

In the Our Father we pray: "... lead us not into temptation ...". Would God do that to us?

With our English translation of the Our Father, one could imply the interpretation referred to in this question; that God is planning to lead us into temptation unless we pray and ask Him not to. But it can also be understood that we are praying to God so that He will help us avoid temptations, especially temptations that we do not have the strength to resist.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church answers this question quite clearly: *"This petition goes to the root of the preceding one, for our sins result from our consenting to temptation; we therefore ask our Father not to 'lead' us into temptation. It is difficult to translate the Greek verb used by a single English word: the Greek means both 'do not allow us to enter into temptation' and 'do not let us yield to temptation.' God cannot be tempted by evil and he himself tempts no one; on the contrary, he wants to set us free from evil. We ask him not to allow us to take the way that leads to sin. We are engaged in the battle 'between flesh and spirit'; this petition implores the Spirit of discernment and strength."* (CCC #2846)

The Catechism goes on to give a richer treatment of this petition of the Our Father in paragraphs #2847-49. For a more complete understanding, I encourage you to look this section up in the Catechism. What? You don't have a Catechism in your home? Well, Christmas is coming soon; you might want to put one on your list. No Catholic home should be without one. Of course, if you have access to the internet, you can always go to the Vatican's resource page: <http://www.vatican.va/archive/index.htm>. Here you will find not only the Catechism, but also the Bible, the Code of Canon Law, and the documents from the Second Vatican Council.

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