



The Devil Wears Temptation

Text: Mathew 4:1-11

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1. Read 1 Peter 5:8. T.A. taught that Satan wants to tempt you by making you feel ineffective, unfruitful, and unlovable. Where in your life are you most struggling with those thoughts and feelings?
2. Read Matthew 3:13-17.
 - a. What do you think is the significance of the baptism of Jesus preceding the tempting of Jesus?
 - b. Jesus is the eternal Son of God, but because of his saving work, when we put our faith in Christ as Lord and Savior, we get adopted into the family of God. (See Galatians 4:4-7.) Why is this identity important when it comes to the topic of fighting temptation?
3. Read Matthew 4:1-4. T.A. taught that temptation is when the devil tries to convince us to satisfy a legitimate hunger in an illegitimate way. What are examples of this dynamic from your life?
 - a. What are you hungry for? What drives you in your day-to-day life?
 - b. What would be a legitimate way to satisfy that hunger?
 - c. What illegitimate ways are you tempted to pursue? What makes those illegitimate ways so enticing?
4. Read Matthew 4:5-7. Both Satan and Jesus reference God's Word. Satan twists God's Word to justify sin and fuel temptation. Jesus uses God's Word to fight temptation.
 - a. How do we know if Scripture is being twisted?
 - b. How have you seen Scripture used to cast guilt, shame or hatred on others? How should we respond in those moments?
 - c. What tools or resources can we use to make sure we are not believing a warped view of Scripture?
5. Read Matthew 4:8-11. When Satan offered the path of comfort, Jesus chose the cross. Satan tempts us away from the cross with comfort.
 - a. How do we know if we are choosing comfort over obedience/submission to God?
 - b. What do you think motivated Jesus to remain obedient to the point of death on a cross? (See Philippians 2:5-11 and Hebrews 12:2.)
 - c. What can we learn from Jesus' example on how to fight and experience victory over temptation?

6. Part of the Good News of the Gospel is that we are no longer fighting for victory but *from* victory. What difference would it make to remember this truth when temptation comes around?

Challenge: James 5:16 says to “confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.” When we confess our sin and when we are prayed over, something powerful happens. Partner up with someone of the same gender in your Grow Group. Spend time confessing the temptation and sin struggle in your life where you feel most defeated. Then pray over each other using the prayer points below. Commit to connecting with each other and checking in on each other throughout the week to see how things are going in those areas.

Prayer: Close your group time by making the words of Scripture your own and using God’s Word to form your words as you pray for your prayer partner.

- **Romans 5:1** “Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (*For example, you might say, “God, help John remember that because John has faith in you, he has peace with you.”*)
- **Romans 8:1** “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”
- **Philippians 4:8** “Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.”
- **Colossians 2:13** “And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses,”
- **1 John 1:7-9** “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

STUDY DEEPER **Love Conquers All**

Paul prayed in this way for the church at Ephesus:

I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, [God] may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. —Ephesians 3:16:17

Christ resides in us, and we reside in Christ by our trust that what God says about himself and us in the person of Jesus Christ is true. By faith we participate in the triune love of God. Paul’s prayer is for this divine participation to be increasingly experienced as we are increasingly “rooted and grounded in love.”

Through the work of the Spirit in our lives and through the discipline of our minds, the roots of our lives must become firmly planted in the reality of God's love as revealed in Christ. Like the ground from which a tree's roots are nourished, God's love is the one source from which we are to drink and derive nourishment.

When we are empty, we are to drink the fullness of God's love.

When we face temptation, we are to drink the strength of God's love.

When we catch ourselves feeling superior, we are to drink in the mercy of God's love, remembering that we ourselves are forgiven sinners.

When we feel condemned, we are to drink the forgiveness of God's love.

When we feel despair, we are to drink the hope of God's love.

When we feel lifeless, we are to drink the abundant life that is God's love.

When we feel hate, we are to drink in the love that led Christ to give up his life for those who hated him.

It is all there in Christ. He is the truth and he is the life (John 14:6). We must be rooted in him and in him alone. Love conquers all.

God's love, as revealed in Christ, is also the source of our grounding, our stability in life. Trees with deep roots bend when strong winds come, but they are not uprooted like trees with shallow roots. So too, our stability in life depends on our being firmly grounded in the reality of God's love as it is revealed in Christ. If our lives are grounded in idols from which we try to get life, we are building our house on sinking sand. But if our lives are grounded in Christ as "the source of [our] life" (1 Cor 1:30), our house is built upon an immovable rock (Matt 7:24-27).

We live in a world under the influence of the Accuser, who roams about as a lion seeking to devour us (1 Pet 5:8). He is continually accusing God before us, just as he is perpetually accusing us before God, just as he is perpetually accusing us before God, ourselves, and each other. If we are not rooted and grounded in God's love, we will invariably find ourselves unconsciously or consciously judging and accusing God, and then ourselves and each other. We will live in judgment, and the flow of love from God to us and through us will be suppressed.

May Christ dwell in your hearts through faith, being rooted and grounded in love.

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