

Temptation and Testing Matthew 4:1-11

Happy Father's Day to all you men out there! We thank God for you!
What would be a great gift to give your father today on Father's Day?

What kind of gift(s) do you think our Heavenly Father would be most pleased to receive today, in honor of Father's Day?

At Jesus' baptism, the Father declared from heaven - **"This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased!"** The obedience of the Son was the gift that was well pleasing to the Father! We too are the children of God!

I wonder, would God say the same about us, His children, today?
Yes, Jesus was/is the unique, begotten Son of God, sent into the world to fulfill all righteousness, in order to make the rest of us pleasing in His sight.

But we too, as God's children, are called to honor Him with our obedience!
Such obedience doesn't earn God's favor but is a response to it!

The Westminster Catechism asks the question, "What is the chief end of man?" "To glorify God and to enjoy Him forever!" Is that our life pursuit?

Too often we are ruled by our own pursuit of glory and our desires for the things of this world that can only offer us temporary happiness. Video

Adam & Eve, our first parents, ate the forbidden fruit b/c their focus was only on the elevation of self & the fulfillment of their immediate desires!
If that's what rules us, then we will never live a life pleasing to the Father!

H.C. #127- "By ourselves we are too weak to hold our own even for a moment..."

Our Heavenly Father knows that we will struggle to make pleasing Him our highest aim, and that's why He sent His Son into this world - to save us..., to make us into a new creation..., and to give us an example to follow.

We see here in Matthew 4:1-11, a picture of what it means to truly live a life pleasing to the Father! Let's read & learn from this example of Jesus together!

Vs. 1 starts out with a hard saying, **"Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil."** Does God tempt us?

The devil is doing the tempting, the Spirit is doing the testing! Tempting is for the purpose of destroying, while testing is for the purpose of polishing!

Temptation/Test #1 – Vs. 2 & 3

The temptation was an attack on Jesus at the place of greatest vulnerability, to get him to elevate his human wants/needs above everything else!

If we were attacked today by the devil/world/flesh, where would we be most vulnerable? Our earthly desires put an easy target on our backs!

This test was to show that even in our weakness there is strength, that comes not from earthly things (bread), but from heaven (God's Word & presence)!

Temptation/Test #2 – Vs. 5 & 6

The temptation was an attack on Jesus' identity! The devil tried to get Him to feel entitled, & to respond by abusing His power!

Do we ever wrestle with entitlement, and does that ever lead us to sin? Again, Jesus shows us how to battle that – with the Word of Truth!

This test was to show that who we are in God's eyes is enough! We don't need titles, status, or spectacle -we don't have to prove anything to anyone!

Temptation/Test #3 – Vs. 8 & 9

The temptation was an attack on Jesus' purpose! The devil tried to offer Jesus the prize without the cost! But there are no shortcuts in God's plan!

Do we ever struggle with impatience? Do we ever make compromises for the sake of just trying to reach our own goals?

How does Jesus' answer help us today? **"You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve."** Who is on the throne of our lives?

This test was to show that there are no shortcuts, no compromise, no easy way, when it comes to living out our purpose in this world! We will either choose to worship & serve God or we will worship/serve something else!

We all will be tempted, and tested, in this world, the question is, **"How will we respond?"** If we desire to be a gift that is well-pleasing to the Father, it will be because of what Jesus has done, and what we do in response!

To follow Jesus' example:

- We must not pursue earthly things at the expense of heavenly things!
- We must not promote ourselves out of a place of entitlement/insecurity!
- We must not please the devil by forsaking our God-given purpose!

May our Heavenly Father be pleased today by how we follow the Son's lead!

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