

## How Do You Stop The Devil? (Part 4)

I called her Fern for...actually I'm not sure for how long. But her real name was Lois. I know, I know, "*How did you get Fern out of Lois?*" you are thinking. I have no idea. It was embarrassing when I was finally corrected. Thankfully, *Lois* had a good sense of humor.

Being called by the wrong name is like having your identity confused. *You* know who you are, but how important is it for others to know who you are? Perhaps a better and more focused question is: How important is it for God to know who you are? *Does God know who you are?*

That was the central focus of the devil's second temptation of Jesus in Matthew 4:

**<sup>5</sup>Then the devil took Him into the holy city and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, <sup>6</sup>and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down; for it is written, 'HE WILL COMMAND HIS ANGELS CONCERNING YOU'; and 'ON their HANDS THEY WILL BEAR YOU UP, SO THAT YOU WILL NOT STRIKE YOUR FOOT AGAINST A STONE.' "**

Did you notice the 'if' statement: *'If' you are the Son of God?*

The 'if' is designed to create doubt. The first temptation also started with an 'if.' It was designed to create doubt in Jesus' *identity* as the Son of God, as if to say, "*Are you sure you are the Son of God?*" The second temptation questioned the identity of Jesus from God's perspective, as if to say, "*Does God really know who you are; does He think you are the Son of God?*"

In the first temptation the devil tempted Jesus to prove His identity by performing a miracle *Himself*. In the second temptation he tempted Jesus to force *God* to perform a miracle to validate that *He* believed Jesus was the Son of God.

The devil quoted from Psalm 91 (Impressive!), but consider the verse after the quotation:

**You will tread upon the lion and cobra, The young lion and the serpent you will trample down.** —Psalm 91:13

The vivid imagery in Psalm 91 was used to convey a message of protection and assistance for those who trust in God. It was not meant to be taken literally. The devil misapplied scripture.

Jesus detected the devil's deception and knew that he was trying to make Him question His *relationship* with God. Did God need to prove anything to Jesus, or was God's word enough?

God had made an open verbal declaration stating that Jesus was His Son (Matthew 3:17). For Jesus to do what the devil suggested would have been asking God to prove what He had already said by doing a miracle. Jesus did not doubt God, but responded wisely:

**On the other hand, it is written, 'YOU SHALL NOT PUT THE LORD YOUR GOD TO THE TEST.'**  
—Matthew 4:7

One way the devil tempts Christians is to make them doubt their relationship with God. When difficult times come some wonder if God really cares. Some wonder if God hears their prayers. They doubt God when they do not get what they pray for. Do you think an easy life, health and constant blessings are necessary to prove God's love? In reality, there is nothing for God to prove, not to you and not even to the devil.

Read Romans 5:1-11. Has God already demonstrated His love for you? Has He already declared His relationship with those who are in Christ? *Do you believe what God has already said about you!? Or will you put God to the test?*