

## Lead

*“lead us not in to temptation”*

**Matthew 6:13**

**Lead**—The Greek word is *eisenegkes*. It is a combination of *eis* (in or to) and *phero* (to bring or bear). Literally, “to bring into”. This passage is so familiar that we hardly think about how strange it sounds. In the middle of the Lord’s prayer, we find this 17<sup>th</sup> Century translation that appears to plead with God so that He will not send us down the pathways of temptation. Does this phrase really mean that God leads us into temptation so that we have to pray asking Him not to?

**James 1:13** denies any validity to such a thought. God does not tempt anyone. If that is the case, then what can this verse mean? To understand the sense of this phrase, we need to look at another time when Jesus talked about being lead into temptation. Jesus is in his final hours. He goes to the Garden to pray. He asks three of His disciples to stand watch with him and He tells them, “Pray that you will not enter into temptation.” We could translate the sense of this comment, “Pray that you steer clear of temptation.”

Imagine you are traveling along a roadway without a map. You need directions so you stop to ask one of the locals. “Listen, I need some help. I want to go to Basileia, I don’t want to go to Cosmos. Don’t lead me into the wrong location”, you say to him. There are two options. One takes you away from the place you wish to avoid, the other takes you toward the place you wish to avoid. So, you ask him to not lead you toward the place you want to avoid. In other words, protect me from making a mistake and going the wrong way.

Pray that you will not go in the direction of temptation. God, lead me not into temptation, don’t let me go the wrong way. Lead me in a way that will keep me from going toward temptation. It’s too bad that we have to read this in English. In Greek the word *not* comes before the verb *lead*. “Not lead” says “steer me away from.”

Every time you say the Lord’s Prayer, you are asking God to steer you away from the path toward temptation. Don’t let me go that way, Father. I am weak but you are strong. Put your hand on me and protect me from evil. Keep me going in the right direction.