

Prayer Practice **Deliver Us from Evil**

The United States military has a well-known motto: No man left behind. It's echoed in many of the branches of the Armed Forces. And the idea is simple. In times of war and conflict, no one is abandoned. No one will be left to fight alone.

That perspective is reflected in the last petition found in the Lord's prayer. "Deliver us from evil" (Or, as some versions render it, "Deliver us from the evil one;" Matthew 6:13.)

The perspective on praying—offered by Jesus—began with asking the Father to make His name great and to extend His kingdom. Why ask for the spread of God's kingdom? Is He not already sovereignly ruling? Indeed, He is, but there is an enemy and a battle to be waged. As followers of Jesus and participants with God in what He is doing in the world, we need to be aware that we are not "on holiday" with Jesus but we are "in a war" as we partner with Him.

But notice the focus of this petition. Deliver *us* from the evil one, from the evil that might take us down. It's not wrong to pray this kind of prayer for yourself, but Jesus is inviting His followers into something broader: A no man left behind type of prayer. Praying for one another, that no follower of His would be left to fight (and survive) the spiritual battle alone.

Jesus Himself prayed this way as we see when speaking to Peter about the enemy's attack that was coming, He said: "Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail" (Luke 22:23-32). Aware of the battle that Peter was going to face, Jesus was going to make sure (through prayer) that Peter would not be fighting that battle alone.

This week, as you think about brothers and sisters you know, embrace a warfare mentality. They might be going through a relational challenge or some financial hardship. It's not wrong to ask the Lord to provide for them in such moments. But be attentive to how the enemy might want to "sift them" and draw them away from dependence on Jesus. So, pray for them as one engaged in the fight on their behalf.

Ask the Lord to open the eyes of your friends who are going through difficulties to see—and avoid—the traps laid out for them by the enemy of their souls. (See 2 Corinthians 2:11.)

Beseech the Lord to provide strength and endurance for your friends who are going through challenges so they can resist all of the enemy's attacks. (See James 4:7.)

Ask the Lord to flood the minds and hearts of your friends who are undergoing such attacks with fresh recollections of God's Word so they have the necessary weapons to fight and win the battle they are in with the enemy. (See Matthew 4:1–11 and Ephesians 6:16-17.)

Let's pray for one another in such a way that, in the face of the spiritual battle, no one is left behind.