

Small Group Guide: The Temptation of Jesus

Based on Luke 4:1-13



Overview

This session explores the account of Jesus being tempted by Satan in the wilderness. We will examine what this passage reveals about the nature of temptation, the character of the enemy, the importance of Scripture, and the significance of Jesus as the last Adam who succeeded where the first Adam failed.

Key Takeaways

1. Satan attacks at your weakest point. The enemy is strategic. He does not waste effort on areas where you are strong. He waits for opportune moments when you are most frail, most vulnerable, and most easily deceived.

2. Jesus responded to every temptation with Scripture in context. In each of the three temptations, Jesus quoted directly from Deuteronomy. He did not argue, debate, or reason with the devil. He anchored himself in the Word of God.

3. Instant gratification is one of Satan's primary tools. Each temptation offered Jesus something real, something that was even rightfully his, but on the enemy's terms and timeline. Waiting on God, though harder, leads to far greater freedom and blessing.

4. Satan twists Scripture. In the third temptation, Satan quoted the Bible out of context. This is a warning to know Scripture well enough to recognize when it is being misused.

5. Jesus is the last Adam. Where the first Adam had everything and still failed, Jesus had nothing and still overcame. His victory over temptation is the foundation of the salvation he offers us.

6. Belief should be reflected in behavior. If we truly believe we carry the message of eternal life, it should change how we live and how we speak to the people around us.

Discussion Questions

Opening Question

- Think of a time when you faced a temptation at your weakest moment. Without going into detail you are not comfortable sharing, what did that experience teach you about how temptation works?

Going Deeper

1. The pastor noted that Satan attacked Jesus not where he was strong, but where he was physically at his absolute limit. What does this tell us about how we should think about our own areas of weakness? How honest are we with ourselves about what those areas actually are?
2. Jesus responded to each temptation by quoting Scripture from Deuteronomy. He did not argue or debate. What does that approach teach us about the role God's Word is meant to play in our daily lives, not just in crisis moments?
3. Satan offered Jesus something that actually belonged to him, authority over the kingdoms of the world, but on Satan's terms instead of the Father's. How do you see the pattern of instant gratification versus patient obedience playing out in your own life? In what areas is the temptation to take what feels rightfully yours, but on the wrong terms, most present?
4. The pastor pointed out that Satan also used Scripture, but took it out of context. Why is it dangerous to know only isolated Bible verses without understanding their

broader context? How can a small group like this one help guard against that kind of deception?

5. The comparison between the first Adam and the last Adam is striking. Adam had everything and failed. Jesus had nothing and overcame. The pastor said we relate more to Adam because we live comfortable lives. Do you agree with that? What does comfort do to our spiritual vigilance?
6. The pastor referenced Penn Jillette, an atheist, who said there is nothing more hateful than someone who believes they have the cure for eternal damnation and says nothing. How does that challenge or convict you personally in the way you engage with people who do not know Christ?
7. The sermon closed with the idea that Jesus can succeed through you when you get out of your own way and stop seeking the pleasures of the world. What does getting out of your own way actually look like in a practical, day-to-day sense?

Practical Applications

This week, try one or more of the following:

- **Map your vulnerable moments.** Take an honest inventory of when and where you are most tempted. Are there times of day, environments, relationships, or emotional states that consistently put you in a position where the enemy has an easier time? Write them down and bring them to God in prayer.
- **Memorize one passage from Deuteronomy.** Jesus drew from this book in each of his responses to Satan. Pick one passage from Deuteronomy that speaks to an area of personal struggle and commit it to memory this week.
- **Practice the prayer Jesus taught.** Make "lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one" a daily, specific prayer. Name the actual temptations and situations you want God to lead you away from.
- **Have one honest conversation.** Think of one person in your life who does not know Christ. Pray for them by name this week and ask God for one opportunity to speak into their life, even in a small way.
- **Find an accountability partner.** Share one area of weakness with a trusted person in this group and ask them to check in with you regularly. The pastor noted that being held accountable during our most vulnerable times is a practical way to avoid giving the enemy an opening.

5-Day Bible Reading Plan and Devotional Guide

Based on the Temptation of Christ and the Victory of the Last Adam



Day 1: The Wilderness Is Not Wasted

Reading: Luke 4:1-2 -- Jesus, full of the Spirit, is led into the wilderness and endures forty days of testing by the devil without eating anything.

