

“I Dare You”

*“And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.”*

Matthew 6:13 (NIV)

As children we all have been dared to do something or else have dared our friends to do something foolish and possibly dangerous. I recall being in such a situation as a teenager one day when I played hooky from high school.

Some friends dared me to climb up the girders of a 500 meter long bridge and walk along the “catwalk” just underneath the roadway of the bridge. Foolishly I accepted the dare and soon was walking along the beams 120 feet above the friends who were watching from the safety of the valley’s floor.

Had I fallen from that height I would most certainly have died. However, being young and foolish, I accepted their taunts and yielded to the temptation to prove how brave I was by climbing up that massive structure. Reflecting on the temptation now over 50 years later, I know that I only proved how foolish I was, not how brave.

Temptation comes to us in many forms and the term is usually thought of as being a negative or evil thing. Certainly my friends that day were suggesting an evil action and it was wrong for them to put me to that form of a test.

In Scripture we read that God does not entice or lure people into evil activity. James 1:13 (NIV) “When tempted, no one should say, ‘God is tempting me.’ For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone...”. So when we think of the evil side of temptation we are to understand that God never does this to anyone.

However, the word for temptation in our verse today always has the meaning of testing in Matthew’s Gospel and in the 36 occurrences in the entire New Testament it means to tempt to do wrong only twice (1 Corinthians 7:5; James 1:13-14). Even in the accounts of our Lord’s “temptations”

we should understand the meaning as “testing”.

When you feel the power of an evil temptation coming your way remember this important petition taught us by our Lord. Call out to God to deliver you from the trap that lies in your way. The sooner you pray the better.

Jesus wisely words the prayer as asking for deliverance and not for assistance. Never should we be confident in ourselves and our strength and wisdom to resist temptation. We should pray passionately that the Lord would pick us up and carry us beyond the place where we might be tempted to do evil. God is willing to deliver us but are we wise enough and willing to ask for His strong arm to save us?

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