

THE THREAD

DISCOVERING THE THREAD OF THE GOSPEL THROUGH THE BIG-PICTURE STORY OF THE BIBLE

PART 3: THE GOSPEL COME TO LIFE

LESSON 3 || TEMPTATION OF JESUS

SESSION SNAPSHOT

NARRATIVE PASSAGE: Luke 4:1-13

GOSPEL FOCUS: Hebrews 4:14-16

STUDENT TAKEAWAYS:

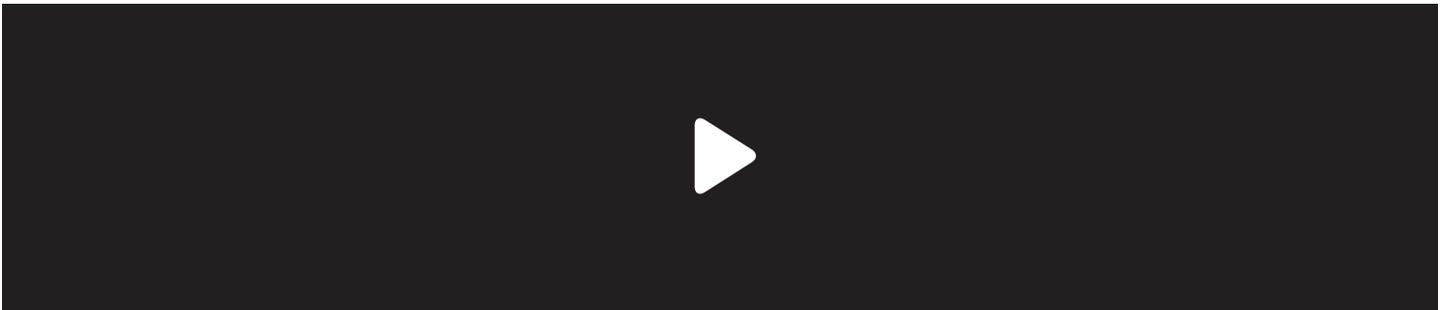
- Understand that Jesus was aggressively tempted by Satan to sin.
- Realize that Jesus knows what it feels like to be tempted.
- Examine their attitudes toward temptation and sin and commit to being more diligent in resisting temptation.

OVERVIEW:

Temptation is abundant. It's something we all deal with every day on multiple occasions. Fortunately, Jesus gets it. He was tempted, just as we are tempted. And instead of having contempt for our weak, frail attempts at righteousness, God looks on us with love. He doesn't love us because we are compliant and try to be good; He loves us just because He does. So instead of rejection, He gives us mercy and invites us to be with Him. Not only does He empathize with us, but God always provides a way for us to escape temptation and avoid sin. It's up to us to follow His escape plan.

TEACHER PREP VIDEO:

Each *Thread* lesson comes with a Teacher Prep Video. These short videos are designed to help you grasp the lesson's main point as you prepare to teach.



BIBLE BACKGROUND

The Bible Background is designed to help you provide the basic context for the passages you'll be studying.

- **WHAT DO WE MEAN BY "CONTEXT"?** In every YM360 Bible study lesson, we encourage teachers to help students know *who* wrote a particular book, *when* it was written, and *why* it was written.
- **WHY TEACH CONTEXT?** Grasping the big-picture view of God's story of redemption is difficult for teenagers without understanding the context of the books and passages they're studying.

LUKE

- *Author:* Luke was a doctor, a Gentile Christian, and a companion of Paul.
- *Time frame:* The Gospel of Luke was written around 60 AD.

- *Purpose:* Luke is the only Gentile author of the Bible. His entire purpose was to write an accurate account of the life of Jesus to present Jesus as Savior, fully God and fully man. It is one of the synoptic Gospels, having much in common with the Gospels of Matthew and Mark.

