

IF YOU ARE THE CHILD OF GOD
JESUS SERIES
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Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13
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The temptation of Christ can be viewed in a variety of ways—in fact, I am certain that the multiple facets of the temptation experience are far beyond our ability to imagine. We can't begin to plumb the depths in 35 minutes. So I will make the concepts quite simple and hopefully the applications exceptionally apropos.

Much depends on whether Satan meant “IF” or “SINCE?” (or both) in his opening parry.

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“If son you are of the God ...” is a first-class-conditional sentence in Greek that may just as well be translated, “Since son you are of the God ...”

If Satan meant, “Since you are the son of God”, then he conceded that Jesus is God. Therefore, the focus of the temptations were on the kind of Messiah Jesus would be?

“Turning Stones to Bread” is a temptation to gain a following by providing for the physical needs of people—a Bread Messiah.

“Jumping Off the Temple” is the temptation to gain a following by performing showy tricks.

“Worshipping Satan” is the temptation to take the easy road, avoiding the cross, and gaining a following by bowing down to Satan.

On the other hand, if Satan meant, “If you are the Son of God”, then the focus of the temptations was to put doubt in the mind of Christ concerning His relationship with His Father.

“If you are the Son of God, why is He not taking better care of you? Why don't you feed yourself by TURNING THIS STONE TO BREAD?” The temptation is Self Reliance.

“If you are the Son of God, then why are you so tired, hungry and weak. Didn't God say forty days ago at your baptism that you were his beloved son? Look at you; you're not worth receiving the kingdoms of the world. FALL DOWN AND WORSHIP ME and I will give you the kingdoms of the world.” This is the temptation to Self Condemnation.

“If you are the Son of God, wonderful, prove it by JUMPING OFF THE TOP OF THE TEMPLE. Put yourself out on a limb because God has promised to always take care of you.” The temptation is Self Centeredness.

As we apply this experience from the life of Christ, why don't we place more emphasis on the “doubt” side of the temptation experience? After all, most of us don't struggle with deciding what kind of Messiah we are going to be. We struggle to experience our acceptance as children of God.

Luke 4:1 Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert, 2 where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry.

The Greek word “tempted” can just as fairly be translated as “tested.” Remember that temptation is not sin. Sin only occurs if we give in to it.

“IF YOU ARE A CHILD OF GOD ...”

Self Reliance (Turn stones to bread): If You Are A Child Of God, Why Do You Have So Many Problems. You Can't Trust God. Take Matters Into Your Own Hands!”

Self reliance says, “I really don't need anything or any one, and if I do, I will take care of it myself, thank you!”

One of the painful realities of self reliance is that self reliant people are insensitive and intolerant of other people's neediness.

Self reliant people are emotionally alone.

If we think that our lives subsist of bread then we will do everything in our power to get bread. But, if we ever realize that bread does not sustain, then we will do everything in our power to submit to the life giving Words of Jesus Christ.

Self Reliance is conquered by reliance on the living Word of Jesus Christ

Self Condemnation (Worship Satan): “You Are Not Worthy To Be A Child Of God. Why Don't You Just Give Up And Quit.”

Why would we feel not worthy enough for God?

1. We were raised to have a poor self image.
2. We feel guilty because we have done some shameful things.
3. We have not yet fully experienced our acceptance in Jesus Christ.

Self condemnation is overcome by sitting at the feet of Jesus in worship and experiencing from Him our true value.

Self Centeredness (Jump off the top of the Temple): “If You Are A Child Of God Feel Free To Go “Out On A Limb” Because God Will Take Care Of You No Matter What.”

“Testing God” means to live life our own way and expect God to bless us anyway.

Don’t presume on God’s will. You just might jump and He won’t catch you. Selfishness is an ugly thing. We can’t live anyway we want to without hurting ourselves and the ones around us.

Self Centeredness is put to rest by choosing to live Christ’s way instead of ours.

Luke 4:13: When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time.

Beware, Satan will attack time and time again.