

## 13: ESCAPING THE HIDDEN TRAP OF TEMPTATION

### "THE OPPORTUNITY"

#### LUKE 4:1-13

#### **This Week's Core Competency**

**Self-Control** – I have the power, through Christ, to control myself. Titus 2:11-13 *For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. 12 It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, 13 while we wait for the blessed hope--the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.*

Every challenge in life comes with its own set of temptations. And while testing is not bad in itself, we have to beware of its accompanying pitfalls. As one writer explains: "Tests in life are not bad; in fact, they can be divinely sent (James 1:2-4). The main issue is my response to a test. Do I respond in a way that looks to God to guide me through it? Do I trust him, or do I get angry? Do I seek to reassert my control (even when I know I cannot control events)? Or do I rest in faith, look for God's hand, and ask him what I should learn from what I am going through?" Then the writer adds his personal testimony, which we call all identify with: "Though I personally wish I could say that I always do the latter, I know I do not, but that should certainly be my goal. If I am to grow spiritually, I can expect

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*More than Jesus' character was at stake on the sandy plains of Palestine; human history hung in the balance.*

– Philip Yancey

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trial. If I am to grow spiritually, I need to look to God in the midst of it" (Darrell L. Bock, *The NIV Application Commentary: Luke*, 131).

One way to turn to God in the midst of a trial is to do what Jesus did—turn to God's word. "Just do it" and "Just say no" are easier said than done. Weak in the knees in the face of intense temptation, we can do neither apart from the strength that comes only from God's Spirit. Paul said as much in his general admonition to "put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes" (Eph 6:10). More specifically, he said, "Take . . . the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (v. 17). This sword "given by the Spirit" (Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 852) is the only offensive weapon at our disposal, and it's identified as "the word of God."

Christ shows us how to use it during his three encounters with the devil in which he took the offensive. As one commentator observes: "Jesus was not portrayed as passively being dragged out by the Evil One to endure temptation, for the initiator of this event was not the devil but God. The picture is that of the Anointed of the Lord on the offensive and led by the Spirit to confront the devil" (Robert H. Stein, *Luke*, NAC, 145).

In reply to his first temptation, Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 8:3, "Man does not live by bread alone" (Lk 4:4). In reply to his second temptation, Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 6:13, "Worship the Lord you God and serve him only" (v. 8). Then Satan begins quoting the Old Testament. In an attempt to get Jesus to misuse the the word of God, he tells

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him, "Throw yourself down from here. For it is written:

'He will command his angels concerning you  
to guard you carefully;  
they will lift you up in their hands,  
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.' "

Jesus replies by quoting Deuteronomy 6:16, "Do not put the Lord your God to the test." It's not enough to know what the Bible says. One must know what it means and must use it correctly. Satan tried to use Jesus' knowledge of the Old Testament against him by tempting him to *misuse* what God had said, and failed miserably.

"As I look back on the three temptations," Philip Yancey writes, "I see that Satan proposed an enticing improvement. He tempted Jesus toward the good parts of being human without the bad; to savor the taste of bread without being subject to the fixed rules of hunger and of agriculture, to confront risk with no real danger, to enjoy fame and power without the prospect of painful rejection—in short, to wear a crown but not a cross. (The temptation that Jesus resisted, many of us, his followers, still long for)" (*The Jesus I Never Knew*, 72).

By telling his readers about the temptation, Luke emphasizes the central importance of the word of God in the life of the individual believer and of the church. As one writer concludes: "It would be difficult for Luke's readers not to understand how central and important the Scriptures are for the Christian life. Here as in his being 'full of the Spirit,' Jesus is a model for the believer" (Robert H. Stein, *Luke*, NAC, 150)

## day **1** ENCOUNTER – read God's word to put yourself in touch with him.

### Luke 4:1-13

1 Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert, 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 does 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, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. 7 So if you worship me, it will all be yours."

8 Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Worship the Lord your

God and serve him only.' "

9 The 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 says: '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.

