



# Higher Ground

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## NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. This year is passing so quickly! What have we done for Christ? Have we made efforts to enlarge His kingdom? Have we drawn closer to Him? Have we *TAKEN TIME* to learn the things of God, or have we allowed business to keep us from doing and being what we should?

These articles are included with the intention that they will be a blessing to you. Thank you all who passed on quotes or articles. It is exciting to see God working in

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*If Christ took Man's Advice...*

Memorandum

J.M.C.

TO: Jesus, Son of Joseph  
Woodcrafter Carpenter Shop  
Nazareth

FROM: Jordan Management Consultants  
Jerusalem

Dear Sir:

Thank you for submitting the resumes of the twelve men you have picked for management positions in your new organization. All of them have now taken our battery of tests; we have not only run the results through our computer, but also arranged personal interviews for each of them with our psychologist and vocational aptitude consultant.

It is the staff opinion that most of your nominees are lacking in background, education and vocational aptitude for the type of enterprise you are undertaking. They do not have the team concept. We would recommend that you continue your search for persons of experience in managerial ability and proven capability.

Simon Peter is emotionally unstable and given to fits of temper. Andrew has absolutely no qualities of leadership. The two brothers, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, place personal interest above company loyalty. Thomas demonstrates a questioning attitude that would tend to undermine morale. We feel that it is our duty to tell you that Matthew has been blacklisted by the Greater Jerusalem Better Business Bureau. James, the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus definitely have radical leanings, and they both registered a high score on the manic-depressive scale.

One of the candidates, however, shows great potential. He is a man of ability and resourcefulness, meets people well, has a keen business mind and has contacts in high places. He is highly motivated, ambitious and responsible. We recommend Judas Iscariot as your controller and right-hand man. All of the other profiles are self-explanatory.

We wish you every success in your new venture.

Sincerely yours,  
Jordan Management Consultants

this way! Don't be afraid to send anything you think may be worthwhile – the worst that can happen is that it could be left out! Go on, be a blessing!

Joshua

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The editor of Higher Ground is Joshua McPherson. He is a young man who desires to walk closer to the Lord each day, and encourages others to do the same.

### Free Subscription

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*And he hath put a new song in my mouth,  
even praise unto our God: many shall see it,  
and fear, and shall trust in the LORD.*

*(Psalm 40:3)*

This imaginary letter reminds us...  
Man looks on the outside – God looks on the heart

## THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS — PART 2

*“And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being forty days tempted of the devil...” Luke 4:1-2*

So why did Jesus have to go through this time of testing? I don't believe that this event was a proving of Himself before commencing His formal ministry on earth, or a preparation for it. God the Father was already pleased with Him, as had been confirmed at His baptism with the voice from Heaven saying, “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.” He didn't need to be tested. But He did need to identify with us. And that is what the writer of the Hebrews said, “For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”(Hebrews 4:15). Consequently, we can approach the throne of grace with boldness.

There is also another important reason for this account, and that is the way that it reveals to us more about the devil and his approach in tempting so that we can better guard against his attempts in our own lives. There are several things we can learn from this event about the devil:

1. The devil is cunning and attacks at our points of vulnerability. Most of us have not experienced much more than a day without a meal – in fact, I feel rather hungry after going for a handful of hours between meals without eating anything! And Jesus had gone forty days (that's almost six weeks!) without eating. It's no wonder that He was hungry! The devil waited until this point, when Jesus was at his most vulnerable physically, in an extremely hungry state, before exploiting that through the temptation. In the same way, the devil will work on our areas of physical or emotional vulnerability when he attacks.

2. The devil knows the Bible. One aspect of this event that I've often heard preachers focus on is how Jesus countered temptation by using God's Word. That is certainly an important point, but it seems to me that it is generally ignored that the devil also used the Scriptures, quoting confidently from the Psalms, in his temptation. Jesus' response to this was: “It is also written,” which I believe highlights the importance of interpreting Scripture in the light of Scripture (since it will not contradict itself).

