

The next time you feel somewhat intimidated by a **fundamentalist quoting the Scriptures**, tell him even Satan knew the Scriptures. In this exchange, Satan is quoting Scripture passages and Jesus counters with his own. Living the Scriptures, as Jesus shows us, is a heck of a lot more important than memorizing them.

Jesus has just been baptized - filled with the Spirit and led by the Spirit into the desert he goes. He goes there **to discern how he is going to spend the rest of his life** - to think, to pray and to struggle.

+**I have noticed this occurs at different phases of life** - we graduate and wonder now what shall we do, Lord? And then at mid-life, you also struggle and pray, wondering what the heck just happened and asks for direction as you begin that journey in life.

His struggle is that while he is conscious of his unique abilities (tough to miss that), he must decide **how he will use them in ministry** - he is discerning his approach and it is Satan who ultimately forces his hand.

Our own struggles are seen in this scene as well, because life can at times come down to **how we react to evil temptations** - the choices we make when Satan forces our hand. Be sure of this, the degree to which **you seek change** will inevitably be matched in temptation to divert you from such a path.

You will be tempted to go the **path of least resistance**, which will lead to a lifetime of fleeing and thus never knowing what it means to be tried and found worthy.

In this exchange, Jesus will see and choose just how **he will win women and men to God**. In the end, he rejects the way of power & glory and accepts the way of **suffering and the cross**.

Even though Jesus overcame each temptation, it did not end in the desert, for we are told Satan *"departed from him for a time."* As we all know, we can overcome one temptation, but you can be sure there will be another.

In the 1st temptation, Satan seeks to sow doubt in Jesus' mind: *"If you are the Son of God..."* In essence he is saying, *"Are you sure this is what you are to do? If God loved you, why would he allow you to hunger? God wouldn't want that..."*

You see, he successfully tried this once before, in the Garden of Eden (Hey, why not go to the well one more time?). **Gen. 3:1** *"Did God really tell you not to eat of any of the trees in the Garden?"* He goes on to say, *"Your eyes will be open!"*

Temptation always **begins with doubts** to throw us off balance and to question:

In the most **loving of marriages**, there are times when one hears the doubts - *"Are you sure she is the one you should have married? You might have been happier with..."*

Priesthood: *"You don't seem to be making much of a difference...you might have made the wrong choice...or...she could have been the one."*

All that bad news on the television: *"How could God exist amidst all of this? All those people dying..."*

"Why give up drinking? It chases away all those anxieties...you're not really an alcoholic..."

Having doubts about something? It might just be you are on the right path, but that evil seeks to disrupt with another path. He tempted Jesus to feed his craving, but Jesus knew it would never suffice. Have you noticed that? You give into temptation and the *hungrier* and *emptier* you become.

+*Come on, feed that lust with a quick look on the internet - just this one time feed that craving.* And then, before one knows it, he has become a slave of what seduced him and discovers he is dying from starvation.

Satan tempts Jesus to change rocks into bread of the world, from which one will always hunger for more. The irony is that Jesus will later take this ordinary bread of the world and transform it into the Bread of Eternal Life.

The 2nd temptation concerns power. In the heat of President Bill Clinton and Monica Lewinsky affair the head of a women's support group spoke to CNN. This is what she said, in essence: *"Monica Lewinsky has done nothing wrong. In the world of corporate establishments and in the White House bureaucracy, women who want to advance must use everything at their disposal: power, connections and sex. If that is what she has done, we see absolutely nothing wrong with that."* The theme of this temptation is to **use what you have to get what you want.**

+In the movie, *Schindler's List*, Schindler is confronting the Nazi leader, who is shooting at the defenseless prisoners. He pleads with him, telling him that true power is to know you have it and **not use it.** You see, that is Jesus dying on the cross. He could have destroyed them all, but chose not to and gave it all back to the will of God that Father. That is true power.

All of us have gifts and some are more high profile than others. You are given great business sense, but have you ever asked yourself why? You were given a beautiful body and are so very popular. Why was this given to you? You have charisma of a great leader, but have you realized why this was given to you? To understand, look to Jesus, who submitted the greatest power of the universe for the will of the Father.

The 3rd temptation: Do something sensational! Throw yourself down! Wow them with that! (He will be tempted with this one last time (Mark 15:30) *"Save yourself by coming down from that cross!"*) Jesus knows that if he submits to Satan, people will always seek another feat, something even greater than the last.

Later in his ministry, we are told countless times how they tried to make him a king and each time he disappeared from their midst, knowing such adoration quickly turns.

+Think Tiger Woods may be discovering this? Let's hope so, for when his talents and sensationalism are gone, all that will matter will be the ordinary love of family.

The God of Jesus Christ is not a God of the sensational, but a God who works through the ordinary of everyday life, but bear in mind, so too is Satan.

Take the hand of Christ, listen to the word of God and feed on the Body of Christ and you will never have to fear evil. Place your hope in him and be free. Yes, hold on to Christ and drive the temptations from the desert of your life!