

The Great Temptation

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There is one sin that the enemy wants to cause you to slip up on more than any other. It is one of the worse sins of all time that Satan comes to you with. It is worse than murder, adultery, etc. It is the sin that he even tried to get Jesus to commit. The Devil was trying to get our Lord to act out from Himself. The Devil was out to make Him sin, and the sin that few consider as sin is acting out from himself.

Do you remember when Jesus was led of the Spirit of God into the desert to be tempted by Satan? Note what the nature of the temptation of the Devil was. You will find that every temptation had to do with Jesus taking things into His own hands, making His own decisions, living His life His way, and taking control of His own life. (Matthew 4:1-11)

"The Tempter came to Him and said, "If You . . ." (Matthew 4:3,6)

All of these temptations relate to doing the will of God but maybe not in a way that we may have yet considered. The Tempter's desire was to get Jesus to do something of Himself, which would not be doing God's will at all, but His own will. The "will of the flesh," and the "mind of the flesh," resists, is contrary, and is opposed to the will of the Spirit, and the "mind of the Spirit" (John 1:13; Romans 8:4-7; Gal. 5:17,18). That statement does not imply that our flesh never wants to do what God wants done. What it means is that, what ever is required, the flesh wants to accomplish it FOR GOD.

We are always praying to God in the Lord's prayer, "Your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven," yet we are not seeing that His will is for us to be dependent on Him and not ourselves. That can only happen when "Thy kingdom come." In other words, until Christ is our Governor and government, we will proceed to serve God but on our own basis and in our own understanding. To Jesus, doing the will of God was more than just doing the right thing. To Him it involved allowing the Father to do that work through Him.

"My Father in Me, He does all the work!" (John 14:10).

God's will is for He Himself to accomplish what needs to be done but we don't see that as the will of God. Too many of us are trying to carry out God's will ourselves. However the flesh profits nothing and the carnal mind is not subject to the law of God.

Satan's tactics have never changed. Why should he change something that works so effectively against us? The same tactics he used against Jesus is what he uses against all of us in trying to get us to do our own will. Self-will is not just defined in terms of doing fleshly or sinful things. It is doing what we ourselves want to do. It is self-works, whether they be done to satisfy our flesh or to satisfy God.

Unknowing, because we seek to do the right thing we may be building up self-righteousness. We may look at others who are not doing the right thing and, because we

are, we can boast in ourselves and also put others down. This is what the Pharisee did in Luke 18:9.

"Certain who trusted in themselves that they were righteous." (Luke 18:9).

The Pharisee, in the above story, thought that all that was required was to do the right thing. We also seek to pick good over evil assuming that that is God's way. It is not! Good and evil are both on the same tree: the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. What we should be choosing is life. The tree of Life represented a form of life that Adam did not yet possess. He need to partake of it. Jesus is that Life and is the tree of Life. Christianity is more than just doing the right thing: it is Christ in you the hope of glory (Col. 1:27).

When you came to God, you did not simply receive a Christian religion – hopefully you received Christ! If all you received as a religion then I can pretty much figure out what kind of life you are living for the Lord. It is a powerless walk filled with failure, Jesus is not a powerless religion but a powerful Person. And if somehow, like Paul, you are doing pretty good and always doing the right thing then you have become a critical, self-righteousness Pharisees.

Paul said, "We preach Christ, not ourselves!" (II Cor. 4:5). He went on to say that we have a Treasure in our earthen vessel. The purpose stated for putting Him in us was so "the power may be of God and not of us." The true Christian life is not something we are doing. Nor is it about doing the right thing for Christ. It is not about us at all but it is about Him.

How can we possibly talk of our Christian life, when it is not us living it at all? But this is where the devil's temptation comes in. He first blinds our eyes to the fact that the gospel is Christ living in us. Then he tempts us to do things, even great things for God, that proceed out from ourselves instead of are a result of His life. This is the "great temptation" of the devil. It is the great sin that he tempted both Adam and Eve and Jesus with. Are you regularly failing the test and giving in to temptation? ***