HEBREWS

- *Author:* The author of Hebrews neither names themselves nor clearly designates their audience. The traditional title “to the Hebrews” reflects the ancient assumption that the original recipients were Jewish Christians. The author’s identity has been a matter of significant conjecture throughout church history. Authorship has been attributed to Paul, but there are serious differences in the style and method between this letter and Paul’s other letters. Other scholars have offered Barnabas, Clement, Luke, or Apollos as authors, but most concede that this author remains anonymous.
- *Time frame:* Hebrews was almost certainly written before the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 70 AD since the author does not mention or give any hint to this catastrophic happening.
- *Purpose:* Hebrews was written to address Jewish converts to Christianity and challenge them to hold fast to their newfound faith. Many of them were resorting back to old traditions, and some were even considering merging with certain Jewish sects. Because of the increased persecution of Jewish converts to Christianity, many were tempted to resort to old rites and rituals to avoid the pain. The writer was convincing these Jewish Christians that Jesus is better than any angel, priest, or old covenant institution.

LESSON PLAN

The Lesson Plan contains four elements:

- **GETTING STARTED**– An introductory activity designed to prepare teenagers to engage with God and the truth of His Word.
- **THE STORY**– A section featuring a narrative from Scripture that helps teenagers know God better through learning the story of the Bible.
- **THE THREAD**– A special emphasis where teenagers discover the Gospel thread coursing throughout the story of the Bible.
- **WRAPPING UP**– An application-focused segment helping teenagers ask the question, “How am I impacted by what I learned today”?

GETTING STARTED

- *Goal:* To get students thinking about what temptation feels like.
- *Set-Up:* You’ll need to provide a marshmallow for each student. You’re also going to need a way to display a YouTube video.
 - Preview the following link: https://youtu.be/QX_oy9614HQ

FIRST, pass out a marshmallow to each student. Instruct students to wait until the end of the lesson to eat their marshmallows.

THEN, show students the YouTube video “The Marshmallow Test.” Explain the background and recent additions to the marshmallow experiment: **Say something like:**

- **This marshmallow experiment is a classic psychology test first done at Stanford in the 1960s. It started as an exploration of what kids do to resist temptation. But until recently, the test has been used to demonstrate the value of delayed gratification, in other words, waiting for rewards. When researchers followed the lives of the children tested, they learned that those kids who could resist the temptation to eat one marshmallow and wait to receive two marshmallows were generally more successful in life. Many years later, researchers at Rochester University followed up on the classic Stanford “Marshmallow Test” by adding a new variable: how reliable the adult was. What they discovered turned the Stanford “Marshmallow Test” on its head! They discovered that a child’s ability to resist the temptation to eat the one marshmallow depends on how much they trust that the adult will actually deliver on the promise of a second marshmallow.**

THEN, ask something like:

- **How tempted are you to eat your marshmallow right now?**
 - *Answers will vary.*
- **Are you a gratification delayer or more of the instant gratification type? Why?**
 - *Answers will vary.*

FINALLY, TRANSITION TO THE STORY BY EXPLAINING TO STUDENTS THAT IN THIS LESSON, YOU’RE GOING TO EXPLORE HOW JESUS WAS TEMPTED AND WHAT THAT MEANS FOR US.

THE STORY

- *Goal:* Students will understand that Jesus was aggressively tempted by Satan to sin.
- *Set-Up:* Students will need a Bible or a Bible app. You may find that a dry-erase board is helpful for jotting down some notes, but it’s not essential.

FIRST, explain that in this lesson, you’ll be looking at the story of the temptation of Jesus in Luke 4. The same story can be found in Matthew 4, and it’s summarized in Mark 1. If you’d like, use the Connecting The Dots section below to review or fill in the gaps between your last lesson and this one.

CONNECTING THE DOTS

As you teach *The Thread*, there will naturally be some gaps in the story. This is an optional way for you to fill in some of the gaps between the last lesson you taught and this one. Use it to review or connect the dots to the events surrounding the passage.

- This story takes place at the very beginning of Jesus' public ministry.
- The very first thing He did was get baptized by John the Baptist, which we studied last time. This is where God's voice declares that Jesus is His Son. It's also when John says that Jesus is the Messiah.