## EXAMINE – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

- \* Underline "Holy Spirit" and "Spirit" in v. 1.
- \* Circle "full" in v. 1.
- \* In the margin next to verse 1 write, "Cf. 3:22."
- \* Circle "forty days" in v. 2.
- \* Circle "tempted" in v. 2 and "tempting" in v. 13.
- \* Circle "ate nothing" in v. 2.
- \* Number the repeated references to "the devil."
- \* Bracket "If you are the Son of God" in vv. 3, 9.
- \* In the margin next to v. 3 write, "Cf. 3:22, 23, 38."

- \* Highlight "It is written" and "It says."
- \* Bracket "has been given" in v. 6.
- \* Box "So" indicating *result* in v. 7.
- \* Circle "highest point" in v. 9.
- \* Box "for" indicating *reason* in v. 10.
- \* Circle "test" in v. 12.

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## day 2

**EXPLORE** – the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help.

1. What happened at the Jordan (3:21-22), and what did the temptation have to do with it?
2. Jesus was "*full* of the Holy Spirit." Explain what that means.
3. What do you infer about Jesus' temptation from the details recorded in verse 2?
4. Jesus was famished after fasting for forty days. Why should he not turn a stone into bread to satisfy his hunger? Surely God did not want his Son to starve in the desert.
5. If people do not live by food alone, what *more* does it take? (see Dt 8:3; cf., Mt 4:4)
6. Put the *gist* of the second temptation in your own words.
7. Do you think Satan had the authority to do what he promised?
8. Why would Satan quote Psalm 91:11-12 in connection with the third temptation?
9. The devil told Jesus, "Throw yourself down from here." Where's the temptation in that?
10. **Discussion:** Talk about the value of knowing how Jesus was tempted and how he responded.

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## day 3 **EXAMINE** – an explanation of the message to better understand the meaning of the passage.

When you read the Gospels, it's important to remember that although you're reading books found in the New Testament, the characters in them lived under the law, and the events in them occurred in Old Testament times. Therefore they must be read in light of Old Testament promises concerning the Messiah and the kingdom of God (cf., Lk 1:32). What's more, the historical setting of the Gospels is complex. The Four are, in fact, documents with two historical contexts. The first pertains to Jesus himself and his original hearers. The second pertains to the authors of the Gospels and their readers (Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, 116). In other words, Jesus said and did things for particular reasons related to his original audience. Years later, the Gospel writers reported what he had said and had done for reasons related to their readers. This observation is reflected in the following comment on the meaning of the temptation narrative. "First, the original meaning of this narrative must be determined. Second, Luke's understanding and usage of the narrative must be determined" (Craig A. Evans, *Luke*, NIBC, 65).

Luke 4:1-13 describes what happened when Jesus was tempted by the devil. Three times Satan tried to get Jesus to act independently from the Father, to act like a rebellious son. Twice he prefaced his temptations with the words, "If you are the Son of God," never doubting who Jesus really was. In both cases the grammar behind his conditional statement indicates that he assumed the condition to be so. "Since you are the Son of God" is what he meant. But no matter how hard he tried, he could not tempt Jesus to take matters into his own hands to run an end around his Father's will.

Jesus was God's obedient Son in *contrast* to Israel, God's disobedient son. As one commentator explains: "The choice of texts used by Jesus is significant. They come from Dt. 8:3; 6:13, 16, passages which relate to Israel in the wilderness (4:1!), tempting God and being tested by him, and which occur in the context of the *Shema*, the authoritative claim by God upon Israel's worship and loyalty. The temptation of Jesus—and of his followers—is to be seen as antitypical of the experience of Israel. But where Israel fell, Jesus shows the way to victory" (I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, NICNT, 166). The temptation

confirmed two things made explicit at his baptism: 1) the Holy Spirit was upon him; 2) he was God's Son and Messiah. That is the original meaning of the narrative.

