

STUDY NOTES

THROUGH THE DESERT

A Series At New City Church

www.newcityphx.com/sermons

The following content is based on the message "Trials, Tests, Temptations, and The Way of Escape" on 8/25/19 at New City Church in Phoenix, AZ. The following is not meant to be a full synopsis but rather a brief look at the main ideas. To use this study guide effectively, you must listen to the message found at <http://www.newcityphx.com/sermons/>.

Leaders using these study notes for group study and reflection should read the biblical text thoroughly before beginning, using this resource as assistance — and not relying solely on this material for insight. We encourage all leaders to pray and ask the Spirit for revelation as they lead their respective community groups.

PRAYER

Pray and ask God to lead the discussion as everyone gets to share.

SCRIPTURE: MATTHEW 4:1-11

LED INTO THE DESERT

It could feel uncomfortable to think about how the Holy Spirit led Jesus into the desert to be tempted. James 1:13 says, "God tempts no one." God didn't tempt Jesus, but God led him to the place to be tempted. Why would God do that? God might want to remove all aspects of our will from us, to show us how we must rely upon the Spirit. God doesn't tempt you, but he will test you. He wants you to grow into maturity by turning to him rather than something else.

- *Why would God want maturity for you?*
- *How does testing lead to maturity?*

When Jesus walked on this earth, Matthew says that the Holy Spirit led him into the desert to be tempted by the devil. In this desert, he had been fasting for forty days, which meant that Jesus was isolated and hungry. He was in a vulnerable position to be tempted.

- *What does this verse mean to you personally? Hebrews 4:15 says that Jesus "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but is one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin."*

TYPES OF TEMPTATION

Jesus faced the same types of temptation that we face today. The first one that the devil placed in front of him was in relation to Jesus' appetite. He was hungry and the devil tried to tempt him with food. There was nothing inherently wrong with eating food, but Jesus came to do the Father's will, not his own will. Today, we could think of many different ways that our appetites present themselves. Our appetite can relate to food, sex, possessions and more.

- *Give some examples of how constantly giving in to different appetites shows immaturity.*
- *What are some ways to resist temptation?*

The devil presented Jesus with another temptation. This one was in relation to Jesus' safety and health. Surely, God would have rescued Jesus if he jumped from the top of temple; however, it would have made God step outside of his plan for Jesus. God isn't someone to be forced into magic tricks. Treating God like a divine force who will rescue a person from his own mistakes makes a mockery of free will and our own choices.

God loves you enough to let you face the consequences of your own sin.

- *How is it loving for God to allow you to face consequences of sin?*

The devil's final temptation that Jesus faced in the wilderness came in relation to power. Satan could have given Jesus immediate power, but God had a bigger plan in place. God's bigger plan was just going to require patience and faithfulness from Jesus. When completed, Jesus became the name above every other name. He received something from God that was so much better than what Satan could offer. We fall when we are unwilling to sacrifice what is expedient for what is eternal.

**Flesh says "ME" and "NOW"
Spirit says "GOD" and "WAIT"**

- *How is the immediate so much more alluring than the eternal?*
- *Describe a time when you received the benefits of waiting on God?*
- *Pray with each other to resist temptation.*