

# EVEN THE DEMONS

JAMES 2:19

## Week of January 9 – Temptations Abound: The World, the Flesh, and the Devil<sup>1</sup>

### Overview:

This spiritual world in which we live is more real than we know. But into this spiritual darkness, Jesus' light has crashed in to replace lies with truth and destruction with power. Jesus also gives believers that same authority over darkness. **"Even the Demons"** believe this and shudder, knowing they are already defeated! Last week we began our study by looking at Jesus' own interactions with demons in the Gospel of Mark.

This week we'll discuss differences between the "world," the "flesh," and the "Devil." **Jesus has all power and authority over temptation and empowers believers with that same authority to bring God's kingdom here on earth.**

### Group Objectives:

- Reflect on this past Sunday's message and other devotional reading.
- Pray together and provide encouragement for other group members.
- Recognize that our fight against the world, flesh and the devil rely on us knowing the truth of God and walking in obedience to that truth. Jesus knew the truth of God through the word, and he spoke that truth during his testing and defeated the devil.

### DNA statement(s) tie-in:

- *We are all for Jesus.* We know God best through Jesus, our Savior, Sanctifier, Healer, and Coming King. Jesus has power and authority over all things.
- *We are empowered by the Holy Spirit.* God the Father speaks to us through the Bible, and we commune with him through prayer.

### Conversation Starters:

- When you forget your lunch and come home famished, what is the first thing you grab to eat?
- How have you seen God at work this week in the lives of others around you and in your own life?

### Read and Reflect: Inductive Bible Study Discussion

#### **This week's text is Matthew 4:1-11**

*The devil has had one desire throughout history, to usurp God's throne and to frustrate God's plans. As Jesus begins his ministry the enemy wants nothing more than to usurp Jesus' own authority, but instead Jesus (fully human and fully God) resists the enemy's temptations with the word and truth of the Lord, ushering in a new kingdom that is not just for heaven, but is for us here and now. We learn through Jesus' example that we can walk in step with the Holy Spirit, defeat the enemy along with his temptations with the truth of God and live in God's kingdom now and in the future.*

**Read Matthew 4:1-11** aloud as a group and then give each person 4-5 minutes to read it to themselves. After everyone has had time to read through the text discuss these questions:

- Compare and contrast Jesus and the devil in this passage? What are their goals, and what are they fighting for? How do they each use the scripture?
- What Old Testament connections do you see? (*Wilderness wanderings, Numbers 13-20; Adam in the garden of Eden, Genesis 3; Elijah ministered to by angels and traveling 40 days/nights, 1 Kings 19.*)
- List the three temptations you see. What significance do they seem to have?
- What happened just before Jesus's temptation, and what happened right after? Do you see any significance to this placement in the storyline? Why or why not?

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<sup>1</sup> This week's lesson was written by Allison Dykhouse and edited by Dawn Gentry.

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## **Read James 4:4-8, 1 Peter 1:16 & 1 John 2:15-17**

- Keeping Matthew 4 in mind, how do these passages show us we can follow Jesus' example in resisting the devil and live free in God's kingdom?
- What character traits did Jesus show that we can emulate to resist the enemy in similar fashion?
- What next steps do you need to take to follow this example? (*Be sure to bring up the 40 days and nights fasting and connecting with his Father*).

## **Summarize and Respond**

- Jesus was tempted in every way a human has been and is tempted, yet he did not sin. He battled with the devil using the truth of God written in the scripture. He did not raise fists or use miraculous powers; he used the words found in the bible. In what areas of your life are you trying to battle the enemy with fist and might? How might God be inviting you to lean into his word and fight with the power found in God's word instead?
- Jesus was attended to by angels after his temptation. We do not know what they looked like, but we get the idea that they were present and cared for him. Have you ever experienced the Holy Spirit attending to you?
  - *Example: perhaps a time when you were in your car driving down the road looking for a distraction from the heavy conversation or argument that you had just had? You turn on the radio, podcast, audio book, even try calling a friend but nothing is calming your spirit or hitting the spot you are trying to cover or avoid? So, you drive in the silence and feel the Lord invite you to ask him his thoughts on the situation? Or feel a desire to ask the Lord to explain the pain? Then, in that silence, you hear or feel a peace, a calmness, a bold resolve, or a new perspective. This could be the Holy Spirit attending to you.*
  - Have you ever experienced something like this? If you are willing, share with the group.

## **Prayer Prompts:**

- Instead of just sharing prayer requests with others, let's practice what Jesus did before his temptation, Leaders, create some time to sit in silence with the Lord and let him speak and care for the group. Find some soft music or relaxing white noise to have in the background to help with the random distractions. Then invite the group to ask the Holy Spirit to speak and attend to the places that need care. To speak into the areas where they need the Lord's touch, the Lord's word to speak deeply to their hearts so they can resist the enemy and all his schemes when against the world, flesh or devil. Plan for 5-10 minutes of time based on your group.
- After the time with the Holy Spirit, invite your group to share in the larger group or in small groups of 2-3 how the Holy Spirit met them in that time.
- Close thanking the Lord for your study and caring for each of you.

## **To Learn More:**

- Compare synoptic Gospels parallel stories, Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-13.
- Payne, Karl I. *Spiritual Warfare: Christians, Demonization, and deliverance*. Republic Book Publishers, 2020.