Devotional: The wilderness is rarely where we choose to go, but it is often where God does his most defining work. Jesus did not stumble into the desert by accident. He was led there by the Spirit. That means difficulty, hunger, and isolation were not signs of God's absence but instruments of his purpose. When you find yourself in a season that feels barren, consider that you may not be abandoned. You may be being prepared. The same Spirit who led Jesus in also brought him out. Trust the one who leads.

Reflection Question: What wilderness season in your life might God be using to strengthen rather than punish you?

Practical Application: Write down one current hardship and pray specifically that God would reveal his purpose within it rather than simply removing it.

Day 2: The Word That Holds When Nothing Else Does

Reading: Deuteronomy 8:3 -- The passage that teaches Israel, and which Jesus quotes to Satan, that human beings do not live by bread alone but by every word that comes from God.

Devotional: When Jesus was at his most physically desperate, he did not reach for a miracle. He reached for Scripture. Every response he gave the enemy came from the book of Deuteronomy, the summation of God's law spoken to a people who had wandered forty years in their own wilderness. Jesus modeled something essential: the Word of God is not merely information to be studied in comfort. It is sustenance to be consumed in crisis. If you are not in the habit of reading Scripture when life is good, you will have very little to draw from when life is not. Build the habit now.

Reflection Question: How familiar are you with Scripture on an ordinary day, and would that familiarity be enough to sustain you in an extraordinary trial?

Practical Application: Memorize one verse this week, not for performance but for survival. Choose one that speaks directly to an area where you know you are vulnerable.

Day 3: Instant Gratification and the Long Road to Glory

Reading: Hebrews 12:1-3 -- The writer calls believers to fix their eyes on Jesus, who endured the cross and its shame for the joy set before him, and who is now seated at the right hand of God.

Devotional: Satan offered Jesus the world. The staggering truth is that the world already belonged to Jesus. The enemy was dangling before the Son of God something that was already his by right, simply asking him to take it now rather than through the suffering his Father had ordained. Jesus refused. He chose the long road, the hard road, the road of the cross, because what waited at the end of faithfulness was worth infinitely more than what was being offered as a shortcut. Every temptation you face follows this same pattern. The enemy rarely offers you something entirely foreign. He offers you something real, something you may even legitimately desire, just through the wrong door and ahead of the right time.

Reflection Question: Where in your life are you being tempted to take something good through a wrong or premature path?

Practical Application: Identify one area where you are pursuing a legitimate desire through an illegitimate means, and take one concrete step today to realign that pursuit with obedience.

Day 4: The Last Adam and the Victory You Could Not Win

Reading: Romans 5:17-19 -- Paul explains that just as one man's disobedience brought condemnation to many, so one man's obedience brings righteousness and life to many.

Devotional: Adam had everything and lost it. He stood in paradise, fully fed, fully known, in unbroken communion with God, and still fell when temptation came. Jesus had nothing. He stood in a desert, starving, physically depleted, and still held. The contrast is not incidental. It is the entire point of the gospel. Where humanity failed at its best, Christ succeeded at his worst. This means that when you fail, and you will, you are not disqualified. You are exactly the kind of person the last Adam came for. His perfection is credited to you. His victory is the ground you stand on. You do not earn your way back. You receive your way back.

Reflection Question: In what area of repeated failure do you need to stop striving in your own strength and begin resting in the righteousness of Christ credited to you?

Practical Application: Confess one specific area of failure to God today without immediately following it with a personal resolution to do better. Simply receive his grace and thank him that his obedience covers your disobedience.

Day 5: Believing It Enough to Say It

Reading: Romans 10:14-15 -- Paul asks how people can call on the one they have not believed in, how they can believe without hearing, and how they can hear without someone telling them.

Devotional: If you genuinely believe that you possess the message of eternal life, silence becomes a form of cruelty. Jesus endured forty days of starvation, three years of opposition, and the full weight of the cross so that this message could reach the world. He then commanded those who received it to carry it forward. We live in a generation with more access to Scripture, theology, and Christian resources than any people in history, and yet the proclamation of the gospel has never felt more timid. The question is not whether you have access to the truth. The question is whether you believe it deeply enough to let it change how you live and what you say.

Reflection Question: Is there someone in your life whose eternal soul you have been aware of but have said nothing to, and what is the honest reason for your silence?

Practical Application: Identify one person you genuinely care about who does not know Christ. Pray for them by name every day this week, and ask God for one natural opportunity to speak truthfully and lovingly about what you believe and why it matters.