

# Sermon Study Guide

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## THE MAIN THING: The Temptation Trap – Part 2 – Manipulation

Understanding our identity in Christ is the second powerful 'key' to avoid getting caught in the temptation trap.

### PURSUE RELATIONSHIP: *Opportunities to connect and pray as a group*

1. Did you ever watch 'Crocodile Hunter'? Do you have a favourite scene?
2. Tell of a time when you have felt unappreciated or unnoticed. How did you handle that situation?
3. What is the meaning of your name? What was the significance of the name you were given?  
(Suggestion to the Group Leader: look up the names of your group participants)

### PURSUE GOD: *Time that is devoted to the Word of God*

1. What do we learn about satan's tactics in this second encounter? How does Jesus recognize the manipulation and what prepared him to respond?  
(also refer to Matt 3:13-17)
2. What expectations did the Jewish people have of the Messiah? Compare this with the description given in Isaiah 53:1-3.
3. How does Zephaniah 3:17 assure us of our identity in God? Compare this verse with the words spoken by God over Jesus at His baptism.
4. How did Jesus, knowing His identity, resist satan's temptation? What does that mean for us and how is this tied to Key #1 (the power of God's Word)?

### PURSUE MISSION: *Seek to be the community of God's people in your community*

1. 'Unguarded strength is double weakness' (Oswald Chambers) How have you experienced this in your life?
2. In what ways are you aware that you have tried to manipulate God, or God's Word? Pray about those areas of which you are not aware?
3. Has God affirmed your new identity? How did He make this known to you? How does He continue to make this known? How can you enlarge your experience of your new identity?
4. Jesus waited 30 years before beginning His ministry. Are there areas in your life where you are 'waiting'? Pray for each other about those areas.

### Book resources:

Anonymous: Jesus' Hidden Years and Yours, Alicia Britt Chole

The Gift of Being Yourself, David Benner

### THE WORD (NIV)

#### Deuteronomy 6:16

<sup>16</sup>Do not put the LORD your God to the test as you did at Massah.

#### Psalms 91:11,12

For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; <sup>12</sup>they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.

#### Isaiah 53:1-3

Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? <sup>2</sup>He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. <sup>3</sup>He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.

#### Zephaniah 3:17

The LORD your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you; in his love he will no longer rebuke you, but will rejoice over you with singing."

#### Matthew 3:13-17

<sup>13</sup>Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. <sup>14</sup>But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" <sup>15</sup>Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented. <sup>16</sup>As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. <sup>17</sup>And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

#### Matthew 4:5-7

<sup>5</sup>Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. <sup>6</sup>"If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written: "He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'" <sup>7</sup>Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

# Sermon Study Summary

## **Temptation Trap – The Second Key to Resisting**

Steve Irwin, an Australian wildlife expert, also known as the Crocodile Hunter, dodged away from some of the fiercest animals for 14 years until he was suddenly killed by an unexpected attack from a stingray, a docile sea creature! Like Steve's encounter with the stingray, temptation comes unaware, at a time in life when we are the least prepared for battle. The areas where we perceive ourselves to be the strongest are those very areas we're least prepared for battle and therefore most vulnerable. We give a foothold to the enemy when we give in to some of those harmless, docile, non-threatening temptations of life and before we know it, the enemy derails us from the life God calls us to live. We can learn practical lessons about resisting temptation by looking at the temptations that Jesus faced and how he responded to them.

### The First Key to Overcoming Temptation: Anchoring out lives in God's Word

Last week we focused on the first temptation of Jesus – the temptation to turn stones into bread. It was a challenge to act independently of God. Jesus responded by quoting God's word – "... it is written, 'Man cannot live on bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'" (Revised Standard Version, Matthew. 4: 4)

### The Second Key to Overcoming Temptation: Living in our new identity in Christ

For the first 30 years of his life, Jesus lived anonymously – the world did not know him as Messiah or the Savior. He was the son of a carpenter, living an obscure life in a small village. It was not until his baptism that Jesus stepped out of hiddenness to begin his public ministry and in so doing, became a threat to Satan. Because he wanted to disqualify Jesus from being the Savior of the world, Satan dangled a bait of notoriety in front of Jesus. (Matthew 4:5,6) He tempted Jesus to show up at the temple in a spectacular way and reveal his identity and meet the expectations that the Jewish people held for the coming of the Messiah which was contrary to the Messiah described in Isaiah 53: 1-3. There is a natural longing in all of us for approval and applause of others and this second temptation must have been appealing to Jesus. Satan also backed up this temptation by quoting Psalms 91: 11,12. But Satan had taken these passages out of context and he tried to get Jesus to manipulate and test God with a conditional clause – to use the privileges of His sonship to twist God's hand – "If I am your Son, make me spectacular so everyone will take notice of me!" This was the second temptation faced by Jesus. Jesus answered Satan by saying, "... 'It is also written: Do not put the Lord your God to the test'" (Matthew 4:7; Deuteronomy 6:16).

It is important to always look for the whole counsel of God's word before arriving at a doctrine. For Jesus to expect God's protection over a reckless act was not faith but manipulation by testing God and abusing His promises. God's promises are there for us too when we need them; but we should never manipulate situations to get God to fulfill them. Jesus resisted. He remained confident in God's affirmation of His life. Matt. 3:16-17 tells us that as soon as Jesus was baptized the Heavens opened and the Holy Spirit came like a dove and empowered Jesus for his ministry and God stamped his mark of approval on Jesus as He **spoke**, "This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy." Before Jesus had preached one sermon, before He had healed one person, before He had saved one soul, God affirmed to Jesus how delighted He was with him and that He accepted him not because his performance but because Jesus was His Son whom He loved and was proud of. This affirmation from God gave Jesus identity, security and significance which flowed through his entire life and ministry. Jesus was never swayed by public opinion or even the opinion of his own family but rested confidently on His identity as the Father's only Son.

This is the second key to overcoming temptation. If we do not know our identity and our position, we will manipulate God and manipulate people in order to gain acceptance and affirmation. Some of us carry wounds from the past and we have low self esteem and low self image. Even if we have the best parental love, the best spousal love, and affirmation from millions in the world it is not enough. We have a heart that only God's love and affirmation can satisfy. And Jesus gives it to us freely. David Brenner ([The Gift of Being Yourself](#)) says "An identity grounded in God would mean that when we think of who we are, the first thing that would come to mind is our status as someone who is deeply loved by God." Is this true of you or is your identity defined by your professional role or title, your accomplishments or by what others say about you?

In Zephaniah 3:17 we are told that God delights in you, He is proud of you, He loves you so much He even sings over you. You have a new identity in Christ – and you don't have to live in bondage to the past. "You are God's beloved daughter, God's beloved son – in you He is well pleased. You are a child of God, loved by God unconditionally. This is your primary identity and everything else should flow out of that. You possess the Second Key to Resisting Temptation – The Power of Your Identity in Christ!