**Lead Us God**

**Introduction:**

All of us need guidance in our lives. In the Model Prayer given in Matthew 6:13 by Jesus, He instructs the disciples to pray “Lead us not into temptation.” This informs us of how important it is for Christians to pray for God’s guidance. Temptation may have two different meanings depending on the context.

1. A trial to prove man’s integrity, virtue
2. An enticement to sin

It is the first definition that will be the focus of this lesson.

God has always tested men’s faith. The Bible informs us of how God tested Abraham, Job, and Paul to name a few. Trials reveal our true selves.

**Body:**

1. **Why Does God Allow Trials?**

* Thomas Warren gives an excellent answer to this question in his book, Have Atheists Proved There Is No God? “God knew how to create a world which would provide for man an environment which was as good as any possible for the purpose of enabling man to be truly free and to have an environment in which he could best develop morally and spiritually. The Bible clearly teaches that God created *man* and the *world* as a “vale of soul making” for him, and planned for man’s life on earth to be a probationary period which ends at the moment of his physical death (thus attaching vital significance not only to the world as a “vale of soul making” but also to man’s life in that world as the *only* time in which he can make the decision to turn to God in love, devotion, and obedience).”
* Jesus instructs us to pray for God’s guidance in the trials that come our way. Such trials would include death of family and friends, health issues [ours as well as others], financial problems, divorce, . . .

1. **What Benefits Do Trials Bring?**

* Trials are a part of being a disciple. II Timothy 3:12 “Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.” NKJV Romans 8:18 “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” NKJV Christians do not have an easy path to follow. We need to pray to the Father for guidance so we can be victorious over our trials.
* Here is a partial list of benefits from our trials which was composed by **Charles Pugh**:

1. Suffering provides an opportunity to develop strength in moral character. Romans 5:3-4 “And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope.” NKJV James 1:2-4 “My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.” NKJV
2. Suffering provides an opportunity to test one’s loyalty to and love for the Heavenly Father. Job 1:9-11, 22 “So Satan answered the Lord and said, ‘Does Job fear God for nothing? Have You not made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But now, stretch out Your hand and touch all that he has, and he will surely curse You to Your face! 22 In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong.” NKJV Job 2:3-6 “Then the Lord said to Satan, ‘Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil? And still he holds fast to his integrity, although you incited Me against him, to destroy him without cause.’ So Satan answered the Lord and said, ‘Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life. But stretch out Your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will surely curse You to Your face!’ And the Lord said to Satan, ‘Behold, he is in your hand, but spare his life.’” NKJV
3. Suffering may influence the wayward to return to God. Psalm 119:67 “Before I was afflicted I went astray, But now I keep Your word.” NKJV
4. Suffering may encourage us to increase our knowledge of God. Psalm 119:71 “It is good for me that I have been afflicted, That I may learn Your statutes,” NKJV
5. Suffering may help us understand and better appreciate the suffering. Philippians 3:8-11 “Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.” NKJV

* As children of God, we pray that life’s trials will help us mature rather than reject God. It is comforting to remember the words of II Peter 2:9. “then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment,” NKJV
* Jesus gave a parable dealing with life. Matthew 7:24-27 “Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, and it fell. And great was its fall.” NKJV Both “*built his house*” – *his life*. Both experienced floods, wind, and rains of life.
  + The “*floods*” might be those times we are flooded with family problems, major health issues, deaths, disappointments in others. Psalm 69:1-3 “Save me, O God! For the waters have come up to my neck. I sink in deep mire, Where there is no standing; I have come into deep waters, Where the floods overflow me. I am weary with my crying; My throat is dry; My eyes fail while I wait for my God.” NKJV
  + The “*winds*” could represent those things that try to change what is right and wrong: redefining marriage, homosexuality is just a matter of choice, truth is not absolute. Isaiah 5:20 “Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!” NKJV
  + The “*rains*” might be subtle evils that slowly erode our spiritual foundations: materialism, apathy, immorality.

**Conclusion:**

Trials will come. Relying on God for divine guidance will help us overcome them. I John 4:4 “You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.” NKJV Trials, though, may produce great benefits.

I Peter 1:6-7 “In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,” NKJV

Bobby Stafford August 13, 2017