

Overcoming Temptation Matthew 4:1-11

Temptation # 2 (vs. 5-7) Act independently of God.

1. After the first temptation was unsuccessful, the Bible says, “*Then the devil taketh him...*” Satan immediately tries another tactic, another approach.
2. This temptation is designed to appeal to Jesus’ pride. It corresponds with “*the pride of life.*” **1 John 2:16**
 - He is trying to induce Christ to do something grandiose and magnificent that will make everybody pay attention.
 - “You can make a grand entrance into this world and into your ministry. Cast yourself down from the pinnacle of the temple and the angels will catch you and rescue you.”
 - Malachi 3:1 predicted that the Messiah would come suddenly to His temple. Satan’s like, “Here’s your chance to fulfill prophecy – descend suddenly into the temple.”
3. The key to uncovering this temptation of Satan is found in the phrase, “*Cast **thys**elf down.*” (vs. 6) Again, Satan wants Jesus to act outside of the Father’s words and instructions, and do something of His own will.
 - “You believe the Bible? Why not prove one of God’s promises?” Again, like the first temptation, it is a very subtle temptation.
 - He is tempting Jesus to prove God’s love, protection, and care by an act of self-will.
4. Satan even makes it look more appealing by trying to convince Christ that He will be standing on God’s promises. He quotes (misquotes) Psalm 91:11-12.
 - Satan used the **Bible** to try and convince Jesus to act independently of God.
 - I can’t tell you how many times people use the Bible to excuse their sinful actions. It has happened throughout history and still happens today.
5. It is important to note that Satan did not quote that passage in its entirety. Satan thinks nothing of adding and subtracting words from the Bible for his own evil purposes.
 - **One side note:** Sometimes the Bible will quote itself and alter it a bit or paraphrase, but the Holy Spirit can do this because He

is the author and always does it faithfully. Man and Satan, nor any other created being have that right or privilege. It is God's Word! It's final, complete, and totally authoritative.

6. Let's look at it more closely. Notice that Satan left out the phrase, "*in all thy ways.*" God keeps His promises when we keep His ways.
7. Satan also took the verse out of context. The context of that passage is a man that has made God his complete habitation and is walking in total dependence on God.
 - Those promises have no meaning to a man who willfully and knowingly is tempting God through self-willed actions.
8. Jesus sees right through Satan's masquerade and misuse of the Bible, and responds, "*It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.*" (vs. 7)
9. Let this be a lesson. Satan will twist the Bible to give carnal believers all kinds of "Bible reasons" to sin. Satan cares nothing about rightly dividing the Word, but rather, he wrongly misuses it to achieve his evil purposes in our lives.
10. This is another reason why a believer needs to know their Bible and know how to rightly divide it. It is our defense against the wiles of Satan.

Temptation # 3 (vs. 8-10) Worship something besides God.

1. This last temptation is very straightforward and corresponds with "*the lust of the eyes.*" (1 John 2:16) He wants Jesus to **see** all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them.
 - Satan captured many a king's heart with this in the past – the glory of earthly dominion and earthly wealth. Now he tries to capture the heart of the Carpenter of Nazareth.
2. You may ask, "How could Satan do this? Were the kingdoms his to give?"
 - Satan is the prince of this world's system. He usurped dominion of the earth from Adam in the Garden of Eden by seducing them to rebel against God.
 - Jesus does not dispute Satan's claim to be in control of these kingdoms on earth.
3. But God had a plan to reconcile the kingdoms of this world back under His authority. That plan was centered on His Son, Jesus Christ. The Father promised the kingdoms of this world to His Son (Psalm 2:6-7).

4. But before that could happen, there had to be a way for the sin issue to be dealt with. Sin had to be paid for so that the earth could be purged of sin and Satan's influence. God's plan of reconciliation was centered on the cross. Colossians 1:20
5. First would come the cross, then the crown. First the suffering and then the glory. This was the Father's plan.
6. Satan tried to tempt Christ to take a shortcut to gain the kingdoms of this world right then and bypass the cross. Satan tempts man with the idea of immediate gratification. Satan says, "You see it. You want it. Get it now."
7. God's principle is one of delayed gratification. Even though the right thing may bring me pain and suffering now, I will do the right thing because of the gratification it will bring later.
8. Satan constantly tempts us to take shortcuts.
 - "Forget God's plan. It takes too long. Get what you want now. Feel good now. Look what your worship of God has gotten you – in a wilderness starving to death. Worship something that will benefit you right now."
 - Satan wanted worship because Satan's desire has always been for power and control. He wants to function **like** the most High. When Satan fell at the beginning, it was a power grab.
9. So Satan wanted Christ to forsake the cross, take the kingdoms, but worship him thereby giving him dominion and control.
 - Satan is like, "It is a win/win. You get the kingdoms and wealth of the world without having to suffer, and I get the power and control I have always wanted."
10. Christ defeated Satan with Deuteronomy 6:13. Simple and direct – "Nobody is worthy of worship but God Almighty." It wasn't that Christ despised the throne of the earth, but He would only have it as His **Father's** gift.
11. Whatever we worship we serve.
 - If we worship money, we live for money and serve it. If we worship God, we live unto Him and serve Him.
 - Christ knew that if He worshipped Satan, he would then have to serve Satan.
12. Once again, Christ overcame Satan through God's Word. When we truly have a heart of worship towards God, we live to do His will. We don't take shortcuts or manipulate circumstances to get our way or alleviate pain. God's will and plan are number one.

- Every heart that puts God first and seeks to please Him **only** is certain to escape Satan's most subtle snares.
13. When our heart and affections are on Christ (Colossians 3:1-2), we are given clearness of vision to discover Satan's snares in our lives.