

## The Way of Perfection

### Part 5: Our Father

Deliverance

Chapter 38 (summary)

Saint Teresa of Avila

**Chapter 38** Deals with the great need we have to beseech the Eternal Father to grant us what we ask for in the words, Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. The subject matter is important.

We have great things to think about and to understand here, Sisters, because these things are what we are **asking for**. I am certain that those who **reach perfection** do **not** ask the Lord to **free them** from **trials** or **temptations** or **persecutions** or **struggles**.

This is another very great and certain **effect** of contemplation and the **favours** his Majesty gives and of the **Lord's Spirit** rather than of an illusion.

On the contrary, these persons desire, **ask for** and **love trials**. They are like soldiers who are happier when there are more wars because they hope to earn more. With no war, they receive their wages but realize they won't get rich.

**2. Soldiers in Christ**, those who experience contemplation and engage in prayer, are eager to fight. They never fear public enemies very much. They recognize them and realize they have no power against the strength the Lord gives. They always come out **victorious** and with much **gain**.

They never turn from their enemies... They do fear the **traitorous enemies** though, the devils who transfigure themselves into **angels of light**, who come **disguised**. Not until they have done much harm to the soul do they allow themselves to be recognized. They destroy our virtues.

With regard to these enemies, daughters, let us **ask** and often **beg** the Lord in the Our Father to **free us** and **not** let us **walk into temptation**, so they will not draw us into error or hide the light and truth from us, that the poison will be discovered.

**3.** Consider, daughters, the many ways these enemies can cause **harm**. By making us suppose that the delights and consolations

they feign are from God seems the least harm ... On the contrary, they will make one advance more quickly because the delights will cause one to spend more hours in prayer ... He sees he is unworthy of the consolations and so doesn't stop thanking God and feeling an obligation to serve Him more. He will also dispose himself so that God will grant him more.

**4.** Strive always, Sisters for **humility** and to see that you are **unworthy** of these **favours**; do **not** seek them. I hold that the devil loses many souls who strive for humility ... His Majesty looks at our **intention**, which is to please and serve Him and remain with Him in prayer. The Lord is **faithful**.

**5.** The way the devil can do a **great deal of harm**, without our realizing it, is to make us **believe** we have **virtues** when we **do not** ... In regard to delights and consolations, it seems we are only receiving and so have a greater obligation to serve.

We think we are **virtuous**. We are **serving** and **giving** and so the Lord is **obliged to pay**. This notion does **great harm**. It not only weakens humility but we grow careless about acquiring the virtue we think we already have. The **remedy** is what our Master teaches us: **prayer and supplication to God not to let us enter into temptation**.

**6.** If it seems the Lord has **given us virtue** ... let us understand that He can **take it away**, as in fact often happens ... Sometimes I think I am very **detached** and when put to the test I am. At other times, I find myself so **attached** to things the day before I would have made fun of, that I almost don't know myself...

In like manner it seems to me that I don't care about **gossip** said of me; and when put to the **test** this is at times true – indeed I am pleased about what they say. Then there are days in which one word distresses me, and I would want to leave the world because it seems that everything is a bother to me ...

**7.** Since this is true, who will be able to say he is **virtuous** or **rich**? For when there is need of virtue one finds oneself **poor**. Let us, Sisters, always think we are **poor**, and not go into debt when we do not have the means to repay... We do not know when the Lord will want to leave us in the **prison of our misery** giving us

nothing. And if others thinking we are good, bestow favor and honor on us --- which is **borrowing** – both of us will have been fooled. True, if we serve with humility, the Lord in the end will meet our needs; but if this **poverty of spirit** is not genuinely present at every step, the Lord will abandon us. This **abandonment** is one of our Lord's greatest favors. He does it for us to be humble and understand **we have nothing we haven't received.**

**8.** Take note of this **advice**: the devil makes us think we have the **virtue of patience** ... We make frequent **acts of willingness** to **suffer** much for God ... so we become very **satisfied**. The devil helps us believe this. I advise you not to pay any attention to these virtues ... until we see the **proof** ... It will happen that with one **displeasing word** spoken to you, your patience will go tumbling to the ground.

When you **suffer often**, God is beginning to teach you this **virtue of patience** and strive to endure because the suffering is a sign that in this way He wants you to **pay** for the virtue. He gives it to you. You do not possess it. It is **on deposit**.

**9.** The devil brings about another temptations. We think we are **poor in spirit** saying we couldn't care less about anything. But, when an occasion arises to receive a **gift** our poverty of spirit is completely ruined... We have so often said we have the virtue that we end up believing we do.

It is important to understand this temptation ... When the Lord truly gives one of these **solid virtues**, it seems it carries the others in its wake ... But again I warn you that though it seems you possess it, **fear** though that you be **mistaken**. The truly **humble** person always walks in doubt about his own virtues, and those he sees in his neighbors seem more certain and more valuable. AMEN