

Run the Other Way if You Ever Encounter This Satanic Deception

I should have known, when Timmy was playing quietly in his room for too long, that something was amiss.

I realized it when I entered his room and saw large, looping swirls all across his carpet—in yellow marker.

“Timmy?” I sighed. “Did you draw on your floor with this yellow marker?”

“Uh ... uh” Timmy ducked his head.

“Pretty much?” I prompted, and Timmy nodded.

“Why did you do that?” I asked.

“Because I wanted a pretty floor,” he said.

Well, that makes sense. Who doesn’t want a pretty floor? It’s a legitimate desire.

But Timmy tried to fulfill his legitimate desire by illegitimate means.

Did he know they were illegitimate means? You bet he did. We’ve had the *don’t-draw-on-your-floor-with-markers* conversation several times before. Yet he chose to disobey me simply because he wanted what he wanted and didn’t care whether or not he had to disobey me to get it.

Good thing you and I never try to get good things by illegitimate means, isn’t it? Oh, wait, we do.

We try to gain our husband’s agreement by nagging him.

We try to gain material goods or fun experiences by putting them on a credit card because we really can't afford them any other way.

We try to gain emotional peace by denying reality or refusing to face it.

Is it wrong for us to desire our husband's agreement, material goods/vacations or emotional peace? Of course not. But it is wrong for us to go about getting those things in any way that doesn't please God.

Jesus knew that, of course. When Satan tempted Jesus in the wilderness, he offered Him good things: food, a way to convince people to believe in Him and authority over everything. Was it wrong for Jesus to desire those things? Of course not. He had a human body, so naturally, He desired food. (I can't go for 40 seconds without eating, but He went 40 days.) He was the Son of God, so He is entitled to all authority, and it's good and right for Him to desire that people should believe in Him.

But Jesus didn't succumb to Satan's temptations because He was unwilling to gain any good thing by illegitimate means.

What about you? What about me? Are some things so important to us that we're willing to do illegitimate things in order to get them?

Before you say, "No way!" consider these questions: Do you ever try to gain peace in your household by yelling at your children? (Guilty here.) Do you ever try to gain people's approval or admiration by boasting—or maybe just by "letting them know" about your accomplishments? (Um, guilty here.) Do you ever try to "encourage" your husband to change by being critical? (No comment. I'm going to plead the Fifth.)

When doing something bad in order to get something good doesn't bother us—or when it does bother us, but we push those

guilty feelings away and refuse to think about them—we are most certainly not being like Jesus. We're not pleasing God. And ultimately, we're not even pleasing ourselves.

You see, the reason God has told us not to do certain things in order to get what we want is because He knows not only that they aren't right, but that the more we do them, the more they damage both us and others.

What are you willing to commit in order to get what you want?

We need to throw ourselves on God's mercy if we're willing to commit anything less than holiness.

Matthew 4:4 says, "But He answered, 'It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God."'" {eoa}

*Adapted from **Megan Breedlove's** blog, *Manna for Moms*. Megan is the author of *Well Done, Good and Faithful Mommy* and *Manna for Moms: God's Provision for Your Hair-Raising, Miracle-Filled Mothering Adventure* (Regal Books.) She is also a stay-at-home mom with five children.*