



Life Guide

applying God's Word to life

The Son of God Goes into Battle Feb. 29-March 2, 2020

Matthew 4:1-11

¹Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. ²After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. ³The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread."

⁴Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

⁵Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. ⁶"If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written:

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

⁷Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

⁸Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. ⁹"All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me."

¹⁰Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'"

¹¹Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

1. What's the worst fight you've ever been in?
2. Why do you think God allowed/wanted Jesus to be tempted by the Devil? (cf. Heb. 3:14-18; 4:15; Gal. 4:4)

If Jesus was going to be man's perfect substitute, he would need to be subjected to all the temptations that mankind faces—and overcome every one of them. Because he was tested, but never gave into temptation, the righteousness he gives us, through faith,

justifies us before God. In addition, because Jesus was tempted, we know he can empathize with us when we are struggling with those same temptations in our lives.

3. What two tactics does Satan employ in the first temptation? (What two things is he trying to get Jesus to do?)

First, he tries to get Jesus to doubt his identity as the beloved Son of God. Then he tries to get Jesus to misuse his power as the Son of God by serving himself rather than patiently enduring God's will for his life (in this case, going without food).

4. In what way does Satan use those same tactics in your life? Satan tempts us to question God's love for us, when we are forced to endure hardships in life (sickness, death, depression, job loss, etc. Can you give a personal example of this?) Satan also tempts us to misuse our status as forgiven children of God by using God's promise of forgiveness as a license to sin. Were tempted to take the easy way out rather than endure the pain that sometimes comes with obeying God's commands.

5. Can you put v. 4 in your own words?

Obeying God is more important than meeting our physical needs. We survive, not because of the food we eat, but because God graciously preserves our life (e.g. Jesus trusted that if the Father truly wanted him to survive 40 days without food, he would make it happen. On the other hand, if God didn't will it, all the bread in the world wouldn't have kept Jesus alive.)

6. Regarding Satan's 2nd temptation, it's been said, "Sometimes the Devil comes with a Bible in his hand." Explain.

Satan likes to take Scripture out of context to serve his purpose. (For example, how might Satan misuse Matthew 6:25 or 7:1?)

7. How does Jesus counter Satan's 2nd temptation?

Jesus quotes a Bible verse that more properly addresses the action that Satan was proposing to Jesus. Jesus is teaching us to let Scripture interpret Scripture. Don't take a passage out of context. Apply each passage in light of everything the Bible says.

8. In light of Satan's 3rd temptation, give an example of something that Satan promises to give you if you serve him instead of God.

Sexual fulfillment (lust never makes good on its promises), the satisfaction of winning an argument, holding a grudge, putting someone in their place, feeling better than everyone else, not letting others know the truth about you (by lying, etc.).

9. "Owning a Bible is like owning a handgun." Explain.

If you don't know how to use it properly, it can do more harm than good. The more time you spend handling it, the more effective you become using it.

10. Agree/disagree: In Matthew's account, Jesus shows us how to resist/overcome Satan's temptations.

Yes, Jesus shows us that the Word is "the sword of the Spirit" which can be used to fight against Satan's temptations. Looking to the Bible helps us expose the lies that Satan tells us. However, even when we know the Scriptures, we still fail to overcome temptation. We are unable to perfectly follow the example that Jesus sets here.

11. So, is there any "gospel" in these verses?

This inspired account of Jesus' repeated victory over Satan's temptations becomes good news to us when we view it in light of the other passages of Scripture which speak of God giving us credit for Jesus' perfect life/righteousness (cf. Jer. 23:6; 2 Cor. 5:21; Romans 3:21-22). Because of Jesus, even if we lose some battles, in the end we win the war!