

# Baptized, Committed, & Tested

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MP: following our public statement of faith in Christ, Satan will fight seriously to draw us away from that faith

Following our profession of repentance and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, we may think that because of following the Lord's example to be baptized, we will enjoy a special immunity and that Satan would leave us alone. What is usually experienced, however, is an increase of temptations from the devil. Doing anything in God's will, can bring serious opposition from Satan.

When a new convert is baptized and makes a commitment to Christ, they will be tested. James 1:12 says this life is a test, and if we will persevere through trials, eternal life is given. Tests of faith give evidence that our profession of repentance is sincere. Satan will do anything possible to get us back to the world. Jesus reminds us (Luke 9:62), *"No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God."*

Satan will suggest to a person (after they are baptized) that it does not matter how they live, but it *does* matter because their actions reveal their faith (or lack of it). If we have committed our life

to God and made the decision to follow Jesus, tests will be met. *"Every test that you have experienced,"* (1 Corinthians 10:13), *"is the kind that normally comes to people. But God keeps his promise, and he will not allow you to be tested beyond your power to remain firm."*

Each new day presents choices that will require divine power to remain *in the faith*. We all begin life with a sinful nature that is prone to sinful desires, so the devil takes advantage of that and tempts us to want things outside of God's will. We must understand the seriousness of our sins and what it took to forgive them. We should immediately repent of sins and to confess them before God. *Take my life and let it be, Consecrated, Lord, to Thee,* should be sincere.

(Psalm 119:9-11), *"How can a young man [or woman] keep his/her way pure? By living according to your word. I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands. I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you."* Reading God's Word is an important part of every day.

After Jesus was baptized, He was tested. (Matthew 4:1), *"Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil."* It was not a minor temptation but a series of serious tests for many days. Jesus spent over a month in the desert (fasting and praying). After baptism, Satan will fight more than ever. It is written (1 Peter 5:9) *"Resist him, standing firm in the faith."* James 4:7 says to *"Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."*

We must be ready to defend our faith in Christ (if the opportunity is given). A co-worker may want to know why we do not ask for a pay increase. Our reply is the same as the one Jesus gave to the devil. *"Because it is written"* (Luke 3:14) *"be content with your pay"*. God is in charge of our finances, and He will see that we receive increases (if and when they are needed).

The devil first tempted Jesus to provide food in a way that was outside the Father's will. The next test was to place someone ahead of God, and the third was doing something to prove God would be faithful. All three were replied to with Scripture. (Luke 4:4), *"It is written: Man does not live on bread alone."* (Vs 8) *"It is written: Worship the Lord your God and serve him only."* (Vs 12) *"It says: Do not put the Lord your God to the test."*

If we are tempted to desire anything outside of God's will, we are to say *It is written*. We may be tempted to borrow money (but God's Word says owe no one anything, but love). We may be tempted to resent something (but Scripture tells us to forgive from the heart). No matter how tough the test, we are to *live by every word God gives*.

If we are tempted to place anything ahead of God (which is idolatry) we are to say, *"It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve Him only.'"* If we are tempted to be involved in dangerous activities (or risk-taking) our response is, *"Do not put the Lord your God to the test."*

Many in the world today do very foolish things and try dangerous stunts. They want to set records and bring attention to themselves. It is all from pride and wanting to be recognized by the world (but not approved by God). We should resist Satan's temptations to do anything foolish or unwise because we only want to please God.

The devil will tempt us to lie, to resent something, or start an argument, but all such things are tests of our faith in God. The Word of God tells us to always tell the truth, to forgive from the heart, and to bring peace in every situation.

Following baptism we will be tested—and sometimes seriously). After we have made a commitment to follow God's Word by faith, Satan will do anything possible to get us away from the faith. *"God keeps his promise, and he will not allow you to be tested beyond your power to*

*remain firm; at the time you are put to the test, he will give you the strength to endure.”* (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Our desire is to follow Jesus, so we should have no desire for worldly friends, unscriptural entertainment, and dangerous activities. Our only desire should be to be in union with Christ. We are to repent of unscriptural attitudes and to forsake wrong ways. If we are committed to God and to following Christ (by the power of the Spirit) we will give up anything that would not be approved by God). *Worldly pleasures all forsaken—take me, Jesus, take me now.*

We should be willing to sacrifice (on the altar of God), questionable novels, films, or music (with warning labels). We should not tolerate profanity, abusive language, immorality, and the vile images of the world. God says (Ezekiel 5:11) *“because you have defiled my sanctuary with all your vile images and detestable practices, I myself will withdraw my favor.”* Everyone (someday) will give an account for their actions and decisions. We should make any change God has revealed to us.

John the Baptist proclaimed easy-to-understand truths. He said to give food, clothing (or anything) to someone who needs it. He told us not to overcharge for services, don't force people to pay debts, never tell a lie and be content with our pay. Everyone had the choice to follow that teaching then, and everyone has that same choice today.

We can still give food, money, and clothing to the poor. We can still give things to those who want to borrow (and not asking them to give it back). If we told a lie, we can still ask to be forgiven. If we have complained about our wages, we can still re-commit our life to God and do our work as *unto Him*.

We have stated that we believe with all our heart in the Lord Jesus Christ, so now we can expect to be tested to prove our sincerity. John was not easy on those who came to him with wrong motives. *“You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance.”* (Matthew 3:7-8). He wanted the change in their heart to be evident in their life. Satan will constantly try to draw us away from the faith, because it is by grace (through faith) that we escape the flames. Satan is determined to destroy anyone who is foolish enough to let him.

If we have decided to follow Jesus, then there is no turning back. He is *“the Author and Finisher of our faith.”* We gave our heart to Him, so our desires (attitudes and our life in general) must have His approval. The world has an insatiable desire for money (and all those things it is supposed to buy that brings happiness), but the apostle said to, *“Flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, and gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses.”* (1 Timothy 6:11-12).

While sharing a meal with friends, Jesus promised to give them a Helper. His Spirit is now the Friend we need to help us in times of testing. Jesus said He will, *“teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.”* (John 14:26). (Vs 21), *“He who has my commandments and obeys them—he it is who loves me.”*

Jesus told us many things and gave many instructions, so now it is our turn to make a decision. *Lord Jesus, I long to be perfectly whole. I want You forever to live in my soul. Break down every idol, cast out every foe. Now wash me and I shall be whiter than snow. Lord Jesus, look down*

*from Your throne in the skies, and help me to make a complete sacrifice. I give up myself, and whatever I know. You see that I patiently wait. Come now, and within me a new heart create. To those who have sought You, You never said “No.”*

*“Search me, O God, and know my heart today. Try me, O Savior, know my thoughts, I pray. See if there be some wicked way in me. Cleanse me from every sin and set me free.”* (John 8:31-32) *“If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”*

*All to Jesus I surrender, all to Him I freely give. I will ever love and trust Him...in His presence daily live.* The apostles had totally given their lives to God. Simon Peter asked Jesus, *“We have left everything to follow you! What then will there be for us?”* (Matthew 19:27). Jesus promised him (and everyone who ever left anything for His sake), that they would be provided for today (and would inherit eternal life—tomorrow).

*Take my silver and my gold...not a mite would I withhold. Take myself and I will be...ever, only, all for Thee. When the Bridegroom cometh, will your robes be white? Will your soul be ready for the mansions bright? (They will if we), Lay aside the garments that are stained with sin...and be washed in the blood of the Lamb. There's a fountain flowing for the soul unclean, [so] be washed in the blood of the Lamb.*



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