

TEMPTATION

“Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me.” We recite these words as kids, but the truth is, what others say about us affects us deeply. Have you ever believed what others said about you, even though you knew it wasn’t true? Most of us can think back to a time when someone said something unkind and untrue that has stayed with us up to today. How can we, as people of Jesus, not give into this lie?

Many Christian thinkers and theologians agree that there are three core lies the enemy tries to tempt Jesus with while in the desert:

1. “You are what you have”
2. “You are what you do.”
3. “You are what others think of you.”

This week, we look at the third lie.

Have you ever observed a time where this lie completely derailed the life of another person? What happened?

Read Matthew 4:5-7

Does anything stick out to you about this particular temptation?

The fact that satan began his statement to Jesus with “If you are the son of God...” reveals that he was trying to get Jesus to question His identity. Even more, the fact that the enemy quotes Scripture to Jesus reveals that he is trying to get Jesus to have to prove Himself.

Have you ever felt tempted to prove yourself? Where does this come up in your life?

How easy is it to accomplish the purposes of God when we are listening to what others think of us?

How does shame connect to this lie in our lives?

How does pride play into this lie?

Jesus reveals to us how to combat this lie, and how to suffocate shame and pride. By understanding and obeying God's word (what God says) we can avoid falling into the trap of what others say.

I tried keeping rules and working my head off to please God, and it didn't work. So I quit being a "law man" so that I could be God's man. Christ's life showed me how, and enabled me to do it. I identified myself completely with him. Indeed, I have been crucified with Christ. My ego is no longer central. It is no longer important that I appear righteous before you or have your good opinion, and I am no longer driven to impress God. Christ lives in me. The life you see me living is not "mine," but it is lived by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I am not going to go back on that.
– Galatians 2:20 (The Message)

How does this section of Scripture encourage us to avoid falling into the trap of what others think of us?

Pray this prayer: "Father, may I learn to listen to what you say. I am not what others say I am. I am not even what I say I am. I am what You say am. Thank you for your Word, the Word of Life. Help me hunger for more of Your Word. Help me to find times of solitude so I can lean into Your Voice even more. I receive Your grace to overcome my shame and pride. I receive the identity You died to give me. Thank you Jesus. Amen."