



TEEN TREE OF LIFE SATAN'S SUBTLE STRATEGIES

Part 5

July 5, 2020

Before you begin, ask yourself a very important question: Do you believe that Jesus Christ died on The Cross for all of your sins? If you answered yes, you will need to be sure that you are filled with The Holy Spirit. How do you do this? You name your sins to God The Father in His Son's Name. This is called Rebound. As a Christian, you must rebound any time you sin. This is taught in 1JOH 1:9: *If we confess [name] our sins [directly to God], He [God] is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* Now, if you have never believed that Jesus Christ died on The Cross for all of your sins, all you have to do is say to yourself that you believe in Him and you are saved! The Bible verse which teaches us this is ACTS 16:31: *"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved."*

As we learned in last week's Teen Tree of Life, Satan has three basic strategies he uses to tempt believers to sin. They're the same three that he uses for unbelievers and are found in **1 JOH 2:16**. The three strategies are: The Lust of the Flesh, The Lust of the Eyes, and The Boastful Pride of Life. As we studied, Satan used these with the woman in the Garden of Eden and won. But when he used them to tempt Our Lord and Savior Himself, he lost!

MATTHEW 4 is subtitled "The Temptation of Jesus." The Chapter begins like this: ***Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry. (MATT 4:1-2)*** In this Chapter, the apostle Matthew includes references to both the barren desert (the Judean wilderness was and is exactly a barren dessert), and Jesus' severe physical condition, after such a long fast. It's believed that when hunger pains return after such a long fast, it indicates the person fasting is beginning to starve to death. So, you can imagine that at this point, Our Lord is extremely hungry and weak.

Knowing these things, Satan begins to try to tempt Jesus by using The Lust of The Flesh. Satan wants to get Jesus to satisfy His own hunger (the desire of His Body/Flesh) by His own means and methods, rather than relying on God to provide what He needs: ***And the tempter came and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." (MATT 4:3)*** Jesus answers Satan by quoting **DEUT 8:3 (New International Reader's Version): *"It is written, 'Man must not live only on bread. He must also live on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"*** Our Lord's message here – to both Satan and to us – is that every Word of God should be more precious to us than food itself!

Next, it's important to look at some very important underlying facts concerning what went on in the wilderness. First, while He lived on earth, as a man, Jesus Christ had two natures. These two natures are inseparably united but He never mixed them together. Each nature has a separate identity. There was never any transfer of the attributes of one to the other; in other words, He never used His Godly Attributes as a man. Since His Incarnation, Jesus Christ is true humanity and undiminished deity in one unique person forever. This is called the Hypostatic Union. The Incarnation is the period of time that Jesus Christ, the second Person of The Trinity, lived on earth in Hypostatic Union. All of this is important to know because during this time in the wilderness with Satan, Jesus used the same Divine power which we have available to us in the Church-Age, along with God's Word, to stand up to Satan's temptations. Jesus did not use His Deity or any of His Godly attributes (called the doctrine of Kenosis). He stayed in God's Plan for His Life. And when we are tempted in any way to sin, we should also rely on Divine power and God's Word and stay in His Plan for our lives.

Satan was trying to get Jesus to use His Godly ability, and instead Jesus used God's Word. He did this because of His Impeccability. Impeccability is the doctrine of Christology, which recognizes the fact that during the entire course of the dispensation of the Hypostatic Union, Jesus Christ did not sin, though He was tempted in His humanity and the temptations were real.

The second strategy Satan uses is The Boastful Pride of Life. This is found in **MATT 4:5-6 (The New International Reader's Version): *Then the devil took Jesus to the holy city. He had him stand on the highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. It is written, The Lord will command his angels to take good care of you. They will lift you up in their hands. Then you won't trip over a stone."*** In the second part of this verse, Satan is actually quoting Scripture – **PSA 91:11-12**. The lesson here is that the devil is also the author of Scripture twisting, and the father of lies. You can be sure that the devil has memorized the Bible himself and is an expert at quoting it out of context to confuse and defeat those he tempts. His idea here is that if Jesus jumped, the people would see Him doing this great miracle and they would praise His act. Satan is tempting Jesus to "force" the Father into a supernatural event. Satan is trying to appeal to the desire within every man to sense approval from God and to have that approval publicly demonstrated. But Jesus didn't fall for it (so to speak!!). The "**highest point of the temple**" arose some 200 feet from the floor of the Kidron Valley. A leap from there, and the appearance of the promised angelic protection, would be a remarkable spectacle. Again Jesus replies with a quote from Scripture with **DEUT 6:16 (The New International Reader's Version): *"Do not test the Lord your God."*** In other words, Jesus is saying never to test the reality of God's presence and the Greatness of His Power!

The third temptation strategy Satan uses against Jesus is The Lust of The Eyes. Look at **MATT 4: 8-10: *Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory; and he said to Him, "All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me." Then Jesus said to him, "Go, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.'*** Essentially, what Satan is tempting Jesus with is an invitation to take a shortcut around The Cross.

Interestingly, this is the verse that teaches us that Satan truly has been given the authority over this world and its governments; the temptation could not have been real unless Satan truly did have authority over all the kingdoms of the world. Of course, ultimately, all things belong to God; but God allows Satan to function as the god of this age (see **2 COR 4:4**) for a purpose. This is why, the fallen world is in the mess it's in today!

What Satan is asking for here is what he's been longing for ever since his fall from grace, in eternity past: worship and recognition from God Himself. This is a revealing insight into Satan's heart. Worship and recognition are far more precious to him than possessing "**all the kingdoms of the world and their glory...**" Don't forget, he's the one who said: "**I will go up to the heavens. I'll raise my throne above the stars of God. I'll sit as king on the mountain where the gods meet. I'll set up my throne on the highest slopes of Mount Zaphon. I will rise above the tops of the clouds. I'll make myself like the Most High God.**" (ISA 14:13-14 The New International Reader's Version)

Satan is also trying to get in the way of God's Plan for His Son's Life. And he tries to do that to us every day! This strategy can be devastating to our lives as Christians. That's why you always have to keep studying God's Word and staying in His Plan by not allowing Satan's visual distractions to sidetrack you!

Again, Our Lord's response to Satan is another Scripture: "**Get away from me, Satan! It is written, 'Worship the Lord your God. He is the only one you should serve.'**" (DEUT 6:13 The New International Reader's Version) Our Lord's reply cuts up Satan's offer by the root. His reply may look simple; but what He's saying to Satan is that the only command He willingly obeys, excludes all reverence and service to any other over-lord than God The Father! And that He takes His commands directly from God. Never forget that Jesus followed His Father's Commands, even knowing that it would take Him to The Cross.

The BIG lesson with these three temptations is that God's Word has the power in it to suppress Satan's temptations. It can easily overthrow Satan. The temptations of Jesus also remind us that it is not a sin to be tempted, as long as the temptation is resisted.

Another thing you must understand is that Jesus did not defeat Satan by quoting Scripture, but by **knowing it** and **being obedient to it**. Scripture cannot be used like some magical incantation. Memorization of Scripture without a willingness to apply it and be obedient to it will not protect you from Satan's subtle strategies.

{to be continued}