NEXT, have students turn to Luke 4. While they're finding it, provide some of the basic background for the book using the Bible Background. Then, read or have a student read Luke 4:1-13. **Ask something like:**

- **Look at verse 2. What's the significance of Jesus fasting for 40 days?**
 - *Answer:* It reminds us of Moses and Elijah both fasting for 40 days, and the Israelites wandering in the desert for 40 years. It helped prepare Him for His public ministry.
- **How long was Jesus actually tempted by Satan?**
 - *Answer:* Sometimes, we might only think about the three temptations that are specifically recorded, but this verse lets us know that He was tempted the whole time.
- **Look at verses 3-4. Having a little nibble of something to eat after 40 days of fasting doesn't sound so sinful. What do you think is the significance of this temptation?**
 - *Answer:* Satan was tempting Jesus to look to Himself to provide rather than trusting the Father.
- **Now focus on verses 5-8. What is the significance of this temptation? What is Satan trying to accomplish?**
 - *Answer:* First, Satan is trying to get Jesus to break the first commandment. He's also trying to get Jesus to give in to a desire for power and authority. He's trying to get Jesus to gain power by His own hands rather than waiting to be glorified by the Father.
- **Why would Satan tempt Jesus with all the kingdoms of this world? Doesn't Jesus have those anyways? Or does He not?**
 - *Answer:* Jesus is going to accomplish His purposes and receive His reward from the Father by going to the cross. He knows this. Satan is tempting Him to take an easier road.
- **Look at verses 9-12. What's at the heart of this temptation?**
 - *Answer:* Pride. Satan is pushing Him to test God and prove that He's the Messiah. It's similar to the Cross when they mock Jesus and tell Him to come down if He's really the Messiah.
- **What's unique about how Satan posed this temptation?**
 - *Answer:* Satan quoted Scripture this time.
- **What's the issue with how Satan used Scripture?**
 - *Answer:* He twisted and misused Scripture for his own wicked purposes.
- **How did Jesus respond to the temptations?**
 - *Answer:* Jesus, like the other two temptations, used Scripture to respond to Satan. The difference is that Jesus used it properly, looking to it and submitting to it as God's Word.

THEN, have the students turn to Deuteronomy 8 and Deuteronomy 6. Explain that you're going to look at the passages Jesus used to respond to Satan with. While they're finding those chapters, transition to a discussion of God's reliability by **saying something like:**

- Remember, recent research has added a new twist on the classic “Marshmallow Test.” The kids were much more likely to resist the temptation to eat the marshmallow if they trusted the adult who told them they could have another one if they waited. Just like with kids and marshmallows, our ability to resist temptation largely depends on whether or not we see God as reliable. Each time Jesus responded to Satan, the Scripture He used clearly shows that God can be trusted. Let’s look at these passages and see how they show us that God can be trusted.

NEXT, read or have a student read Deuteronomy 8:2-3 and ask something like:

- How would this passage have reminded Jesus that He could trust His Father?
 - *Answer:* First, it would have reminded Him that God has provided in the past, and He does not change. Second, it would have reminded Him that physical food is not what is most important. It sustains for a while, but God’s Word endures forever.

THEN, read or have a student read Deuteronomy 6:10-14 and ask something like:

- How would this passage have reminded Jesus to trust His Father over what Satan was offering?
 - *Answer:* This passage would have reminded Jesus that the Lord is the One in control, the One worthy of being revered, and the One that delivers on His promises. Trying to subvert that would only lead to destruction.

NEXT, read or have a student read Deuteronomy 6:16 and ask something like:

- How would this passage have reminded Jesus to trust God rather than giving in to what Satan was trying to get Him to do?
 - *Answer:* The Israelites tested God by questioning Him and asking if He was really there. This passage would have reminded Jesus to trust that the Father is always there and that trying to goad Him into proving it is a sign of a lack of trust.

Finish this section by saying something like:

- So the point here is that Jesus was tested just as we are. When He was tempted, He used God’s Word to rebuke Satan and to remind Himself that the Father was reliable and trustworthy, that God’s way is the best way. The question for us is: How do we respond to temptation, and do we really believe that we can trust God?

TRANSITION INTO THE THREAD TO SEE HOW THE REST OF SCRIPTURE REINFORCES THE TRUTHS OF THIS PASSAGE.

