

TEMPTATION

When we think of Jesus, we often think of Him healing people, performing miracles, preaching, dying on the Cross and rising from the dead. We forget that He also had an obscure season before His ministry where He was tempted in the desert by the enemy. Let's explore how He was tempted, and how it applies to us in 21st Century America.

Many Christian thinkers and theologians agree that there are three core lies the enemy tries to tempt Jesus with in the desert:

1. "You are what you have" (the lie of false security)
2. "You are what you do." (the lie of false significance)
3. "You are what others think of you." (The lie of false belonging)

Read Matthew 3:16-17

In light of the three temptations Jesus would face in the desert, why is it important that He hear these words spoken over Him by the Father?

Now Read Genesis 3:1-7

Do you see the three lies at work in this passage? How so?

What is the enemy doing to their view of God and of themselves?

The enemy tells them that God doesn't want them to eat the fruit, because then they will be "like God". Why is this ironic and sad? (Hint: Genesis 1:26-27)

Read Matthew 4:1-4

This is the moment where the enemy is trying to attack Jesus' sense of security. Why do you think this was a temptation for Jesus?

The fact that Jesus could turn the stones into bread doesn't mean it would've been wrong for Him to do it. It's that the enemy is tempting Jesus to provide for Himself by His own power instead of depending on the power of the Spirit.

What is the response of Jesus?

What is the importance of the eternal Word of God?

All of us struggle with the lie that "we are what we have". In what areas of your life do you find yourself believing this lie?

What would it look like for you to depend on God for this?

Jesus modeled fasting as a way for us to overcome the temptations of the flesh, and to increase our ability to not give into the lie of false security. How does the idea of fasting make you feel?

What would fasting potentially look like for you?

Pray this prayer: "Father, may I learn to look to you for my daily bread. May I depend on you for my needs. Holy Spirit, help me learn to lean on you instead of trying to lean on myself. Jesus, thank you for modeling holy dependence, and for making a way for us to overcome temptation. Amen."