

# 3 Sinister Ways the Devil Will Try to Tempt You

We have watched believers and even great leaders fall into temptation because of ignorance of Satan's schemes. Many times, leaders won't talk about their temptations because they worry that disqualifies them from leadership. But the truth is that temptation is a universal reality of life on this earth.

The truth is that there are some bad traps out there, even for believers. Everyone, everyday lives surrounded by the influences of the enemy's temptations, which are often disguised to throw us off and trick us into letting our guard down. But behind every mask is the enemy of our lives, Satan.

Even Jesus, while alone in the wilderness, found Himself to be tempted by the devil for 40 days. The story of His temptation in the wilderness, told in Luke 4, demonstrates some important truths about the source and nature of temptation. It makes it clear that temptation is from the enemy and that temptation can be found everywhere—in empty places, in low places, in high places, and yes, even in holy places.

Wildernesses are empty places where the spirit of lack can wear you down physically, mentally and spiritually. In Jesus' wilderness experience, Satan's first attack was twofold: It was an assault on His senses and an attempt to fill Him with self-doubt. Luke 4:1-3 tells us this about the beginning of their exchange:

*Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being tempted by the devil for forty days. During those days He ate nothing. And when they were ended, He was hungry.*

*The devil said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread."*

While He was in the wilderness, Jesus was fasting, so you can imagine how desperate His body felt for the taste or even smell of food. For 40 days, everything inside Him and around Him had begged Him to yield to the temptation, but He had resisted. With the finish line in sight, Satan began by appealing to Jesus' flesh to get him to succumb to the promise of food before His period of fasting was over.

I don't know if I could spend 40 days in the middle of nowhere with nobody around to encourage me and no food to eat without craving and eating a good, meaty steak. Talk about a test! But the Son of the living God was full of the Holy Spirit and had been led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness. Because of the Spirit within Him (v. 1), Jesus was able to win over the temptations of hunger.

This attack, however, contained another, related temptation. Remember, Satan told Christ, "If You are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread" (v. 3). With this little phrase, the enemy attempted to overcome Jesus with the introduction of doubt, covertly shaming Him and cornering Him into a low place. Attacks in low places are Satan's way of trying to crush us under the strain of intimidation from the drain of self-doubt. Some of the questions of low places are: Who am I? Where did I come from? Do I have a future? What is the value of life? Does my life have value?

What Jesus knew—and what we must remember—is that the situation we are in and what the devil says about us do not determine our worth. Our value is determined by "It is written" (v. 4). What does God's Word proclaim about us? The victory was, is and will be won with the sword of the Spirit, that is, "every word of God" (v. 4). Because of the Word within Him, Jesus was able to win over Satan's first trick.

When Satan knew that he failed in tempting Christ the first time, he moved on to the next temptation. He took Jesus from the low place to a high place upon a mountain.

*The devil, taking Him up onto a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said to Him, "I will give You all this power and their glory, for it has been delivered to me. And I give it to whomever I will. If You, then, will worship me, all will be Yours."*

High places require worship. The high places of this world's system require worship, but this drains you. In this test, Jesus was grappling with the strain of materialism from the drain of its worship. However, He knew this: you break the back of Satan's attack in high places by resisting the devil, worshiping God, and serving Him only. Jesus superseded this temptation once again, saying, "Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve'" (v. 8).

For his last stand, Satan tried to tempt Jesus in a holy place, the temple.

He brought Him to Jerusalem, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here. For it is written: 'He shall give His angels charge concerning you, to preserve you,' and 'In their hands they shall hold you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone'" (Luk3e 4:9-11).

You can't isolate yourself from temptation, not even at church or in leadership. This type of temptation targets the strain of religion from the drain of its ambition. Most people enter ministry to serve and help to someone, but then an unholy ambition takes over. We learn the rules and the language of the culture. We learn how to impress people, and jumping off pinnacles and commanding angels to catch you is far more impressive than riding donkeys and washing people's feet. However, we are not called to impress anyone. Instead, we derive our call and the grace to carry it out from God. He is our source of worth and affirmation, and our lives must point

others to Him instead of drawing attention to ourselves.

The devil will try to tempt us following this same pattern in our lives. He begins by tempting us in one area, and if that doesn't work, he moves on to the next.

1. The first temptation we experience often deals with the lust of the flesh and your view of yourself. It is a sensual attack to get you to focus on your flesh and intimidate you into doubting who you are in Christ. If he can get you to say, "I deserve this," he will be satisfied.
2. The second temptation deals with your view of the devil and the world. It's a social attack that targets the lust of the eye in an attempt to get us to justify sin because, "I'm worth this."
3. The third temptation deals with your view of and relationship with God. This attack is spiritual in nature. If we find ourselves thinking, "I've arrived!" it's likely we have succumbed to the pride of life.

There are so many areas of temptation that Satan places in our lives to try and distract us from the love of God. Failure, defeat and sin are in direct relationship to an ignorance of God's Word and deafness to His voice. Knowing the Word of God, worshiping God and doing the will of God are the foundation for overcoming the influences of temptation. But even those can become draining without intimacy with God. We cultivate this intimacy through studying the His Word, with worship and remaining surrendered to His will.

When we feel ourselves buffeted by temptation, we should increase our praise and worship. This will posture our flesh to serve the Lord, turn our eyes to focus on Him instead of the world and remind us that our place is at the foot of His cross instead of on our own pedestal. It is also wise to ask ourselves these questions, which are at the core of temptation: On what do I base my relationship with God? My

achievements? Something spectacular I might try? Am I guilty of trying to manipulate God into doing something for me?

As you resist temptation, you will experience His grace to overcome, His love and the value He places on you, and His new mercy every morning.

“For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who was in every sense tempted like we are, yet without sin. Let us then come with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb. 5:15-16).

They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death” (Rev. 12:11).

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). {eoa}

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