

SMALL GROUPS

Sermon Summary

Pastor Mack explored how Jesus understands temptation because He experienced it Himself. Temptation is anything that promises satisfaction at the cost of obedience to God. Jesus was tempted in the wilderness for 40 days, proving that being tempted is not a sin—giving in is. God always provides a way out of every temptation.

Key Scripture: Matthew 4:1-4, Hebrews 4:15, 1 Corinthians 10:13

Discussion Questions

Understanding Temptation

1. What stood out to you most from this message? What challenged you or encouraged you?
2. Pastor Mack defined temptation as "anything that promises satisfaction at the cost of your obedience to God." Can you think of examples from your own life where something promised fulfillment but led you away from God?
3. Read Hebrews 4:15 together. How does it change your perspective knowing that Jesus was tempted in every way but didn't sin? How does this help you in your struggles?

The Process of Temptation

4. Pastor Mack outlined four steps of temptation: thought, imagination, justification, and choice. Walk through a common temptation using these four steps. At what point is it easiest to stop the process?
5. "You're most vulnerable when you're weak AND when you think you're strong." When have you experienced this in your life? What were the circumstances?
6. Read 1 Peter 5:8. What does it mean practically to "stay alert" and be "on guard" in your daily life? What specific areas require extra vigilance for you?

Closing the Door

7. Pastor Mack said, "Temptation often comes through a door that's been deliberately left open." This is a hard truth. What "doors" might you be leaving cracked open in your life? (This may be something to reflect on personally rather than share aloud.)
8. "The best way to resist temptation is to eliminate it." What are some practical ways you can eliminate temptation in areas where you struggle? (Examples: delete apps, change routes, find accountability, etc.)
9. Read 1 Corinthians 10:13. God promises a way out of every temptation. Have you experienced this? Share a time when God provided an exit strategy for you.

Godly vs. Worldly Sorrow

10. Pastor Mack distinguished between worldly sorrow (being sorry you got caught) and godly sorrow (genuine repentance that leads to change). Read 2 Corinthians 7:10. What's the difference, and why does it matter?

Key Takeaways

- ✓ It's not a sin to be tempted—Jesus was tempted, yet without sin

✓ We're vulnerable when weak AND when we think we're strong—pride comes before a fall

✓ Temptation comes through doors we deliberately leave open—we must completely shut the door

✓ God ALWAYS provides a way out—He is faithful, and His Word shows us the exit

✓ Fight with God's Word—Jesus defeated temptation by quoting Scripture

✓ Godly sorrow leads to life change—worldly sorrow leads to death

Practical Application

Personal Reflection

Take 3-5 minutes of silence for each person to pray and ask God:

- What area of temptation do I need to address?
- What door have I left open that needs to be shut completely?
- What is my "way out" that God is providing?

Action Steps

Option 1: Shut the Door

- Identify ONE specific temptation you struggle with
- Write down 2-3 concrete actions you'll take this week to "shut the door" (delete app, avoid location, remove item from home, etc.)
- Share with one accountability partner in the group

Option 2: Memorize Scripture

- Choose one verse from this lesson to memorize this week
- Suggested verses: 1 Corinthians 10:13, James 1:14-15, or Hebrews 4:15
- Text it to someone in the group daily to help memorize

Option 3: Daily Word Intake

- Commit to reading God's Word daily this week (even if just 5 minutes)
- Use a reading plan or devotional app
- Journal one thing God speaks to you each day

Option 4: Identify Your Triggers

- Make a list of when you're most vulnerable (tired, angry, lonely, stressed)
- Create a "battle plan" for those moments (call someone, pray, go for walk, quote Scripture)
- Practice the plan before you need it

Accountability Questions

Partner with someone in your group and commit to checking in this week:

1. What temptation are you fighting this week?
2. What door did you shut?
3. How did you use God's Word to fight back?
4. Did you take the "way out" God provided?
5. How can I pray for you?

Closing Prayer

Group Prayer Focus:

- Pray for strength to shut doors that need closing
- Pray for eyes to see the "way out" God provides
- Pray for genuine godly sorrow and repentance
- Pray for protection from the enemy's attacks
- Pray for each other's specific struggles (as comfortable sharing)

Closing Declaration: "This is how I fight my battles—on my knees, with worship, with God's Word. I am not alone. I am surrounded by God's presence and His promises. He is faithful and will always give me a way out."

For Next Week

- Follow through on your action step
- Check in with your accountability partner
- Come prepared to share one victory or lesson learned
- Continue memorizing your chosen verse

Leader Notes

- Create a safe environment: Remind the group that what's shared stays in the room
- Don't force sharing: Some struggles are deeply personal; allow people to share at their comfort level
- Be vulnerable first: As a leader, your openness about your own struggles gives others permission to be real
- Focus on hope: While acknowledging the reality of temptation, emphasize God's faithfulness and provision
- Avoid judgment: Remember, we all struggle; create a grace-filled atmosphere
- Follow up: Reach out to group members during the week, especially those who shared specific struggles