

Temptation

Key Scriptures: Matthew 3:16-4:11 NET ¹⁶ After Jesus was baptized, just as he was coming up out of the water, the heavens opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming on him. ¹⁷ And a voice from heaven said, "This is my one dear Son; in him I take great delight." ^{4:1} Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ² After he fasted forty days and forty nights he was famished. ³ The tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become bread."

⁴ But he answered, "It is written, 'Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" ⁵ Then the devil took him to the holy city, had him stand on the highest point of the temple, ⁶ 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 'with their hands they will lift you up, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'" ⁷ Jesus said to him, "Once again it is written: 'You are not to put the Lord your God to the test.'" ⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their grandeur. ⁹ And he said to him, "I will give you all these things if you throw yourself to the ground and worship me." ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to him, "Go away, Satan! For it is written: 'You are to worship the Lord your God and serve only him.'" ¹¹ Then the devil left him, and angels came and began ministering to his needs.

Luke 4:13 "Now when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time."

Key Point: Despite being the Son of God, Jesus was not exempt from trials. He is our example of resisting the devil's temptations by relying on Scripture and resting in His Identity.

TALK IT OVER

Start talking: Pick a conversation starter for your group.

- Have you ever had a time when you took a short cut and it didn't work out? (driving, walking, repairing something, cooking, etc.)

Steps of faith: Reflect on your recent walk with Christ.

- Share with the group a step of faith you recently took.
- If you don't have a personal example, can you think of someone else's step of faith that has been encouraging or inspiring to you.

Reflect, Think, & Share: Read through the key scriptures and share any observations or questions with the group.

- Why is the connection between Jesus' baptism and temptation significant in the Gospel of Matthew? How does the "then" in v. 1 teach us about trials?
- How does the story of Job challenge the belief that suffering is a result of not living a good or wise life? What other examples in Scripture can you think of where suffering occurred despite someone being righteous?
- Do you think the 40 days in the wilderness were a place of strength or weakness for Jesus? Why? How can things like solitude, fasting, prayer, and meditation strengthen us spiritually?
- What do you think Satan was trying to accomplish in each of the three temptations?
- In each of Satan's temptations, he offered Jesus a shortcut. What are some "shortcuts" we might be tempted to take in life, and how can we learn from Jesus' response?
- Why is it important to base our identity upon what God has declared rather than circumstances or how you feel?

Start doing: Jesus spent time alone in quiet places so He could pray and meditate on scripture. This week schedule a time to strengthen yourself in this way, where you can be alone, undistracted (no phone or devices) and read God's word, pray, and meditate on it.

Prayer Requests. It may be helpful to pray the scriptures back to God.

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