THE THREAD

FIRST, instruct students to turn to Hebrews 4. If you choose, while they are turning pages, provide them with some brief context for the book by referencing the Bible Background. Read or have a student read Hebrews 4:14-16, then lead students in a discussion. Ask:

- Let’s break this passage down into some bite-sized pieces. What are some really important points?
 - *Answer:* Write their answers on a whiteboard if you have one available. Some points to make sure are brought up include: Jesus was God, Jesus was tempted in every imaginable way yet didn’t sin, Jesus is empathetic to our struggles with sin and temptation, and we can approach God with confidence that He gives mercy and grace.
- What’s significant about the fact that Jesus was tempted in every way?
 - *Answer:* It’s significant because we, too, have been tempted in every way. It means that Jesus is able to identify and empathize with us. He doesn’t sit back at a distance and wonder what we’re going through.
- Does this give you greater confidence in approaching God with what you’re dealing with?
 - *Answer:* Answers will vary. But it should give us greater comfort and confidence, knowing that He has dealt with all the things we struggle with and are bringing to Him.

- **What does it mean that we can approach God and expect to receive mercy and grace?**
 - *Answer:* It means that if we genuinely approach God in our time of need, He's not going to sit there and beat us up and condemn us. He doesn't give us what we deserve. He gives us mercy and grace when we come to Him with our temptations and burdens. He's there to walk with us through these times.

IF YOUR STUDENTS DON'T HAVE ANY MORE QUESTIONS, TRANSITION INTO THE WRAPPING UP SECTION.

WRAPPING UP

- *Goal:* For students to examine their attitudes toward temptation and sin and commit to being more diligent in resisting temptation.
- *Set-Up:* You will probably need a dry-erase board for this section.

FIRST, review The Story part of the lesson. **Say something like:**

- **So far, we've learned about Jesus being tempted. It's important for us to remember that every time He was tempted, He defended Himself with Scripture. Defending ourselves with Scripture, however, isn't that helpful if we don't first trust God and His Word.**

Then, ask something like:

- **What are some temptations you struggle with that would be easier to handle if you actually 100% believed that God's plan was better?**
 - *Answer:* Answers will vary. Some possible answers include sexual temptation, gossip, and cheating or lying to get ahead.
- **When we give in to temptation, what does it reveal about our faith?**
 - *Answer:* It reveals a lack of trust. If I lie to get ahead, I am willfully saying that I don't trust God's way is best. When I give in to sexual temptation, I am saying that I don't trust that God's way is better. This list goes on and on.

NEXT, recall that each student has (hopefully) kept a marshmallow for the entire lesson. **Ask:**

- **What would be different about the temptation to eat the marshmallow if I kept them in a bag with me the whole time versus putting them in your hand?**
 - *Answer:* It's harder to ignore a temptation right in front of you versus one at a distance.
- **What are some ways you mishandle dealing with temptations?**
 - *Answers will vary.*
- **Think back to the video at the beginning. If you think about the marshmallow as a temptation, how do we relate to the little girl that pinched off a tiny bite?**
 - *Answer:* We "play with fire," hoping not to get burned. We feel sin, smell it, squish it, and stare at it. We convince ourselves that a tiny "bite" won't be a big deal.
- **What's wrong with that mindset?**
 - *Answer:* We're allowing the temptation to grow and spiral out of control. Also, it shows that our main concern isn't following God and trusting Him; it's seeing what we can get away with.
- **What is the most important factor in dealing with the temptations that come our way?**
 - *Answer:* The most important factor in handling temptation is how much we trust God and His Word.
- **How can you commit to being more diligent in resisting temptation?**
 - *Answer:* We can all commit to reading our Bibles more and spending more time in prayer. Those things are very

important. But we need to back up a bit and commit to learning to trust God more.

FINALLY, conclude the lesson by asking the students to take some time and reflect on their life. Ask them to think about times they've trusted the Lord and done what He has called them to do. Ask them to think of times they didn't trust Him. Ask them to consider the differences between the two. Remind them of the importance of recalling God's faithfulness in our lives as we seek to trust Him more. Close with prayer and ask God to help grow your students' trust in Him and His Word.

- If you've purchased the corresponding devotional journal, remind students they'll be working through Week 29 this week. Encourage them to keep up with the daily devotions and to give memorizing this week's verse their best shot.
- If you're utilizing the digital devotions included in the Thread curriculum, remind students how you'll be making them available, i.e., Instagram, Facebook, etc.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU . . .

- Do you have questions about a lesson?
- Something that worked particularly well that you want to share?
- Something that didn't work that you want to bring up?

We value your feedback! Please do not hesitate to email us with your questions, comments, or concerns at feedback@youthministry360.com.