

GOD'S LEADER IS TESTED 5/24 24 original Jan. 2016 edited

Leaders are like bridges, they will have to bear up under heavy weights. They must be built carefully to make sure they can handle the expected burdens on them. History is filled with the sad stories of bridges that collapsed, but also of Christian leaders who rose to great heights only to succumb to lowly temptations. Their weaknesses were not dealt with early on in their development. Unfortunately, they took many people down with them who looked to them for truth, support and encouragement.

Jesus came to earth to be the supreme leader for all mankind. It was a giant rescue operation which required that he walk in total victory and perfection. Jesus would become the King of all kings, the Leader of all leaders. His followers would confess him as LORD. God promises that 'everyone who puts their trust in Him will never be put to shame.' - Romans 10:11 Jesus would never disappoint us. Jesus displayed his greatness even as he faced the devil in the desert.

Jesus faced three temptations in the desert from the devil. The Jews looked for a Messiah or King who would feed the poor, perform miracles and exercise military/ political power over their Roman oppressors. Jesus did the first two at times among the people. The third one would await his second coming to earth. Satan does tempt us all to do things that are contrary to God's Word. However, sometimes he tempts us with things that God does want to give us or do through us, but **the main issue is.....timing.** Satan wants us to take shortcuts along the way and avoid the process of waiting on God for his time in the matter. Jesus was always led by the Spirit and not by his own comfort or pleasure. Jesus overcame the devil regarding 3 issues. They could be looked at in the personal realm, but Jesus also dealt with them in their larger dimensions too.

PERSONAL TEMPATION

BROADER TEMPTATION

BREAD: Lust of the flesh
TEMPLE: Lust of Pride
MOUNTAIN: Lust of the world

Economic power
Religious power
Political power

BREAD This was a temptation to fulfill a fleshly appetite at the leading of the devil. Food was an issue in the downfall of Adam, Eve, Esau and others. The enemy knows that we are more susceptible to his temptations when we are tired and hungry to satisfy various areas of our flesh. Elijah had a great victory over the 450 prophets of Baal at Mt. Carmel. It was an exhilarating triumph filled with great faith, energy and emotion. We next find Elijah fleeing in fear from just one person, Queen Jezebel. After a mountaintop experience, one can enter the valley of despair. The enemy can take advantage of our weariness after a great battle. I had this experience the summer of 1983. I had three exciting and fast paced months in London, England as leader of three different evangelism teams in various areas of the city. At the end of this time I returned to our mission conference in Belgium. Suddenly, I entered into two days of oppression. I read the Word and prayed but somehow the dark cloud still hung over me. I decided to go for a walk. A couple of years before I had memorized a pack of scripture verses related to our victory in Christ. As I continued walking I began to recite them. Then I came to one from Romans

"The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace." - Romans 8:6 NIV

As I recited it, I stopped in my tracks. The cloud had lifted and light had come. I was free from the oppression. Funny how that works. One word from God can transform us in an instant. Is that not what God says?

"The entrance of your word gives light." - Psalm 119:30

As a leader of a new kingdom, Jesus faced a much broader temptation from Satan. He could be a bread king with vast **economic power** over the masses. Jesus did demonstrate his power to multiply bread, but it was done to bless the people and bring honor to his heavenly Father. The people immediately wanted to make him king, but Jesus knew it was not the Father's time for that. He did not desire to do miracles for any selfish reasons and neither should we. **Jesus knew that the Cross must come before the Crown.**

The number one temptation problem for men in our society is.....pornography. I was faced with this when I first moved to London at the age of 36. When I rode the busses, I would have to be careful that I did not happen to glance at the third page of the Sun newspaper that someone near me happened to be reading. Every day the third page had a large photo of a topless woman.

I still remember the morning I was **walking** around in my bedroom. In the habit of George Mueller, I often read and prayed the scriptures as I walked about; inside or usually outside if the weather permitted. That particular morning I was praying Psalm 101. The second verse caught my attention.

"I will be careful to lead a blameless life - when will you come to me?

I will walk in my house with a blameless heart."

The rest of that Psalm then came alive to me. "I will set before my eyes no vile thing....." Later as I meditated on the whole of Psalm 101, I realized how much this could apply to our TV watching. Too often we watch things on TV and movies etc. that we would not permit to happen in our home if it was live with actual people there, but somehow we think it is acceptable because it is only a picture on a TV screen.

PRAYER: Holy Father.... we pray for our leaders in all areas of society, but especially for Christian leaders. Give them a desire to live holy lives. May the men whom we know be like Job, who 'made a covenant with his eyes to not look lustfully at a woman." - Job 31:1
May our **eyes be on the faithful in the land.....may they minister unto me.** - Psalm 101:6

In our next message we will go to the top of the temple; we will find Jesus there too.

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