

Lesson 3: The Temptation of Jesus

Thesis: Jesus walked into the wilderness to face temptations, and walks beside us as we face temptation (giving us mercy and grace when we need it most).

Mark 1:12-13 (NLT)

¹²The Spirit then compelled Jesus to go into the wilderness, ¹³where he was tempted by Satan for forty days. He was out among the wild animals, and angels took care of him.

Matthew 4:1-11 (NLT)

4 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted there by the devil. ²For forty days and forty nights he fasted and became very hungry.

³During that time the devil^[a] came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become loaves of bread."

⁴But Jesus told him, "No! The Scriptures say,
'People do not live by bread alone,

but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'^[b]"

⁵Then the devil took him to the holy city, Jerusalem, to the highest point of the Temple, ⁶and said, "If you are the Son of God, jump off! For the Scriptures say,
'He will order his angels to protect you.

And they will hold you up with their hands
so you won't even hurt your foot on a stone.'^[c]"

⁷Jesus responded, "The Scriptures also say, 'You must not test the LORD your God.'^[d]"

⁸Next the devil took him to the peak of a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. ⁹"I will give it all to you," he said, "if you will kneel down and worship me."

¹⁰"Get out of here, Satan," Jesus told him. "For the Scriptures say,
'You must worship the LORD your God
and serve only him.'^[e]"

¹¹Then the devil went away, and angels came and took care of Jesus.

Luke 4:1-13 (NLT)

4 Then Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan River. He was led by the Spirit in the wilderness,^[a] ²where he was tempted by the devil for forty days. Jesus ate nothing all that time and became very hungry.

³Then the devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become a loaf of bread."

⁴But Jesus told him, "No! The Scriptures say, 'People do not live by bread alone.'^[b]"

⁵Then the devil took him up and revealed to him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. ⁶"I will give you the glory of these kingdoms and authority over them," the devil said, "because they are mine to give to anyone I please. ⁷I will give it all to you if you will worship me."

⁸Jesus replied, "The Scriptures say,
'You must worship the LORD your God
and serve only him.'^[c]"

⁹Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, to the highest point of the Temple, and said, "If you are the Son of God, jump off! ¹⁰For the Scriptures say,
'He will order his angels to protect and guard you.

¹¹And they will hold you up with their hands
so you won't even hurt your foot on a stone.'^[d]"

¹² Jesus responded, “The Scriptures also say, ‘You must not test the LORD your God.’^[e]”

¹³ When the devil had finished tempting Jesus, he left him until the next opportunity came.

Hebrews 4:14-16 (NLT)

14 So then, since we have a great High Priest who has entered heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to what we believe. 15 This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin. 16 So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most.

Lesson Prep: Use the following resources to give you a foundation for your discussion?

- Read through the *Weirsbe Commentaries*.
- Read the *Talking Points*

Warm up questions:

Would you rather have wealth, pleasure or power? Why?

Opening Activities: Choose one of the following activities to begin the discussion on temptations.

Tempting Collages

Supplies: Magazines, paper, and Glue Sticks

Pass out magazines and have group members choose 5-10 items (depending on time) from the magazine that they really want. Cut out the pictures and glue them to a piece of paper. Once people complete the collage, have them share them with the group.

Ask: What would you be willing to trade to have these items? Love, Money, success, popularity, a friend, a pet? Would it be worth trading something you love to obtain these things?

Today we are looking at temptations. What makes temptations so tempting?

What helps you resist temptation?

Luring Lines: Use the scale of 1 to 5 to help students discuss how easy or difficult it would be to resist the following temptations:

No Problem (1) - a little tough (2) - Moderately hard (3) - definitely difficult (4) - pretty impossible (5)

1. You didn't study for an exam, but you can see your neighbor's answers. Do you cheat?
2. A \$20 bill falls out of a stranger's pocket in front of you. Do you keep it?
3. You're on a diet and but your favorite cookie is being served. Do you eat it?
4. You are running late. Do you make up an excuse (lie)?
5. Friends ask you to be the designated driver for a party. Do you go?
6. An ad for pornography comes on your screen. Do you click it?
7. Create your own.

Videos from Lord of the Rings

Watch these clips from LOTR and discuss how these characters were tempted by the power of the Ring.

