

Faithful to Truth in an Age of Tolerance

Lesson 2: Facing Temptation Like Jesus Did

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Matthew portrays Jesus as the True Israel. Jesus enters Egypt and God calls him out again (Matt 2:15); he passes through water (Matt 3:13–17); and enters the wilderness where he is tempted 40 days (Matt 4:1–11). Our focus is on Jesus’ time of temptation. Just as the serpent tempted Eve in the lush garden of Eden, and just as the nation of Israel was tempted to disobey God in the wilderness, so Satan appears to tempt the Lord Jesus. Only, where Adam and Eve and later Israel gave into the temptation, Jesus resisted and remained sinless. What can we learn from Jesus’ experience in the wilderness that teaches us to face temptation like he did? There are *three essential lessons*:

1. Be on your guard.
 - a. Temptation is common.
 - b. Temptation is constant.
 - c. Temptation is crafty.

The Temptations Jesus Faced (Matt 4:1–11)		
The Temptation	The Sin	The Trick
If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.	To obey the word of Satan instead of the word of God, violating God’s will.	Appeal to the lust of the flesh; an innocent suggestion during a time of weakness.
If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down.	To tempt God, or put God to the test. This is a form of unbelief.	Appeal to pride through a cunning twisting of the Scriptures.
All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.	To worship someone other than the Father for personal gain or satisfaction.	Appeal to the lust of the eyes and a promise of glory.

2. Commit yourself to God’s word.

Every time Jesus faced temptation he spoke these words: *It is written* (Matt 4:4, 7, 10). This does *not* mean that Satan flees when we quote Scripture. But it does teach us that we must be *completely yielded to God’s revealed will*.

The “wilderness verses” quoted by Jesus indicate the very commitments that keep us from giving in to temptation:

- a. A commitment to the Word of God: *Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God* (cf. Deut 8:3).
- b. A commitment to trusting God: *You shall not put the Lord your God to the test* (cf. Deut 6:16).
- c. A commitment to loving God: *You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve* (cf. Deut 6:13).

3. Find your strength in Christ.

We cannot face temptation on our own, for we will fall just like our spiritual ancestors. Rather, we must face temptation *in Christ*, deriving our resistance from him.

- a. Jesus withstood Eve’s temptation.
- b. Jesus withstood Israel’s temptation.
- c. Jesus is sinless (e.g., Heb 4:15; 1 Pet 2:22; 1 John 3:5).
- d. God has strengthened us to resist temptation by placing us *in Christ* (Rom 6:1–13; 8:1; Gal 2:20; Eph 2:10).