People can misuse the Word of God (even unintentionally) to try and provide validity or substance for their ideas/preferences/hobbyhorses, and it is interesting to note just how many cults, sects, and false teachings have arisen claiming to be Bible-based. The devil can and will use Scripture for his own devious purposes, so we must be careful to resist this approach in his temptation, making sure that it is God speaking to us through His Word, not the devil using it for his purposes. If it is God speaking, we would expect evidence of this to be that it is drawing us closer to Him, and enabling us to fulfil the two great commandments of love. We must consider our motives and seek to rightly divide the Word of truth, not take it out of context, read things into it, or try to use it to defend and validate the precepts of men.

3. The devil will not give up even if his attempts have been defeated. Luke records that when the devil had finished tempting Jesus (without any success), he departed from Jesus “for a season”. Despite his defeat, already the devil was planning to return and tempt Jesus once again. In our daily spiritual battles, with the Lord's help we will have victories when we are tempted – but we must realize that those victories will not deter the devil. He will be back, so we must not rest on our laurels, but instead be standing firm and equipping ourselves with the armour God has provided for us.

So take a moment to think back over the past week. What has been a temptation or test of character or conduct for you? Or maybe it would be even better to ask in what area would your brother/s or sister/s say you most need to overcome temptation? Be encouraged by the promise: “For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.” (Hebrews 2:18)

Temptation is targeted at our mind, it is not wrong in itself, and always results in a choice: to do the Father's will, or to yield to the temptation. It can only be overcome if we have the sincere desire to overcome it, because God has provided us with the resources of the Holy Spirit and His Word, which are sufficient to overcome any temptation (they were sufficient for Jesus). God will allow us to be tested and tempted, as He did to the Israelites in the wilderness, to humble us and to see what is really in our hearts (Deuteronomy 8:3). Temptation can be Satan's weapon to defeat us, or God's tool to build us up. It's your choice what it will be today.

By A. Budimir

“Thou shalt not tempt the  
LORD thy God”

Luke 4:12

## INCONSISTENT, CRITICAL JUDGES

*"For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" John 5:46-47*



Christ constantly put those who criticised and questioned him to shame. Why this critical attitude? Why this continual desire to trap him by their questions? We commonly think of the Scribes and Pharisees with a quiet smile and say to ourselves "if I had been on earth then, I think I would have been like Phillip, or Nathanael or Nicodemus, or Mary, or any one of those who were looked upon as having faith, no matter how small, and who believed and loved Jesus.

Let us take a moment to consider His words in John 5:46-47. Here are the facts as we find them. The Jews were ready to kill Jesus because 1. He healed on the Sabbath, and 2. He made himself equal with God (v18). Christ states that *if* the Jews believed Moses (as they claimed to) then they would believe on Him, for Moses had written of Him. It was impossible for these men to believe what Jesus said was true, because they did not believe what Moses had said about Him.

What does that mean (in simple terms)? The Jews were inconsistent, critical judges of One who was far greater than themselves, yet they never knew it. Though they considered themselves very learned, wise men, who kept the law of Moses, as God had commanded (a commendable thing), and now justly criticised this man who did not keep that law as they did, they were totally wrong. Why?

First, they were only learned, wise men in relation to the facts as they knew and believed them. They never made any effort to get out of their comfort zone and learn how others thought – or to learn that they may have misinterpreted something. Perhaps that someone earnestly believed (as they did) that they were doing the right thing according to God's Word, as they knew it.

Second, they only kept the Law of Moses outwardly, and for selfish reasons. Our Lord had much to say about this, so I will not dwell upon it here. They received the reward of their religion – the praise of men (Mat 6:1-5). They were happy, because they got from their religion what they were in it for. Incidentally, if they had not received this, they would most likely have changed to something where their inward motives would have been satisfied.

Third, they considered their criticism just. They were pointing out the facts: Jesus did not keep the law according to their idea of law-abiding. He worked by healing a man on the Sabbath (though no doubt that had to be added to their list of forbidden Sabbath work, for it was not commonly done before that time!)

