

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

RE: JESUS
NOVEMBER 7 & 8, 2009
No Shortcuts (Pastor Jeff McNarin)

OPEN IT

1. Read Luke 4.1-13 and discuss the following:
 - What is it that jumps out at you in this text?
 - What do you have a hard time understanding?
 - Do you think Jesus, being fully God and fully man, experienced the pull of temptation to the same extent as we do today? Why?
2. Read Hebrews 2.14-18; 4.14-16

DIG INTO IT

1. In both Matthew 4.1-11 and Luke 4.1-13 we see that Jesus' temptations came shortly after what event in his life? What does this tell us about one of the devil's tactics when it comes to temptation? In other words, what does this tell us about his timing? At what times in our life does he come on strong with temptation?
2. Read 1 Peter 5.8 and Ephesians 6.12

Temptation # 1 (Luke 4.1-4, Mt. 4.1-4)

1. The first temptation that the devil placed in front of Jesus was to turn rocks into bread – a seemingly harmless thing – why was this evil? What was the devil trying to get Jesus to do? What was the shortcut he was proposing?
2. Read Deuteronomy 8.3.
 - What was the purpose of Manna in the desert?
 - What did Jesus learn that the Israelites didn't?
 - What is the challenge in this for us today in 2009?
3. Read John 6:35 and Matthew 6.25-34
 - The devil was tempting Jesus to take things into his own hands – it was a challenge to act apart from God – to rely on self instead of God for our needs. Is there an area in your life where you are being tempted to take things into your own hands and act apart from God? If so, how do the above verses speak to you?
4. The real issue for Jesus in this first temptation was if he would trust his father to provide everything he needed. Jesus succeeded at this while the Israelites didn't. How are you doing? Who or what do you mostly rely on to provide your needs?

Temptation # 2 (Luke 4.5-8, Matthew 4.8-11)

1. In this temptation Satan was offering Jesus a shortcut – what was the shortcut, why was it evil, and why did Jesus refuse to take it? Who else tempted Jesus to take a similar shortcut?
2. Read Matthew 16.21-23. Why did Jesus refuse to avoid suffering and the cross? Why did Jesus refuse to take a crown without the cross?
3. Read Heb. 5.8-9 and 12.2-3. Does the fact that Jesus suffered tell us anything about the Christian life?

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- Isn't it ironic that Jesus embraced suffering as part of his journey when most of us go to great lengths to avoid it!
- No Shortcuts!!! Read 1 Peter 5.10 – this verse tells us that if we want to share in Christ's glory that we must also share in his _____. Does this help you change the way you view trials and hardships?

Temptation # 3

1. In this temptation the Devil is tempting Jesus to put into action what he claimed in the first temptation – i.e. God will provide all your needs. Basically what Satan was saying to Jesus was, "if you don't jump you doubt God." Jesus, in his response, was basically saying, "if I do jump I am defying God." – Why would a jump be defying God? Why would jumping NOT have been a test of Jesus' faith?
2. Jesus was being tempted to test God based on Psalm 91. Read Psalm 91 – what is the main message of this Psalm?
3. Read Exodus 17.1-7. Why would jumping off a temple roof be similar to grumbling about water? Both raise the question of whether or not God can be _____ (read the last 7 words of Ex.17.7 – what is the underlying heart condition?)
4. Why did Jesus refuse to put God to the test? Why is it wrong for us to test God? (talk about this before you read on)
5. It's wrong because an appropriate attitude is trust and obedience – Dt.6.16-17
6. If Jesus jumped off the roof it would not have been a demonstration of his faith but of his unbelief. It would have been forcing God's hand – Jesus had faith and he didn't need the father to prove it to him.
7. Like the people of Israel, and like Jesus, our journey through life often has its wilderness or desert moments – life can be very difficult at times – we suffer – we struggle with sin – we let others down – life is often painful, disappointing and difficult. The question for us is how will we respond in moments like these? To test God is to force his hand to prove his trustworthiness – to test God is to look at the difficulties of life and say, "if God did things different for me then I could trust him." To test God is to ask what the Israelites asked, "is God with me or against me?" Is there an area in your life today where you need to respond with faith and obedience instead of forcing God's hand to provide an answer?

APPLY IT

1. What does Deut. 8.2-3 tell us about the tests that come our way?
How did Jesus respond to each of the temptations?

What does this tell us about relationship with God and the value of knowing the word of God? In a survey done by Discipleship Journal, 84% of people said that prayer life was the biggest factor in avoiding temptation. 66% said it was reading their Bible. In other words, one of the biggest factors in resisting temptation is relationship – relationship with Jesus.

A Few Practical Steps to Overcoming Temptation (Resource – Purpose Driven Life – Rick Warren)

1. Recognize your patterns of temptation
2. Request God's help
3. Refocus your attention on something else
4. Reveal your struggle to a godly friend
5. Read the Word and Pray
6. Realize your vulnerability

PRAY

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