Deliver Us From Evil

10-15 minutes

Learning Activity:

Facilitator Instructions: Taking the character from C.S. Lewis’ Screwtape letters, each person is to develop their own personal Screwtape Letter.

(For those not familiar with the book, The Screwtape Letters, you might want to give a little background. Screwtape was a head demon and the Screwtape Letters are a compilation of memos that he sends to one of his underlings named Wormwood. The purpose of each letter from Screwtape is to give individual instructions to Wormwood on ways that he needs to attack, deceive, and thwart the efforts of a person seeking after God.)
Set up the exercise with the following instructions:

Take 10 minutes to write your own personalized Screwtape Letter. The assignment is to write a letter to a demon who is assigned to thwart, minimize, and deceive you. What would that strategy look and sound like? In other words, what would the strategy be for preventing you from living effectively for God? If you share your letter, it would only be as a volunteer, so feel free to be authentic and honest in what you write about.

Screwtape Letters (personalized)

Dear Wormwood,

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
If you feel that there is enough safety in the group, it can be very powerful to have someone volunteer to read his or her letter to the rest of the group. Ask if anyone would be comfortable reading their letter to the group. If more than one is willing that would be great. After one or more have read then ask a few additional questions:

**Discussion Questions:**

1. What was it like to write your own Screwtape Letter?

2. In your experience, how do most people perceive Satan and demons?

**Key Insight:** The last portion of the Lord’s Prayer speaks to our need for protection from Satan and from evil. The Screwtape Letter exercise is simply a way to acknowledge the fact that we are in a spiritual battle and prayer is one of our surest defenses.

**Learning Activity:**

**Facilitator Instructions:** Before you move into the article below, ask the group how they did with the homework from the last session on forgiving others. Ask for a few volunteers to share what the experience was like for them (also, be ready to share your own experience for the benefit of the group).

Transition the group to the article entitled “Deliver Us From Evil.” Ask everyone to read slowly and to highlight the key ideas. After everyone has read, ask people to respond to the reading in groups of two and three by going through the discussion questions at the end of the article. Then bring the whole group back together and ask people to share their responses to the discussion questions. You might want to capture the insights on a flipchart or white board.
Deliver Us From Evil

In the previous modules, we have explored a number of different ways to pray through the Lord’s Prayer. It’s not meant to be a trite, formulaic kind of prayer. Rather, it is a model or template that we can use to have extended times of prayer before our heavenly Father. God wants us to experience all of the fullness of what it means for Him to be our Father. He desires closeness and authenticity with each of His children. Secondly, we focused on unique ways that we can declare “hallowed be Your name” as we consider the character and reputation of God. The third module injected the idea of prayerwalking as a creative way to pray about God’s kingdom and will to be established in our lives and communities. The section on “Daily Bread” helped us to see that God is interested in meeting our daily needs and that He wants us to bring those petitions before Him. The fifth module challenged us to carefully consider our critical need for forgiveness of sin. God wants us to deal with “grit” in our lives and to also extend forgiveness to those that have sinned against us.

In this section, we will explore the portion of the Lord’s Prayer that centers on the phrase “deliver us from the evil one” from Matthew 6:9-13:

Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be Your name,

Your kingdom come,

Your will be done

on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our debts,

as we also have forgiven our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from the evil one.

Throughout this series, prayer is likened to the dynamic experience of an artisan working a piece of clay on a potter’s wheel. Once the raw material has been shaped by the potter, it is set aside for a time before it is placed in a kiln to be cured. In Jeremiah 17:7-8 we find these words:
But blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in Him. He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.

Heat and drought are a part of the human experience. We live in a broken world which is in active rebellion against our Lord. One of the consequences of the Fall is that pain and difficulty intersect all of our lives. It is not a question of “will the heat and drought come?” as it is “when will the heat and drought come?” But rather, how will you respond to the trial, the pressure, the temptation, or the flaming arrow from the enemy? All pieces of clay eventually find their way into the kiln…it is a part of the process of becoming a useful instrument for the will and pleasure of the potter.

