

The Temptation of Jesus

(Matthew 4:1-11)

Introduction

How do we know right from wrong? For example, how do you know it is wrong to lie?

The Bible is God's word. It tells us everything we need to know in order to live our lives in a way that pleases Him. He gave us Ten Commandments to help us know the best way to live our lives. But sometimes it's hard to follow God's rules! That's because we have an enemy that tries to make us sin against God. But God has given us a weapon to use against that sneaky devil—God's word! The Bible tells us that it is sharper than a two-edged sword!

Today we're going to learn why it is so important for us to know God's Word.

Opening Prayer

Father, even though the devil is invisible, he's real and he wants to make us sin against You. Please help us to learn Your word so that we might live our lives in a way that pleases You. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

"For the Word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword..." (Hebrews 4:12a)

Lesson

Last week we learned about the baptism of Jesus. When Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River by John, something very wonderful happened to Him. The Holy Spirit came down in the form of a dove and God the Father spoke to Jesus. He said, "*You are my dearly loved Son, and you bring me great joy.*" (Mark 1:11)

Jesus needed to hear this for He was about to begin a very important work for God. But the devil, the source of all evil, was determined to stop Jesus from obeying God.

After Jesus was baptized, the Holy Spirit led Him out into the desert. Jesus went there to be alone with God the Father. While He was there, God allowed Jesus to be tempted by the devil to sin.

Matthew 4:1

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted there by the devil.

Why do you think the Spirit brought Jesus to a place where He could be tempted by the devil? (I think God wanted to prove His Son to be a sinless and worthy Savior. Plus, He wanted Jesus's faith to be strengthened.) Sometimes God allows us to go through trials in life so that we will learn that God faithfully provides strength and protection for us.

Why do you think the devil wanted Jesus to sin? (He wanted to destroy God's plan to save us from our sins.) If the devil could make Jesus sin, then He wouldn't be perfect and His death on the cross would not have been effective. He had to be the perfect Lamb of God.

While He was in the wilderness, Jesus fasted. Who knows what "fasting" is? Fasting is when you do not eat any food or drink any water so that you can spend time praying and talking to God.

Matthew 4:2

For forty days and forty nights He fasted and became very hungry.

It says he didn't eat for 40 days. Jesus spent His time praying to God, His Father, so He would know what God wanted Him to do next.

How would you feel if you didn't eat or drink for 40 days? [Teacher discuss how Jesus must have felt: tired, hungry, hot, and miserable.] He must have been very hungry.

Soon the devil appeared. He knew that Jesus was tired and hungry. So, he thought this would be a good time to get Jesus to sin.

1st Temptation: Stones to bread – not trusting God, not waiting for God

Matthew 4:3

During that time the devil came and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, tell these stones to become loaves of bread."

The devil came to Jesus and said, "I imagine You're pretty hungry by now, aren't You? If You are really God's Son, You could just say to these stones, 'Turn into bread!' and they would."

But Jesus knew that the devil was just trying to get Him to do what the devil wanted instead of what God wanted.

Why was it wrong for Jesus to turn the rocks into bread? (Because that would prove that Jesus didn't trust God the Father to provide for Him.)

So, Jesus used the sword of the Spirit, the word of God, to defeat the devil.

Matthew 4:4

But Jesus told Him, "No! The Scriptures say, 'People do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

Jesus knew God's word and told the devil that man needs more than bread to live on; he needs to trust every word God says.

2nd Temptation: Jump off the temple – test God's power

So, the devil tried again. This time he took Jesus to Jerusalem and stood him on the very top of the temple where God's people worshipped God. Perhaps he could make Jesus misuse His power to impress the people.

Matthew 4:5-6

Then the devil took Him to the holy city, Jerusalem, to the highest point of the Temple, and said, "If You are the Son of God, jump off! For the

Scriptures say, 'He will order His angels to protect you. And they will hold you up with their hands so you won't even hurt your foot on a stone.'"

The devil was saying, "I know how you could get people to believe You're the Son of God. Just climb up to the highest part of the temple and jump off. You wouldn't even get hurt, because Scripture says that God's angels will catch You."

Of course, Jesus wanted people to believe in Him, so He could tell them about God's wonderful plan of salvation. But Jesus knew that would be the wrong way to get people to follow Him.

Why was it wrong for Jesus to jump off the Temple? (Jesus knew if He did that, he would be testing God's power to save His life and that would prove that Jesus didn't really trust God the Father.)

So again, Jesus used the sword of the Spirit, the word of God, to defeat the devil.

Matthew 4:7

Jesus responded, "The Scriptures also say, 'You must not test the LORD your God.'"

3rd Temptation: Get all the kingdoms by worshipping the devil – wanting to get power

That sneaky devil had one more temptation up his sleeve. Next Satan took Jesus to the top of a very high mountain.

Matthew 4:8-9

Next the devil took Him to the peak of a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. "I will give it all to You," he said, "if You will kneel down and worship me."

The devil was tempting Jesus with power. He said, "Look at all the kingdoms of the world. I can give you power and authority over the whole world if you will just worship me."

