

Week 1: Love Deeper Than Desire Matthew 4:1-11 The temptation of Jesus

Know: Introduce yourselves around the group and share about some of your most frequent food cravings and when they happen.

Grow: Have a volunteer read Matthew 4:1-11. (Note that there are parallel accounts in Mark 1:12-13 and Luke 4:1-12.)

- What had happened to Jesus just prior to this passage? _____
From a “mountaintop” experience to a wilderness experience...
- Who led Jesus into the wilderness? _____ What made Jesus weak at this time? _____
Why do you think that Satan showed up when he did? What do you think was Satan’s overall purpose?

- “Forty” comparison passage: read Deuteronomy 8:1-10. Who led the Israelites in the desert, and for what purpose? _____ How were the Israelites cared for by God even in the midst of this wilderness journey? _____
What do you think that God was trying to teach God’s people? _____
- Group discussion: Do you think that the Holy Spirit leads us into difficult times? Is there a difference between testing and temptation? (see James 1:13-16; 1 Corinthians 10:12-13) Have you ever had a “mountaintop experience” followed soon thereafter by a “wilderness experience”?

- How would you define temptation?

- Consider: Jesus, God Incarnate, came to our world to experience the brokenness of human existence, bringing us salvation, forgiveness for sins, and modeling holy living for us. God’s love is a sacrificial love offered to God’s undeserving children. “For God so loved the world...” (see John 3:16-17)
- What were the three temptations that Satan used against Jesus?
 1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
- Dr. Warren Wiersbe suggests that each temptation targeted a core conflict that we all struggle with. Discuss whether you agree with his thoughts and share where you see present day examples of the same struggles.
 1. First temptation: if God doesn’t meet my perceived needs, perhaps God doesn’t really love me.
 2. Second temptation: the human desire to “tempt” God, meaning that we expect God to spare us from the consequences of destructive actions.
 3. Third temptation: you can avoid suffering and go straight to the rewards. (see 1 Peter 5:10)

- Jesus used spiritual resources available to us today in his defense against Satan:
 1. The power of the Holy Spirit. Through faith, we have power beyond our own to fight temptations. (See Romans 8:26) How can we train ourselves to turn to God first rather than as an afterthought?

 2. The Word of God. (Romans 10:17; Hebrews 4:11-13) Why do you think that Jesus quoted scripture to Satan?

 3. Choosing obedience to God. Temptation involves the will, and Jesus came to do the Father's will. (see Hebrews 10:7) What can we do to make temptation more manageable?

- What happened after Jesus resisted Satan three times?
_____ What additional piece of information does Luke's gospel reveal about Satan's plan? (4:13) _____
- What happens when a Christian consistently resists temptation? _____
- In What ways can we make temptation more difficult to resist? _____

Go: faith takes action steps. "Dare you to love"...God, others, yourself.

- What steps can you take this week to resist the temptations you are facing now?

- How can your small group build some accountability for one another (supportive concern) into these efforts?

- Who in your sphere of influence is struggling with temptation? How does the Holy Spirit prayerfully guide you to offer them support?

For further study: Satan

- What three names are given to Jesus' adversary in this week's passage from Matthew 4? (vs 3,5,10)
1) _____ 2) _____ 3) _____

- The following passages offer additional insights into the nature of our adversary. Write down your learnings.

Romans 8:35	James 4:7	Ephesians 6:10-17
Revelation 9:11	Ephesians 2:2	Matthew 13:19
2 Corinthians 11:14-15	2 Corinthians 4:4	John 8:44
John 12:31	John 16:11	Matthew 12:24
Matthew 4:3	1 Peter 5:8	