



## Daily Verse and Comment

### Matthew 6:13

(13) And do not lead us into temptation,  
But deliver us from the evil one.  
For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

*New King James Version*

Of all the requests to the Father in Jesus' Model Prayer ([Matthew 6:9-13](#)), the opening couplet of verse 13 has stirred the most controversy. The traditional wording, “And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil” (King James Version [KJV]), has come under fire by some modern translators, who argue that not only is this wording imprecise, but it also creates a biblical contradiction.

In [James 1:13](#), the apostle, Jesus' half-brother James, writes, “Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am tempted by God'; for [God](#) cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.” In the next verse, James plainly states that our desires entice us into temptation. If we retain the traditional wording of the Model Prayer's final request, it forces us to choose between opposing claims: Jesus' intimation that God can lead a person into temptation versus James' assertion that God does not tempt anyone.

Here, the scholarly debates over the last request's translation reveal an easy solution to this apparent contradiction. Evidently, the KJV translators sacrificed precision for poetic rhythm and easy memorization when rendering the Greek of [Matthew 6:13](#) into early modern English. In fact, of the four primary words in the couplet—“lead,” “temptation,” “deliver,” and “evil”—only one of them, “deliver,” fits the context without causing theological complications. However, better word choices easily resolve these difficulties.

The Greek verb translated as “lead” in [Matthew 6:13](#) is *eisphero*, which literally means “to bring or carry into.” Many translators claim that “lead” is an acceptable rendering of this word in English, and many Greek lexicons list this definition. However, “bring” and “lead” differ in terms of intent: “Bring” tends to be neutral about motive, whereas “lead” implies the leader has a reason or intention for doing so. The basic Greek word for “lead” is *ago* and its various forms, which this context does not contain. (However, see [Luke 4:9](#), which records that [Satan](#) “brought” [*ago*] Christ to the pinnacle of the Temple in Jerusalem to be tempted.) The use of “lead” suggests that God sometimes willfully directs us into temptations, and a believer must implore Him not to.

The more egregious mistranslation is using the word “temptation” with “lead.” [James 1:13](#) asserts that God *never* tempts anyone, a role the Devil gleefully fills to undermine believers' [faith](#) (see [Luke 4:13](#); [Ephesians 6:16](#)). The underlying Greek term, *peirasmos*, can indicate a temptation but more broadly implies a test or examination. God tests and examines His people “to know what [is] in [their] heart, whether [they] will keep His commandments or not” ([Deuteronomy 8:2](#)). Godly “testing” or a “test” that leads to stronger faith would seem to be Jesus' intent in using *peirasmos* in [Matthew 6:13](#). Thus, His words suggest, “Do not bring us to hard testing” (*The Good News Translation*), or more idiomatically, “. . . do not put us to the test” (*The Revised English Bible*).

In this way, the request asks God to be [merciful](#) in testing and evaluating us. As David writes in [Psalm 103:13-14](#), 17-18:

As a father pities his children, so the LORD pities those who fear Him. For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust. . . . But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, and His righteousness to children's children, to such as keep His covenant, and to those who remember His commandments to do them.

— Richard T. Ritenbaugh

**To learn more, see:**

**[The Model Prayer \(Part Eight\): Testing and Deliverance](#)**

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