



LESSON 3 FOR LEADERS

INVITATION

We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: Jesus Was Tempted and Never Sinned

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 4; Hebrews 4

WORD OF WONDER: From Colossians 1:15

"No, no, no, no, no," I heard my toddler, Jack, muttering. Alerted, I ran and caught him just as he was about to stick his father's keys in an outlet. Too young to understand the danger, Jack was at least old enough to associate the little holes in the wall with the forbidden—his whispered "no" saved him from calamity even if it didn't stop the urge to disobey.

Like Jack, all of us have sometimes chosen to ignore God's "no" and choose our own "yes." We take shortcuts to pleasure or fulfillment, heedless of the danger.

Not Jesus. Take a moment to read Matthew 4:1–11. Notice how Satan tempts Jesus in the wilderness. He invites Jesus to take things—sustenance, protection, and power—that were already His by right. Satan's "shortcuts" offer false promises. But Jesus knew who He is, and He saw through the lies.

In some ways, we're all in the wilderness—the in-between time as we wait for Christ to return. Where are you tempted? What does Satan offer you as an "escape hatch" from your present circumstances? Where do you turn for comfort and satisfaction other than God? Jesus gets it. He's been there. And He wants to remind you of who you are. When you are certain of your identity as a daughter or son of the Father, His voice becomes clear. And Jesus is waiting to show you how to listen to God's "no" so you can experience the very best "yes."

—Lise Caldwell

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JESUS' TEMPTATION

DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

The devil is a personality of evil bent on undermining God's creative purposes and redemptive plan. Satan deceives, tempts, and accuses. Scripture calls him the father of lies (John 8:44) and depicts him as a prowling lion looking for someone to devour (1 Peter 5:8).

WHAT?

The Holy Spirit leads Jesus into the wilderness, or desert. There, the devil tempts Jesus to abuse His status as God's Son and abandon His vocation as the Messiah. Jesus resists temptation by quoting Scripture and does not sin.

WHERE?

After being baptized at the Jordan River, just north of the Dead Sea, Jesus is led into the desert by the Holy Spirit. This likely means the Judean Desert located between Jerusalem and the Jordan River.

WHEN?

This story is wedged between Jesus' baptism, where He was affirmed as the Son of God by the Father and the presence of the Spirit, and the beginning of Jesus' public ministry in Galilee. Jesus was around 30 years old at the time (Luke 3:23).

CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY

During the exodus, the Israelites followed God through the sea into the wilderness. Jesus followed God through the waters of baptism into the desert. Unlike the Israelites, Jesus trusted God in the desert. Jesus, the Son of God, was proven able to fulfill God's calling.