What about Luke's *purpose* for arranging and recording what happened? He indicates in the opening to his Gospel that he is writing for the benefit of Theophilus—thought by some to be Luke's well-heeled patron who sponsored the writing of the books of Luke and Acts—and presumably his other readers. Luke writes, "Since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught" (1:3-4 italics added). Generally speaking, Luke wrote to strengthen the faith of his readers.

It's reasonable to infer also that he wants Theophilus and his other readers to know how to withstand their own temptations. As one commentator claims, "We may be certain that the story was also told for its exemplary features in order to encourage Christians facing temptation and to indicate to them how to recognize and overcome it. They are to note that in each case Jesus replied to temptation with a quotation from Scripture, thereby indicating that the life of the man of God must follow certain clear principles expressive of God's will which have already been revealed in the OT . . . the point is that Jesus is obedient to God's will in Scripture and not that he wins by superior dialectical skill" (Marshall, 166).

The significance of the temptation narrative for our everyday spirituality is further suggested by the contrast between Israel, God's disobedient son, and Christ, his obedient son, coupled with Paul's statement that the things that happened to Israel in the wilderness "happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us" (1Co 10:11). It follows that Jesus' temptation serves as an example and was written down as an encouragement for us. Simply put, we should not follow Israel's example and yield to temptation, but follow Jesus' example and resist it. Luke told his readers about the temptation of Jesus to strengthen our faith and give us an example to follow when we ourselves are tempted.

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## *The Message of the Passage*

*When you're tempted to sin in response to tests in life, follow the example of your Lord by turning to the Scriptures for the strength to resist.*

day **4** **EMBRACE** – how God spoke to you in his word.

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James teaches in James 1:22. Try some of the challenges below to apply what you have learned this week.

- **Journal your thoughts on the passage:**

–Write about how God revealed himself to you . . .

–Write about how God wants you to change you . . .

–Write about how God wants to use you to change your world . . .

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# notes STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

## v. 1 *full . . . Holy Spirit*

In other words Jesus was under the influence of the Holy Spirit and was empowered by the Holy Spirit. He was led by the Spirit into (cf. Mt 4:1) the desert to be tempted by the devil and was empowered by the same Spirit to withstand that temptation. Luke used the same words in the book of Acts to describe Stephen (7:55) and Barnabas (11:24). "Not only had Jesus been conceived through the Holy Spirit (1:35), but the Spirit had descended upon him at his baptism (3:22) so that he might endure the temptations and begin his ministry (see 4:14, 18)" (Evans, 69). "On the one hand, the story demonstrates how the Spirit, who had come upon Jesus, guided and empowered him in his new task; on the other hand, it shows how Jesus, as the Son of God, was obedient to God" (Marshall, 165-66).

## v. 2 *forty days*

"The setting **in the desert** (v. 1) and staying in it **for forty days** (v. 2), during which time Jesus **ate nothing** (v. 2), are probably an intentional allusion to Moses' fast in the wilderness for forty days, at the end of which time he received and proclaimed the word of God (see Exod. 34:28; Deut. 9:9-18; perhaps also Elijah, 1 Kings 19:8). That such an allusion was intentional receives additional support when it is noted that all of Jesus' replies to the devil are quotations from Deuteronomy. Moreover, it has been shown that each of the three temptations reflects temptations to which the Israelites succumbed during their 'desert' wanderings for 'forty' years (see Fitzmyer, pp. 510-12)" (Evans, 65-66).

## v. 2 *was tempted*

Cf., Heb 4:15. Was Jesus *not able to sin* or *able to not sin*? Regarding the *impeccability* of Christ one theologian concludes: "If we are asking if it was actually possible for Jesus to have sinned, it seems that we must conclude that it was not possible" (Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 539). The reality of Christ's temptation was grounded in the *purpose* of the tempter, not his *susceptibility* to the temptation.

