

Kingdom Come

Week 3: Temptation

Main Passage: Matthew 4:1-11

Leader Focus:

Before you continue, take a minute to read **Hebrews 4:14-5:10**.

I remember a message I heard on Jesus' temptation when I was in high school. The pastor talked about how Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit and how He used Scripture to combat Satan's lies and challenges. Up to that point, I followed along just fine. But then the pastor went off on a tangent talking about how Jesus was God and so was able to defeat Satan, and that's when I checked out.

Until that pastor emphasized Jesus' divine nature, Jesus and I were on the same page when it came to temptation. But in glossing over the fact that Jesus was fully God and fully man, the ability to resist temptation just the way Jesus had was lost for me. "Well, Jesus was God – of course He could resist Satan," I argued. And according to that pastor, I was right.

But the writer of Hebrews (and Matthew himself) emphasize for us that when Jesus was tempted by Satan, He was fully man, and therefore, these writers conclude, in our humanity, we too can overcome any temptation Satan throws at us. The weapons Jesus had at His disposal in the wilderness are the same exact weapons we have access to: The Holy Spirit, and God's Word.

Jesus defeated Satan as a man just like us. Satan wanted Jesus to use His divine power, but Jesus chose obedience to God over His right to divinity. It's the same choice He made in going to the cross (see Philippians 2:5-8). The writer of Hebrews does a great job of helping us see Jesus in our own experiences. Immanuel – God with us – understands our weaknesses because He was subject to them too. The difference is, Jesus didn't succumb to those weaknesses. In everything, He remained obedient, sinless, and victorious over Satan and his schemes.

Remember, temptation in and of itself is not sin. Being tempted doesn't mean we've failed – rather, it provides us an opportunity to cling to Jesus, who understands exactly what we're going through. And through His blood, we're able to overcome any temptation – just like Jesus did!

Group Focus:

- Were you a rule follower or more mischievous growing up?

Open the Word:

◆ Have a volunteer read Matthew 4:1-11.

- What event immediately precedes this passage?
- Who did God declare Jesus to be?
- What was the focus of each of the three temptations?
- What was the underlying lie of each of the three temptations?

◆ Have a volunteer read Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7.

- What event immediately precedes this passage?

- How did God describe His creation, including Adam and Eve? (see Genesis 1:31)
- What parallels do you see between how Satan tempted Adam and Eve, and how he tempted Jesus?
- What differences do you see in Adam and Eve's experience and Jesus' experience?

[LN: The following chart may be helpful as your group compares these two events.]

	Adam & Eve	Jesus
Location		
Environmental factors		
Use of God's Word		
Outcome		

- What tactic did Satan use in each of his temptations of Jesus and where do you see those same tactics used against Adam and Eve?

♦ Have a volunteer read 1 Corinthians 10:13 and Hebrews 4:14-15.

- What do these passages teach us about the difference between Jesus' temptation and our own? [LN: Is there a difference?]
- What two weapons did Jesus have at His disposal when He faced Satan in the wilderness? (see 4:1, 4, 7, & 10).
- What two weapons do we have at our disposal when we are tempted?
- Did Jesus do anything to resist Satan's temptations that we are unable to do?

What do we do with this?:

- What are some common vulnerabilities Satan attacks in us? [LN: Keep this part of the discussion general. We'll get personal in the next section. If the group needs some prompting, revisit the areas Satan attacked in Jesus.]
- Ross said that Satan tries to put question marks where God has already made declarations. How have you seen this play out in your life and in culture?
- What practical steps can we take this week to better prepare ourselves for the temptations we know are coming?
- How does our discussion on temptation relate to one or more of the 6 Measures of Maturity and our call to make disciples? [LN: 1. I depend on Christ; 2. I create margin; 3. I place others first; 4. I live generously; 5. I fight for mercy and justice; 6. I engage my church.]

Things to think about:

[LN: These questions are for personal reflection. Have your group members write them down to think about and talk to God about later, rather than to answer now.]

- Satan often comes at the moment of vulnerability. What vulnerabilities does Satan normally exploit in you? How can you combat against them or better protect yourself so that he can no longer use them against you?
- What have you already done or put in place to help you resist temptation?
- What holes are you aware of in your defenses and what can you do this week to fill them?

Wrap up:

Remember, temptation in and of itself is not sin. Being tempted doesn't mean we've failed – rather, it provides us an opportunity to cling to Jesus, who understands exactly what we're going through. And through His blood, we're able to overcome any temptation – just like Jesus did!

Pray together:

[LN: These are just suggestions if your group needs some prompts. Feel free to pray whatever God puts on your heart!]

- Ask God to make you more aware of your vulnerabilities and of ways you can fortify yourself against Satan in those areas.
- Ask God for the will, motivation, and ability to memorize His Word so you're always prepared with the Sword of the Spirit (see Ephesians 6:17).
- Thank Jesus for stepping into our humanity so that He understands our weaknesses (see Hebrews 4:15).
- Thank Jesus for being obedient to God and dying for us so that our sin is powerless against us (see Romans 6:6).

Challenge:

[LN: Encourage your group to memorize Scripture as part of their own spiritual growth. For those who don't think they can do this, remind them it's not about perfection and knowing every word – it's about allowing God's truth to fill our hearts and minds! The Verses app is a great tool for this!]

Memorize 1 Corinthians 10:13.