Why was it wrong for Jesus to bow down and worship the devil? (Jesus knew we are only to worship God.) Jesus knew that the devil isn't in charge of the world—God is! And He knew that by dying on the cross He would break the devil's power forever.

So again, Jesus used the sword of the Spirit, the word of God, to defeat the devil.

Matthew 4:10

"Get out of here, Satan," Jesus told him. "For the Scriptures say, 'You must worship the LORD your God and serve only Him.'"

Jesus had made up His mind to do God's will, and there was nothing the devil could do to stop Him.

Matthew 4:11

Then the devil went away, and angels came and took care of Jesus.

Finally, the devil left Jesus and God sent angels to help and strengthen Jesus after His struggle against the evil one.

Conclusion

Jesus was human, so He was tempted. But He was also God, so He did not sin. Because Jesus faced temptations, He understands how hard it is for us to say, "No!" to temptations. But if we ask Him, God will give us the power of the Holy Spirit Who will help us fight off the devil's attempts to make us sin.

When Jesus was tempted, He used verses from the Bible to overpower the devil. (See vv. 4, 7, 10) The Bible can help us know what God wants us to do. The Bible tells us what is right and wrong.

The devil and his evil spirits are real! They are trying to get you to sin against God. Why does he want you to sin against God? (He wants to ruin your friendship with Jesus and make you feel as if God doesn't love you. He's trying to steal your joy.)

What are some ways that the devil tempts you to sin? (Stealing, making fun of someone or being mean to your sibling, disobeying parents or teachers, lying, cheating.)

Here are 5 ways God can help us when the devil tempts us to sin:

[Teacher, use your five fingers to help them remember this.]

1. **Memorize God's Word.** Read the bible and memorize the verses. God's Word has an answer for every test or problem you have. That is why it is so important to learn as many bible verses as you can. Jesus used God's Word to defeat the devil! These verses will help you make the right choices, just like they helped Jesus.
2. **Pray.** Spend time each day praying to God. Ask God to help you do what is right.
3. **Ask other Christians to help you.** Other Christians can pray for you and help you make right choices.
4. **Tell the devil to go away.** We need to say, "No!" to the devil's temptation to sin. Jesus was weak, tired, and hungry and could have given in to the sin, but He didn't. He said, "*Get out of here, Satan!*" God expects us to choose not to sin, too, just like Jesus.
5. **Be careful.** Stay away from people, places, and things that make you want to do wrong.

Remember, it is not a sin to be tempted by the devil to sin. Even the Lord Jesus was tempted. Sin comes when we give in to the temptation and do the sinful thing.

Jesus won the victory over each of the devil's temptations by using God's word, and He will give you the victory, too.

Closing Prayer

Father, please give us a desire in our hearts to learn and memorize Your Word. We want it to be tucked away inside our hearts for those times when the devil tempts us to sin. Then give us the strength we need to say “No” to sin. Help us to make wise choices as we live our daily lives. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Swords: Supplies needed: cardboard, scissors, paint or aluminum foil. Use the sword pattern (below).

Read Hebrews 4:12. This verse compares the Bible to a sword. Jesus used Scriptures as His “sword” to fight against Satan’s attacks. Have the students make swords out of cardboard. They may paint them or cover them with aluminum foil. Talk about how swords were used in medieval times for protection against enemies. The swords the students make will remind them that the Word of God is for their protection, and for a weapon against Satan.

To carry this idea further, use the sword as a memorization tool. Let the students attach fake gems to their swords for each Scripture verse they memorize. Keep the swords for use throughout the unit. After completing the sword, have students write a short prayer asking God to help them defeat temptation.

Game Center

Hiding God’s Word

Write the Memory verse on the board. Have the children read it out loud with you several times. Erase one or two words and have the children read the verse again, reciting the erased words from memory. Continue to erase words until they are all gone and the class knows the verse from memory.

Explain how important it is to hide God’s word in their hearts. *God’s Word in our heart keeps us from sinning.* Share a time in your life when you were tempted to sin and the Word of God protected you.

Or, use the following review questions in a game of your choice:

Review Questions

1. Who is our enemy? (The devil is God's great enemy and our enemy also.)
2. What’s another name for the devil? (Satan)
3. What does the devil want us to do? (Sin against God.)
4. After Jesus was baptized, where did the Holy Spirit lead Him? (Out into the desert wilderness.)
5. What happened to Jesus in the dessert? (For 40 days the devil came and tempted Jesus to sin.)
6. What is one way that Jesus was tempted? (Stones to bread, Jump off Temple, worship the devil.)
7. What did Jesus use to defeat the devil? (God’s word.)
8. Why was Jesus able to overcome the devil’s temptation to sin? (Jesus used God’s word to answer the devil.)
9. Why does the devil tempt you to sin? (To ruin my friendship with Jesus and make me feel as if God doesn’t love me.)
10. How did Jesus overcome each of the devil’s temptations? (When the devil tempted Him to sin, Jesus quoted Scripture.)
11. Name a sin the devil might tempt you to do. (Stealing, making fun of or being mean to someone, disobeying parents, lying.)
12. What can you do to make sure you do not sin against God? (We can overcome temptations to sin by: prayer, quoting Bible verses, saying “No” to what is wrong, etc.)