

Ordinary Lives Can Be Holy

Luke 4:1-11

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If you have ever lived with a teenager in the house you know of the terrible struggle that nearly all teenagers face. Nearly all teens struggle at some point with self esteem issues. I think it's worst in middle school when no one wants to stand out or be seen as different. Every kid dreads being mercilessly teased for just about anything. And yet the same kids that dread being teased, may also turn around and join in the teasing of another just so they fit in. It is a terrible dog eats dog world for young teenagers.

The hardest part is that no matter how often you tell them that they are perfect just the way they are, the children really struggle to believe it. They will spend hours in the bathroom trying to get their hair to look just right or obsess over what clothes are the cool clothes, so they fit in. Some children even go to great lengths to win the acceptance of their peers.

Now parents handle this phase of adolescence differently. Some try to get all of the latest trends hoping to spare their child from some of the hardship. If they can afford it, you know that the parent will buy the designer clothes, put up with the wild trends like the ripped jeans or the wacky hair colors and make-up simply because their child insists that this is what all of the kids at school are doing.

Our consumer-capitalist society does not help this out at all. Every teen is bombarded with ads, TV shows and musicians all marketing what it means

to be cool, popular and a success. This is because Marketers know that teens have lots of expendable income especially in suburbia. Ads tell us if we have this perfume or brand of clothing then we will win the approval of others or be the popular person in school. Many teens even go so far as to look like the hottest singer copying hair styles, clothing and attitudes for others. This is nothing new in America, I am sure I could ask any one of you who were the trend setters when you were in high school and you could name them and maybe admit to having dressed like some of them back in the day.

Still today, I wonder what consumer trend catches your attention today? Is it the ad on how to lose weight fast? Or maybe it's a get rich scheme with some Multi-Level Marketing company or self-help seminar that will teach you how to flip houses for quick money. So much of this is built upon the idea that you are not satisfied – you need more and you need it fast and it can be easy. What are your current cravings? Who do you look up to as a successful, powerful person? Everyone seeks their five minutes of fame, what is yours?

These are the things that the adversary was postulating to Jesus in the wilderness. If you are the son of God, then prove it and do this. You want power? I can give it to you if you just worship me. You want fame and notoriety? Just jump and God's angels will make you fly over the streets of Jerusalem.

Each of these things gets at the idea that Jesus had be extraordinary to be successful. He could not just be himself, the son of God, he had to prove it somehow. The temptation was that Jesus had to resort things like selfish, manipulation or deception. But each time Jesus came back with quick texts

of scripture that called out the lie that the adversary was trying to offer. God meets our needs, God is to be worshiped above all else and the gifts of God are not to be used to force God's hand.

We see here that outside pressures, temptations were even a problem for Jesus, but he knew he didn't need to prove himself to anyone. All that he needed to be successful he already possessed. He did not need to cheat his way to success.

Often in our world people struggle to see the inward power and strength we each possess from God that make us perfect. We seek to obtain something that others have convinced us we need. We struggle with inferiority complex and measure ourselves against others who appear more successful than we feel we are. We may even get down on ourselves because our past failings. We are not convinced that anything less than perfect would be acceptable will do.

God however sees it differently. God does not need us to be perfect, just perfectly ourselves. We are best suited for the calling we sense, not because we are perfect but because we have been perfectly suited for this. We are ordinary, nothing special and that is what God needs so that we can be a conduit of Divine and extraordinary solutions to life's problems.