

Luke 4:1-13

Overcoming Temptation

Study Summary and Learning Objectives

This is a study of Jesus' temptation recorded in Luke 4:1-13. Through His temptation, Jesus teaches us how to respond in our own times of struggle with sin.

Objectives

- Learning from Jesus' example, we can more effectively fight temptation in our own lives.
- An integral part of fighting temptation is recognizing God's supreme authority and power.

Steps To Prepare (For Leaders)

- We are focusing exclusively on Luke 4:1-13. The next study will focus on Luke 5. It may be appropriate to have your group read the second half of Luke 4 at the end of the study or optionally on their own during the week. Luke 4:14-44 sets the stage for the beginning of Jesus' ministry. Even without a group discussion, reading this portion of Luke will be good background as you move into the rest of the book.
- The application part of this study may bring up some difficult areas of sin that members of your group may be struggling with. In preparing for this study, review Hope's two rules of confidentiality and make sure you are familiar with the additional resources you and your small group members have for addressing serious situations that might come up, especially self-harm or potential harm to others.

Introduce The Study

Read Out Loud: Through His temptation, Jesus teaches us how to respond in our own times of struggle with sin.

Read Out Loud: Luke 4 (NIV)

¹ Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, ² where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry.

³ The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread."

⁴ Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone.'"

⁵ The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. ⁶ And he said to him, "I will give you all their authority and splendor; it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. ⁷ If you worship me, it will all be yours."

⁸ Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.'"

⁹The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down from here. ¹⁰ For it is written:

“He will command his angels concerning you
to guard you carefully;

¹¹ they will lift you up in their hands,
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.”

¹² Jesus answered, “It is said: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’”

¹³ When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time.

? Verse 1 says that while Jesus was full of the Holy Spirit, the *Spirit* led Him into the wilderness. What role does the Holy Spirit play in Jesus’ temptation?

Possible Answers: The Holy Spirit was orchestrating the circumstances under which Jesus would face temptation. This is not to say that the Holy Spirit caused Jesus’ temptation or tried to “set him up”; rather, by leading Jesus into the wilderness, the Spirit was putting Jesus in an environment best suited to fight the sin He’d be tempted with. Jesus was also closer to God during His temptation as He was alone and fasting.

? (Optional) How does the Holy Spirit’s role contrast to Satan’s role?

Possible Answers: Your group might touch on this in answering the question above. While the Holy Spirit is there to guide, support, and strengthen Jesus, Satan is there to tempt Him to sin against God. The distinction is important because when we are facing temptation we should recognize that God wants what is best for us and that Satan is the one who is trying to deceive us.

? What does this passage tell us about God’s sovereignty in times of temptation?

Possible Answer: God is always in control and does not leave us, even in the midst of struggling with sin.

Temptation 1 – Basic Needs (vv. 3-4)

? What would be sinful about Jesus turning the stones into bread?

Possible Answers: 1) Satan was asking Jesus to perform a miracle by turning the stones into bread. Jesus performs miracles throughout the Gospels to show that He is God and has authority over the physical world. Since both Jesus and Satan know that Jesus is God, there is no one there to benefit from seeing this miracle. In effect it would just be Jesus “flexing His muscles” at Satan’s prompting. 2) Earlier in the chapter it says that Jesus is fasting. By making His own food and breaking His fast He would be submitting to His own physical needs and to Satan’s taunting rather than continuing in obedience toward God.

? How does meeting our basic needs sometimes creep into the realm of sinful behavior?

Possible Answers: We prioritize meeting these needs (food, clothing, rest, community, etc.) over being obedient to God's will. "Doing" things (working, studying, socializing) to fulfill our needs rather than bringing them to God first. Placing our "needs" above God as the most important thing in our lives.

? (Optional) How would our lives be different if we always recognized that our *MOST* basic need is a relationship with God?