Some works of clay do not respond favorably to the heat of the kiln. The blast from the furnace overwhelms some pieces of pottery and they crack under the oppressive pressure. Other cups, jars, and dishes are able to successful withstand the experience and emerge as a useful instrument. When we get to this portion of the Lord’s Prayer we are simply asking the Lord to help us not to crack. It is as if we are saying, “I know that the heat is coming…I know that the pressures of life are coming my way…help me to respond well and to hold up under the blast of heat.”

Being placed in the kiln then is your lot in life. Your Father in heaven wants to give you the supernatural help and strength to endure the fiery ordeal. He wants to help you see the way of escape (1 Corinthians 10:13) and to choose to take that route. Sometimes we see the kiln coming and we can ask the Lord for His protective strength to be a “heat shield.” Still other life experiences simply creep into our lives with the forcefulness of a tornado that has gone undetected. We desperately need His strength to not crack when life throws us a curveball. The Lord’s Prayer is a reminder that God wants us to bring all of our “kiln” experiences to Him. Asking for His help is a way to admit our weakness and our frailty.

Many believers are intimidated to discuss the reality of Satan. C.S. Lewis claimed that most Christians either give Satan too much credit and attention or completely ignore his existence. Peter reminds us though in 1 Peter 5:8-9 that:

Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.
Some of the trials and difficulties that come our way in life are attacks of the enemy. And we are given the biblical command to resist him by standing firm in our faith. James 4:7 instructs us to “Submit yourselves, then to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” The Lord’s Prayer is a fantastic reminder about where the strength and courage must come from to resist the evil one. The power to resist and to stand firm must come from God and it is ours to grab a hold of if we will only pray. We need to regularly and consistently ask for the Lord to deliver us from evil. We can ask God to be a hedge of protection, a fortress for our defense, a rock in the midst of the storm, our defender in the battle, and our shield from flaming missiles.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. What stood out to you as you read the article?
2. What principles from the article are you most challenged by and why?
3. What questions or reservations do you have about praying for protection from Satan and from temptation?

**Learning Activity:**

**Facilitator Instructions:** Spend time as a whole group working through Ephesians 6:10-18 which is one of the classic passages on the reality of Satan and the battle we are in. After reading the passage aloud, discuss the questions below:

1. What does Paul want us to understand verse 12?
2. Why does Paul want us to put on the whole armor of God (vs. 11)?
3. Why do you think Paul uses the word “stand” so often in this passage?
4. What might be some examples of a flaming arrow of the evil one (vs. 16)?
5. How do you interpret the six pieces of armor mentioned in this passage?
6. What role does prayer play in “standing firm?”
7. What are personally most challenged by in this passage?
Learning Activity:

Facilitator Instructions: This is the final opportunity for people to pray with others about their needs and to work through the Lord’s Prayer. Ask people to pray briefly so that several can enter into the time of prayer. Ask the group to focus on the kinds of things they wrote down which they are comfortable praying about in front of others. If the group is comfortable you might want to split the group in half so each person can actually pray aloud more frequently. Ask people to use the pieces of the Lord’s Prayer we have studied as an outline for the prayer time.

Part 1: Thank God that He is your Father and wants a close relationship with each of you.

Part 2: Spend time honoring and praising God for who He is

Part 3: Ask God to establish His will in your life and in others (pray for specific examples that come to mind).

Part 4: Bring specific needs (yours and others) before God

Part 5: Ask for forgiveness of any sin in your life and choose to forgive others

Part 6: Ask for God’s strength in any trials your or others are facing and ask for protection from the work of the enemy.

1. Our Father in heaven,
2. hallowed be Your name,
3. Your kingdom come,

Your will be done

on earth as it is in heaven.

4. Give us today our daily bread.

5. Forgive us our debts,

as we also have forgiven our debtors.

6. And lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from the evil one.
Learning Activity:

Facilitator Instructions: As a final wrap-up for the series ask people to respond to the two last discussion questions as a way to celebrate what God has done:

Discussion Questions:

1. What have been two personal highlights for you in going through this series?

2. What do you hope will be different in your life as a result of this series?

Close the meeting with a time of thanksgiving for all that God has done in the group.