfortable flying.

Usually I would request a window seat.

As the plane prepared to taxi down the runway, I would quickly look outside my window and across the aisle to see if all was clear.

When I was young, I remembered hearing of a crash that occurred when two planes ran into each other taxiing on the runway.

For some reason, that image stuck in my mind.

And so to make certain that wouldn't happen, I personally would check the runway and give my own thumbs up signal to the pilot.

That was my routine for many years.

It brought me a sense of security.

I no longer sit by the window.

Ever since 9/11 I now request an aisle seat.

That way I figure I can sit and watch for some terrorist to make a move and I'll be ready to stop the person!

Ridiculous - but that's how my fears have changed.

We all have fears - real or imagined.

Fears that take charge of our lives,
- rob us of joy

- as well as peace of mind.

What fears control your life?

**And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

We live in a dangerous world.

When I started school, 1959, we had bomb drills on a regular basis.

You would hear a certain bell and students would immediately go into the hallway, take a fetal position with our hands over our heads and wait for the all clear bell.

This was during the heights of the Cold War.

At the time, we were given the impression that once Communism fell, we would have peace in the world.

Well, Communism fell, but it didn't usher in a Utopia.

Sometimes I think the world is worse today than it was back in the 1950's when we had these bomb drills!

We forget that the world will never be a safe and secure place.

Sin and evil will continue to evolve and create fears.

And even if we could find a lasting peace in the Middle East, we still would have fears and worries.

There would still be the problem of domestic violence

- carjacking at a red light
- or being hit broadside at an intersection because some driver failed to stop
- or what about the fear of the stranger walking behind you?

World peace is not going to stop a doctor from calling and telling us that the test came back positive and that you need to make an appointment immediately.

Life is scary.

That is why this prayer speaks to us: **Deliver us from evil.**

Let your holy angels surround and protect us - that's our cry each day.

God knows the fears and worries we have.

Why then, if he knows it and why too, if Jesus, who died on the cross to deal with sin, why are we still bothered by evil events?

The devil is a defeated enemy.

Jesus made certain of that on Good Friday and Easter morning.

Our future is safe and secure with our Father in heaven.

In the end, God will be victorious.

Sin and death will forever be destroyed.

However, like any defeated enemy, devil still has some fight left in him.

He can still inflict pain and suffering in this world.

That's why you will never find the fabled city of Shangri-Lai.

Shangri-Lai was a fictional place described in the 1933 novel Lost Horizon by James Hilton.

It was this mystical city hidden away in the Himalayan Mountains.

Shangri-Lai was an earthly paradise, a permanently happy land, isolated from the outside world.

That is what awaits us in heaven - not on earth.
Until then, we face evil - but we face it with God at our side.

God will walk with us, in fact in front of us as we walk through the shadow of the valley of death.

God will bring us out to the other side - heaven.

You might have noticed that I started this message by looking at the second part of the petition, **deliver us from evil**.

What about the other part - **and lead us not into temptation?**

Let's go back to that part.

We face a host of temptation.

And I mean more than the temptation to cheat on a test, or to curse, or the temptation to lose your anger.

Far greater temptation we face is the temptation to just slip away from God.

While this world might hold many fears - it is a world that is filled with technological advances.

Everyday there seems to be something new to make life easier for us.

Past week Virginia and I helped our son Emil into his college, University of Richmond.

During the day, he had to register for gym privilege.

He already had his picture ID car with it's magnet strip that allowed him to enter buildings and buy food and who knows what else.

But for the gym, another type of identification was required.

To register, a student placed their right hand on what looked like a copier machine that read their handprint.

To use the gym, all Emil will have to do is hold up his hand in front of a screen at the gym and he will be able to have access to the gym!

I'm sure many colleges are using this new gadget.

Who knows where this new technology will lead us?

It's just another sign of *God's* blessings - that is technology.

But is it *God's* blessing?

I wonder, at times, if some of our so-called blessings are not gifts from *God* but the work of the devil?

Shocking to hear me say that, but just follow my line of reasoning for a moment.

We Christians don't do well with prosperity.

The more we have - the less we feel we need *God*.

Why do you need to have *God* when you have 54-inch plasma theater screen in your entertainment room in your newly remolded basement?

Why worry about praying for *God* to give me my daily bread, when tonight I have to face the struggle of deciding whether to go out to eat Chinese food or order in a pizza?

Now let me ease your conscious.

Our blessings are a gift from a loving and caring heavenly Father.

But I do believe that as *God* blesses us, Satan stands right behind *God* and tries to plant the seeds of success.

Look at what you have done - what you have!

Do you really need God?

History will point this out, but the Christian Church and Christians are usually their strongest and best when having to face difficulties - difficulties that drive them back into the loving and protecting hands of God.

When I pray "**and lead us not into temptation**" I pray that God's blessings and gifts will not lead me away from God.

God is good and gracious to me.

I can't thank God enough for what he does for me.

But I know myself.

I know that the more I have, the more I take it for granted.

The more I have, the greater the risk of believing and trusting in myself and not in God.

Isn't that true for you?

That's why this petition is so important.

This petition, **and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil**, reminds us

That everything we have is a gift, a loan from God.

It also is a request that God will not allow anything to come between the two of us, be it blessings or difficulties in life. Amen.