Possible Answers: This answer is going to be different for everyone. Generally, though, we want to have our priorities straight. Our worldly pursuits would be driven by our relationship with God. We wouldn't stop participating in life, we would just do things with the perspective that God is our first priority and our activities in "the world" are in pursuit of honoring and worshiping God.

Temptation 2 – Power and Worship (vv. 5-8)

? What does it say about Jesus' faith and perspective that He did not choose to seek earthly/worldly power?

Possible Answers: Jesus is telling us that there is a bigger and better authority in God rather than in the splendor of the world. He is saying that we should have an eternal perspective rather than focusing on how to be powerful and successful in this life. God is the ultimate authority over everything, and we should not put the authorities of the world above Him.

? We're called to have an eternal perspective that recognizes the hope we have in submitting to God's authority rather than our own sinful nature. What does it look like to live this way?

Possible Answer: By properly placing God as the most important thing in our life. Not submitting to your own selfish desires rather than submitting to the desires of God. We can keep God in His proper place of authority knowing that He is sovereign and offers forgiveness of our sin and eternal life.

Did Satan really have authority over all the "kingdoms of the world" as he says in vs. 6?

This section might be confusing in that Satan makes it sound like he has authority granted to him by God over the earth. We should not give Satan more credit than he is due. There are two ways to look at this:

- Satan could be lying to Jesus and hoping to trick Him into thinking he had some sort of power that he did not actually have.
Are we ever tricked into believing that sin has more power in our lives than it actually does?
- Satan may have been implying that the kingdoms themselves had given him authority by turning away from God. He may have been implying that Jesus could rest on His own "authority" too; that He didn't need to submit to God and could seek to glorify Himself only.
In what ways do we glorify ourselves instead of God?

Temptation 3 – Trust (vv. 8-12)

? How does testing God demonstrate a lack of trust?

Possible Answers: God doesn't have anything to prove to us. By testing God we are giving too much authority to doubt in our lives. Asking God to prove Himself shows an expectation that God should serve us when we should be serving Him.

? If not through testing, then how do we develop trust in God?

Possible Answer: By entering into a relationship with God. Spending time in prayer, studying the Bible, and living in community help us know God more. Just like with a friend, you know them better, and learn to trust them, as you hang out more. His truths will become evident in our lives as we seek a relationship with God rather than just expecting Him to show up when it serves our interests.

Application

Read Out Loud: 1 Corinthians 10:13 (NIV)

No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.

? Luke 4:13 implies that even when we overcome temptation once, it will come back. 1 Corinthians 10:13 assures us that we will all face temptation, but that God offers a way out. What are some of the “ways out” Jesus demonstrates for us in Luke?

Possible Answers: Be prepared. Be close with God. Rely on Scripture and the truths you know of God. Recognize and submit to God's authority in and over your life. Rely on God to know and meet our needs.

Leaders' Note: It may be more appropriate to discuss the following application questions during your accountability time. This is a great time to reiterate Hope's rules of confidentiality. We've provided an optional note below. You can either read it directly to your group or put it into your own words. If something comes up during your accountability time that is more than you can handle, encourage them to seek additional counsel such as a pastor, your small group coach, or Restoring Hope (restoringhope@hopecc.com).

For Discussion and Accountability

Read Out Loud: The next couple of questions are not intended to pressure you into sharing more than you are comfortable with. Rather, we hope that in light of the many resources God gives us to fight temptation (community being one of them) and knowing that Jesus and all of mankind (your small group members included) face temptation, you feel freedom to be vulnerable. Hope has two rules of confidentiality that are integral to creating a safe place in our small group. 1. Copyright. Everyone's story

is their own. You cannot repeat it (with or without naming names) without explicit permission from the story's owner. 2. No implying secrets. You cannot give a vague implication that someone needs prayer, even if you don't name them.

? What are some temptations you are currently experiencing or frequently confront in your own life?

? How can our small group be praying for you, encouraging you, and holding you accountable in this area?

Additional Reading: Luke 4:14-44

You may wish to read the remainder of Luke 4 outside of small group time.