Now, we feel pretty good when we consider just how bad those terrible, horrible, mean, nasty, hypocritical Pharisees were!

What if we considered ourselves though? What would we discover? Are we like them in any way? My advice is not to read any further unless you are willing to *honestly* ask yourself some

questions, and do something about what you find.

How often are we inconsistent, critical judges of others? There is the base question. From it many others arise. Remember the Pharisees criticisms arose from several things: a knowledge of the truth (or more correctly, a perception of it), a belief that they were following that truth, and an analysis of others who did not line up to that truth. Put simply, a belief, living up to that belief, and analysing whether others lived up to that belief.

With those three things in mind, let us now consider our own lives. What do we believe? Do we actually know what we believe? If someone asks us what we believe (or perhaps I should say *when* someone asks us, for they will) what will we answer? Most of us will mention a person, a book or pamphlet about the subject, or flounder around trying to think of some verse that clinches our idea. Sound familiar? I can speak for myself! Allow me to put my neck on the guillotine – what will you say when you are asked why you dress differently to the world, or why you won't go down to the pub for a drink – or even just for the meal, or why you have boys hair cut short and girls long? Perhaps they will have no cause to ask these questions? Maybe they won't know there is supposed to be a difference? These are only a sample of the many questions people *should be prompted to ask*.

How much do we believe we believe when we do not really believe what we believe? Believe me, we can be confused about what we believe? I believe you are confused right now – WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE? Do you know why *according to the Scriptures*?

Now let's assume we satisfy that point. We smugly assert to ourselves that we are different to the world, we believe that we are distinct a Christians – from the world, and those other worldly so-called Christians from other churches (be honest – this is how we are prone to think). Are we really? Do our actions confirm what we say we believe? Perhaps they prove that either we don't know what we believe (we are just parrot Christians) or we only believe outwardly, with the mouth, and not the heart. It is, in fact, quite possible that we honestly believe that we believe and practice a thing when we do not. We honestly think we are different to the world, but they can find the glaring inconsistencies in us with no effort at all. If you know Jesus Christ as your Saviour – in reality, not just in word – then His Spirit dwells within and will help you find the areas you personally need to change.

Finally, the attitude of criticism stems from the inconsistencies in our own life. I believe that when we realize the deceitfulness of our own heart, and seek to remove the inconsistencies there, we will have no difficulty with this attitude of criticism. It will deal with itself as we allow God to deal with us. J. McPherson

# THE BELIEVER'S RICHES IN CHRIST — FROM A-Z

*"Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward" Hebrews 11:26*

**A**ccepted in the beloved (Ephesians 1:6)

**B**orn of God (I John 5:1)

**C**rucified with Christ (Galatians 2:20)

**D**elivered from the power of darkness (Colossians 1:13)

**E**nriched in everything in Him (I Corinthians 1:5)

**F**orgiven for Christ's sake (Ephesians 4:32)

**G**rounded in love (Ephesians 3:17)

**H**id with Christ in God (Colossians 3:3)

**I**nstructed in the way of the Lord (Acts 18:25)

**J**ustified by His grace (Titus 3:7)

**K**ept by the power of God (I Peter 1:5)

**L**ed by the Spirit of God (Romans 8:14)

**M**ade nigh by the Spirit of God (Romans 8:14)

**N**ourished in the words of faith (I Timothy 4:6)

**O**rdained to eternal life (Acts 13:48)

**P**erfected forever (Hebrews 10:14)

**Q**uickened together with Christ (Ephesians 2:5)

**R**edeemed from the curse of the law (Galatians 3:13)

**S**ealed with the Holy Spirit of Promise (Ephesians 1:13)

**T**ranslated into the kingdom of His dear Son (Colossians 1:13)

**U**nreproveable in His sight (Colossians 1:22)

**V**ictorious through our Lord Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 15:57)

**W**ashed from our sins in His own blood (Revelation 1:5)

**Y**earned over by the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:26)

**Z**ealous of good works (Titus 2:14)

Submitted by the Bayliss brothers

**A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z**

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To:

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