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Spiritual Warfare: Examining Satan's methods revealed in the wilderness temptations.

1. What is the real battle and why? Ephesians 6:10-12
  - a. Satan has specific methods which we should be prepared to resist.
  - b. Our real battle is against Satan and his demons.
  - c. Why? Satan specifically desires to destroy your relationship with God and to foul up your view of God.
  - d. People are often instruments in the battle but do not share the motives of Satan.(e.g. Judas, Peter, Ananias, Rev. 2:8-11, 1 John 5:19)
  - e. This should shape our view of others and how to act toward others.
    - i. View: More grace oriented toward others. Change your focus in prayer for others. Eph. 6:18-19, 2 Tim. 2:24-26
    - ii. Actions: More aware to the fact that your actions can either promote Satan's agenda or glorify God.
2. Jesus tempted in the wilderness. Matthew 4:1-11
3. All 3 attacks come at a time of tremendous physical weakness. Jesus was near the point of death. Satan always attacks at the opportune time. Luke 4:13; 1 Peter 5:8
4. First attack – depend on God or His own ability? Matthew 4:1-4
  - a. Satan does not question whether Jesus is the Son of God but is affirming that He is and therefore should use His ability.
  - b. Jesus' response points to Israel tested with manna. Exodus 16:4, Deut. 8:3, 16
    - i. Both Israel and Jesus were led in the wilderness by God.
    - ii. Both were led into hunger.
    - iii. The lesson for Israel was to learn that the word of God is the most important issue in life.
  - c. Consider the maturity/perfection of Christ and yet He was still mindful of one of Israel's first lessons.
  - d. Digging deeper will reveal that the issue is humility (subject to God) vs. pride (do it your own way). Deut. 8:3, 16.
  - e. Jesus' answer not only took care of the first attack but also set the standard for conquering the next 2 attacks. Orientation to Word of God is so important when facing trials/temptation.
  - f. Resisting the devil in suffering. 1 Peter 5:5-11.
    - i. Humility and trust are first addressed. Humility is not measured by your attitude about self as much as it is measured by your attitude toward God and your fellow man.
    - ii. Pride produces love for self while humility produces love for God and others. Matt. 22:37-39, Philip. 2:3-4.

- iii. Orientation to the goodness of God aids in our resistance to the attacks of the devil. Notice how humility is usually commanded in view of God's grace. 1 Peter 5:10
- 5. Second Attack: Introduce false application of doctrine and challenge your trust in God.(4:5-7)
  - a. Satan is now challenging Jesus' own words. This is a method of attack for those who have made the Word of God the greatest issue in their life.
  - b. Psalm 91 addresses the security that a believer has in God. Satan is taking this Psalm out of context to actually make Jesus challenge God from a passage that should cause Him to trust God.
  - c. Consider this test in context of the physical condition of Jesus.
  - d. Jesus recognizes that Satan is challenging Him to test God and orients to Israel's failure in the wilderness. Duet. 6:16; Exodus 17:7
    - i. Hebrews shows that Israel repeatedly tested God because of unbelief. They did not know God's ways (3:10), resulting in unbelief concerning His Word (3:19), which, not surprisingly, resulted in disobedience (3:18).
  - e. Why obey the Word of God if you don't know or trust in the goodness of God? Perhaps for a mystical view of the Bible?
  - f. Putting God to the test is a common practice of contemporary Christianity.
- 6. Third attack – Let Satan provide, idolatry, and the enticement of the world.(4:8-11)
  - a. Jesus orients to Deuteronomy 6:13. He showed that no amount of immediate gratification through mammon or glory could be greater than a relationship with God and the future kingdom.
  - b. Consider some who chose the way of the world over God. 1 John 2:15-16
    - i. Judas – love of money.
    - ii. Ananias – greed.
    - iii. Demas - loved the now.
  - c. The challenge is to love God rather than the world. James 4:3-10.
    - i. The mind focused on the world eventually becomes hostile toward God. John 3:19-20, Romans 8:7
    - ii. God offers greater grace as opposed to what the world can offer.
    - iii. Resisting the devil is now in reference to worldly desires.
    - iv. Humble yourself while trusting that God will exalt you.
- 7. Satan's goal is ultimately to cause wrong thinking about God and pride is usually the best way to foul up your thinking.
  - a. Pride to do it your own way.
  - b. Pride to think God needs or will respond to you testing Him.
  - c. Pride to serve your own temporal lusts instead of God.