## v. 2 *devil*

Lit., "slanderer." Luke uses "Satan" (lit., "adversary") elsewhere in his Gospel. "Jesus was not portrayed as passively being dragged out by the Evil One to endure temptation, for the initiator of this event was not the devil but God. This picture is that of the Anointed of the Lord on the offensive and led by the Spirit to confront the devil" (Stein, 145).

## v. 2 *ate nothing*

"Such fasting probably involved minimum drink only" (128). "The forty days for Jesus were an intended period of communion with God accompanied by fasting; it was this communion which the devil sought to destroy" (Marshall, 170).

## v. 3 *if*

The Greek word translated "if" (*ei*) in this grammatical construction "presents the condition as if it were so" (Bock, 128) and thus has the meaning "since." The devil didn't question Jesus' Sonship; instead he employed a more cunning plan. "Satan tempts Jesus to act in a way that supports his Sonship. Of course, his goal behind these temptations is the exact opposite: luring Jesus to act independently of the Father and thus creating a rebellious Sonship" (128).

## v. 3 *stone*

The temptation of Jesus brings to mind Israel's testing in the wilderness—part of which involved letting the Israelites become hungry so they would trust God for their daily bread (Lk 11:3). "By refusing the devil's temptation to satisfy his needs (i.e. by ordering **this stone to become bread**)—as if God could not or would not meet them—Jesus affirmed his faith and reliance in God's provision, the very thing that Israel had failed to do (see Deut. 8:1-6)" (Evans, 66).

## v. 6 *has been given*

"'Has been given' is a divine passive, i.e., God has placed this world's kingdoms under the devil's temporary rule . . . the devil is temporarily given this authority" (Stein, 147). "Though Satan possesses great authority (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; 2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:2), he really cannot grant this wish. The proposal is a delusion and a lie, as are all of Satan's attempts to get us off track" (Bock, 129).

## v. 7 *worship me*

The second temptation alludes to Israel's inclination to idolatry (Dt 6:10-15). "Unlike the Israelites, who so often became ensnared in idolatry, Jesus steadfastly affirms his loyalty to God alone by refusing the devil's offer and by quoting Deut. 6:13" (Evans, 66).

## v. 9 *highest point*

Probably the temple's southeast corner, which looms over the floor of Kidron Valley 450 feet below. The Jewish historian Josephus said that looking over the edge made people "giddy" (*Antiquities*, 15.11.5).

## v. 12 *throw yourself*

The third temptation recalls the Israelites' demand for water at Massah and Meribah (Dt 6:16; cf. Ex 17:7; Nu 20:13; 20:24; 27:14). "Unlike the people of Israel, however, Jesus will **not put the Lord his God to the test** (v. 12; from Deut. 6:16a)" (Evans, 66-67). On the practical implication of this temptation, one author writes, "God has not asked Jesus to engage in such a test, and the action artificially creates a need for God to act. Since it puts God in a 'show me' position, the action is really a private test of God and a sign of a lack of faith. These kinds of tests God's children are not to pursue" (Bock, 130).

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### Family Talk

Encouragement from one parent's heart to another

Say the Pledge of Allegiance. Sing the words to your favorite song. Aha! So you can memorize things! I confess I have had a lifelong struggle in memorizing scripture. I have a few favorites that I have committed to memory but it seems the older I get, the harder it is. At least that's my excuse for the moment. I was convicted this week as I studied the text. Hiding God's Word in our hearts is so important, especially when it comes to fighting temptation. Jesus, the Son of God, spoke scripture when He was tempted by the enemy. I need a whole arsenal ready to fight off temptation as it comes! Make memorizing scripture a family affair. Here are some tips to help you succeed. (1) Write the scripture out by hand. There is an important brain/hand/eye connection that aids in memory. (2) Post the scripture in places you will see often throughout the day. (3) Put the words to a familiar tune. (4) Make up motions to go with the words. (5) Record the verse on your iPod (or whatever you have) and listen to it in the car, as you work out or do chores. There are also many memory verse CD's available to purchase. Search for them online. Once everyone has memorized the passage, don't forget to celebrate! I suggest ice cream!