- Gandalf tempted by the ring: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=00Jj6oI5fg>
- Galadriel and the Ring: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=spHEw2n9LwE>
- Aragon and the Ring: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FzO1f1s4Bs8> (watch from :25 – 1:35)

Ask: Why were these people tempted by this ring?
Why would this temptation distort their good intentions?

Bible Study: Use one these two options to dive into this story?

1: Compare and Contrast Option

Read the different variations found in Matthew and Luke and discuss...

- How are they similar?
- How are they different?
- What temptations does Jesus face?
- How does he respond to the temptations?
- Why might temptation 2 & 3 be switched?
- What makes the differences significant?

Now read the Mark passage. What additional details do you get from that perspective?

2: Discussion Questions Option:

Choose either the Matthew or Luke passage and discuss....

(Use the Wiersbe Commentary and Talking Points to help guide your conversation)

- Where was Jesus led and by whom?
- What was the Spirit's purpose for leading him into the wilderness?
- In what three ways did the devil tempt Jesus?
- To which specific needs/desires do each of these apply (Wealth, satisfaction, or power)
- What might have been wrong with turning stones into bread? Jumping of the Temple? Worshipping Satan?
- What was the devil really tempting Jesus to do in each example?
- Why might Jesus find these offers tempting?
- What do you think Jesus felt during his time of testing? How does this differ from how he responded?
- How does Jesus refuse each of the offers from the devil?
- How did Jesus respond to Satan's offers?
- What 3 words did Jesus repeat after each of the devil's offer?
- How did Jesus use scripture to resist temptation?
- How does the devil misuse scripture to entice Jesus to act independently from the Father?

Application:

Ask:

- What needs or desires in your own life are similar to what Jesus faced?
- Which of these temptations would you find the most difficult to resist?
- Why is knowing, remembering, and clinging to God's Word so essential in overcoming temptation?
- Are there times in your life in which you find yourself more susceptible and vulnerable to temptations than normal?

Read: Hebrews 4:14-16

Ask:

- How can we find encouragement in the fact that Jesus faced temptation?
- How does Jesus facing temptation help him understand us in new ways? How does it help us understand him in new ways?
- How does knowing Jesus was tempted, but resisted, help us in our walk with Jesus?

Say: Because Jesus faced the same kind of temptations we face, we are offered mercy and grace (love and forgiveness) when we need it most.

Make it Personal: Give students some time to confess the ways they have given into temptation, and ask that God would give them the scripture needed to resist temptation.

Close in Prayer.

Optional Application or Homework:

Choose one of the worksheet for additional discussion or a homework assignment.

1: Tip of Your Tongue Worksheet

Hand out copies of the worksheet and have the learners try and find scriptures that will help them face these temptations. Feel free to let them use google or other Bible apps.

2: Inspiration from Max Lucado: Read the story by Max Lucado and discuss.



ON THE TIP OF YOUR Tongue

Each time Jesus was tempted in the wilderness, He fought back by quoting a well-chosen passage of Scripture. Let's see how good you are at His method. For each of the temptations listed below, see how many Bible verses you can think of that would help you do the right thing.

1. Monday morning before school, a friend runs up to you and says, "You wouldn't believe how busy my weekend was. I didn't have time to do a lick of homework. Quick, let me see what you did for our English and math assignments. Don't worry; I won't copy them word for word."

2. You're on a date. The other person is putting a lot of pressure on you to do more than you know you should do. When you begin to resist, he or she says, "C'mon, don't you really love me?"

3. You're a football player. You've been determined not to drink alcoholic beverages. But your team has just won the state championship, and three of your friends are begging you to do some "serious" partying with them.

4. Everyone always picks on Greg ("the Geek"). You don't think he's such a bad guy, but one day in the cafeteria everyone is giving him a hard time. It's obvious that they expect you to go along with them, and you *do* have a couple of clever insults that no one has heard yet. This would be an ideal time to use them, and you could apologize to Greg later, when no one else is around.

5. You're a guy who's been grounded, but the cutest girl in school phones you and tries to persuade you to come over.

6. You're a senior in high school. You're offered a once-in-a-lifetime job in the area of your major. As your prospective boss offers you the job, he explains that the company will pay for your college tuition. But he also expects you to work most Sundays and nights when your church usually meets.

A FEW VERSES TO GET YOU STARTED

James 4:7
Psalm 119:9-11, 16
Exodus 20:3-17
Micah 6:8
I Corinthians 10:13
Philippians 3:13, 14
Philippians 4:8, 13