

Comment on First John 2:16

Jesus was able to resist the temptation offered by Satan because He had a profound sense of what it meant to be a child of God. He gave us an example of what it means to live our lives as Abba's child. When Satan came to Jesus he made a series of offers. First he said, why don't you turn these stones to bread? You will be a satisfied man. Why don't you throw yourself down from a high place? The angels will protect you. You will be an impressive man. Why don't you worship me and do things my way. I will give you kingdoms, governments and the riches of the world. The devil seemed to be offering everything a person could want and more! Jesus said no to it all. Jesus lived with a deep sense that He was Abba's child, and for Jesus that was enough. He didn't need to be impressive, successful or famous. Jesus had a satisfaction that the devil could never understand. In effect Jesus was saying to the enemy "what you are offering does not begin to match the value of what I have as Abba's child.

The things Satan offered were like trash compared to what Jesus had as God's son. The same is true today. All that the enemy might offer you or me, no matter how good it might look at the moment, is like garbage compared to what we receive as a child of God.

Not only did Jesus see Himself as Abba's child but we can also. You and I ordinary people but we can call God by this same intimate name. You and I can know that God is a Father.

As Abba, God has done so much for each of us. We are heirs to much more than we can know. What I have today does not begin to compare with all that the Father has in store for me. But I am constantly trading it for trash which I think will satisfy the strong desires of my flesh.

Often Christians ask questions like: How much sin can I have in my life before I am in the danger zone? Are there low levels of sin that are okay for me? Or at least they, or us, ask them with actions and hearts, not necessarily with words. These are the wrong questions for followers of Christ to ask, either way. The correct question is: Am I growing more and more sensitive and responsive to Jesus in my life? You see, the real question is directional. Am I moving toward the light or away from it? Or do I know? The truth is, it will take some spiritual discernment to get the right answer. The questions I need to be asking, when it comes to sin, are directional and not quantitative. Too often I want to give myself a spiritual pat-on-the-back, because I am not committing heinous and serious sinful actions. What I have to remember is that we all start at different points. It might take more courage and conviction for a kid from Gadsden, Hokes Bluff, or Ballplay not to accept an offer of drugs from a friend, than it does for another person to give most of what he owns to the poor or to missions. Because we all start at different places when we evaluate ourselves, we can't qualify our actions.

The key question I need to ask is: Am I moving toward God or away from God? Our closeness to God is difficult for us as individuals to judge. I know we can not judge it by how willing God is to use us. I do not understand that, but I know it is true. Sometimes God will use a person to do a work for Him, that we would never think He would use. If we are going to effectively battle the "sin thing" in our lives, we need to recognize that the most dangerous sins are sometimes subtle and socially acceptable sins. All sin is wrong and produces separation from God. The scripture is clear about this. We often view some sins as minor and sometimes the very attitudes and actions we secretly label as acceptable can be far more dangerous than we might ever dream. How does this action or attitude move me out of light and into darkness? Many times I have the attitude "I don't have major sin in my life. I don't need a major overhaul like some people do. I just need a tune-up."

But this all said, we must always keep in mind God is our Abba. Foremost in our minds, when we are tempted, must be the value of being Abba's child. Remember all the value and responsibility of that position. His love and His forgiveness are unconditional for His children. When we fail in our battle against the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, as John said, we separate ourselves from God. Satan's forces get a victory and the price can be high for us.