#### What Does The Bible Say

Read: Luke 4:1-13

1. Where was Jesus when He was tempted?
2. How long was He in the desert?
3. Did Jesus give in to temptation?

#### What Do You Think

1. Why do you think Satan chose to tempt Jesus while He was in the desert?
2. Is it wrong to be tempted or to give into temptation?

#### What R U Going To Do

The memory verse for this three week series is 1 Corinthians 10:13. Put the words to a familiar tune or make up motions. You can earn two more tokens if you show it to your leader next Sunday.

### MEMORY TIME

Core Comp

Self Control - Taking charge of myself with Jesus' help

Memory Verse

1Co 10:13 *No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. 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 you can stand up under it.*

### KIDPIX COUPON

I memorized CC \_\_\_\_\_ and Verse \_\_\_\_\_. Family completed **Say** \_\_\_\_\_ **Think** \_\_\_\_\_ **Do** \_\_\_\_\_

Child's name \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Parent's signature \_\_\_\_\_

Earn tokens by completing the Bible study portion of this page.  
Questions: Kids@pantego.org

# 30 CORE COMPETENCIES

## 10 CORE BELIEFS

### **Trinity** *2 Corinthians 13:14*

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

### **Salvation By Grace** *Ephesians 2:8-9*

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

### **Authority of the Bible** *2 Timothy 3:16-17*

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

### **Personal God** *Psalms 121:1-2*

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

### **Identity in Christ** *John 1:12*

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

### **Church** *Ephesians 4:15-16*

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

### **Humanity** *John 3:16*

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

### **Compassion** *Psalms 82:3-4*

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

### **Eternity** *John 14:1-4*

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

### **Stewardship** *1 Timothy 6:17-19*

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

## 10 CORE PRACTICES

### **Worship** *Psalms 95:1-7*

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

### **Prayer** *Psalms 66:16-20*

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

### **Bible Study** *Hebrews 4:12*

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

### **Single-mindedness** *Matthew 6:33*

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

### **Spiritual Gifts** *Romans 12:4-6*

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

### **Biblical Community** *Acts 2:44-47*

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

### **Giving Away My Time** *Colossians 3:17*

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

### **Giving Away My Money**

*2 Corinthians 8:7*

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

### **Giving Away My Faith** *Ephesians*

*6:19-20*

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

### **Giving Away My Life** *Romans 12:1*

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

## 10 CORE VIRTUES

### **Joy** *John 15:11*

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

### **Peace** *Philippians 4:6-7*

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

### **Faithfulness** *Proverbs 3:3-4*

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

### **Self-Control** *Titus 2:11-13*

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

### **Humility** *Philippians 2:3, 4*

I choose to esteem others above myself.

### **Love** *1 John 4:10-12*

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

### **Patience** *Proverbs 14:29*

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

### **Kindness/Goodness** *1 Thess. 5:15*

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

### **Gentleness** *Philippians 4:5*

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

### **Hope** *Hebrews 6:19-20*

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

## About the Authors

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**Wendy Hollabaugh** (B.S.W. University of Texas at Arlington) is the Children's Minister at Pantego Bible Church. Wendy has over ten years of experience in Children's Ministry. She has a passion for leading families to connect with God and each other. She enjoys creating compelling environments where kids fall in love with God and His Truth. Wendy and her husband, Greg, are also involved in their own personal youth ministry as they are training their three teenagers, Hannah, Aaron and Noah.



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The mission of THE SCROLLS is to help you develop the beliefs, practices, and virtues of a follower of Jesus Christ called The 30 Core Competencies through your own active reading of the Bible. Send any questions or comments you may have about this lesson to Tom Bulick. His e-mail address is [tbulick@pantego.org](mailto:tbulick@pantego.org).