

## Small Group Guide

### TRIUMPH THROUGH TEMPTATION

The Church at Brook Hills,

Dr. David Platt

January 8, 2012

Matthew 4:1-11

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This guide is a tool to help you lead your group into spiritual transformation. Use it as a resource to train your group into potential disciple-makers and lead your group in discovering, owning, and applying the truths of God's Word. There may be aspects you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on an aspect of their relationship with God. Your role is to help facilitate this encounter with God in His Word with His Body, not just to complete the guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid group task list.

### Relate . . .

Begin your group time by engaging in relational conversations and prayer that may include the following elements:

*Welcome*—a simple, brief time to greet one another (especially new friends), enjoy refreshments, and make announcements.

*Review*—a time to review the truths discussed last week and report on how members have had success or frustrations in applying those truths during the week. (The leader will want to provide encouragement and shepherding during this time.) Periodically, the leader will also want to review the gospel and allow members to share reports about opportunities they've had to share the gospel. Occasionally, the leader will want to review the vision for the group and discuss ways to accomplish that vision better.

*Prayer*—a time of general prayer with the whole group praying for struggles regarding the application of truths, for those with whom the group is sharing the gospel, and for understanding of today's truths.

### Reflect . . .

Use the following summary and questions to review this week's message and reflect on its implications for our lives. (As a training tool, leaders might want to have various members summarize the teachings in their own words each week sharing how they think the Scripture applied to the original hearers and how the principles apply to us today.)

#### Message Outline

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#### Six Realities...

- There is a spiritual world. (Eph. 6)
- We are involved in a spiritual war.
  - Conflicting kingdoms (Christ and Satan).
  - Continual struggle (Christians and demons).
- Our enemy in this spiritual war is formidable.
- The stakes in this spiritual war are eternal.
- The scope of this spiritual war is universal.
- Our involvement in this spiritual war is personal.

#### Two Pictures...

- Jesus is the new man, stepping into the universal human story. (Gen. 3)
- Jesus is the true son, suffering through the particular Israelite story. (Ex. 4:22; 1 Cor 10:2.; Deut.)

#### Two Questions...

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- Does God tempt us? (James 1:13)
  - We are tempted by Satan (who is subordinate) for evil.
  - We are tested by God (who is sovereign) for good. (2 Cor. 12; Gen. 50)
- Could Jesus have sinned?
  - Jesus is fully man.
  - Jesus was fully tempted. (Heb. 4; 1 Cor. 10:13)
  - Jesus is fully God.
  - God cannot be tempted. (James 1:13)

#### Three Temptations...

- The first temptation: self-gratification.
  - We are tempted to fulfill our wants apart from God's will.
  - Jesus trusted the all-satisfying, all-sufficient goodness of the Father. (Deut. 8:2-3)
- The second temptation: self-protection. (Ex. 17; Deut 6:16)
  - We are tempted to question God's presence and manipulate God's promises.
  - Jesus rested in the shelter of the Father's unshakeable security.
- The third temptation: self-exaltation.
  - We are tempted to assert ourselves in the world while we rob God of His worship.
  - Jesus refused to exchange the end-time exaltation by the Father for a right-now exaltation of a snake. (Mt. 28:18)

#### Three Conclusions...

- Christ will be crowned as King. (Rev. 12:7-12)
  - Two thousand years ago...He conquered sin as our Savior.
  - Today...He fights with and for us through His Spirit.
  - One day...He will reign over all as our Sovereign.
- Satan will be cast down in defeat.
  - The accuser will stand accused.
  - The serpent will be sentenced.
  - The devil will be destroyed.
- The church will rise up in victory.
  - As children of God in Christ, let's trust the all-satisfying, all-sufficient goodness of our Father!
  - As children of God in Christ, let's rest in the shelter of our Father's unshakeable security!
  - As children of God in Christ, let's refuse to exchange our end-time exaltation by the Father for a right-now exaltation of a snake!

#### Message Summary

Without question, Scripture is clear that there is a spiritual world around us and that all people are involved in the middle of a spiritual battle, warring for souls and the glory of God. This war is more than just individual battles with temptation, but it is very personal and there is a specific war against each Christian. Jesus' temptation in the wilderness demonstrated the reality of our spiritual battlefield and reveals much truth about temptation and fighting it. Our adversaries tempt us for evil, but God sovereignly uses this temptation as a means of testing faith and obedience.

The devil's temptations to Jesus mirror the root cause of all temptations: pride and disbelief in God. Jesus was tempted with self-gratification, self-protection, and self-exaltation. All of these temptations questioned God's goodness and His ability and willingness to care as the Father. Jesus refused to succumb to the tricks of Satan, and he trusted in the goodness and faithfulness of God as revealed in His Word. He had full confidence in His relationship with His Father, and He would not bend in questioning it. This spiritual war is one that believers cannot fight on their own. It is the power of the Holy Spirit that enables us to battle against

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Satan with authority and power. We can rest assured that there will be a time when Satan will be permanently destroyed, the war will be over, and Christ will be crowned as King forever.

#### *Group Discussion*

Use the following questions to help review the application of God's Word to our Head (What does God want me to know?), to our Heart (What does God want me to desire/value?), and to our Hands (What does God want me to do?).

- How does Jesus' temptation in the wilderness clearly reveal the nature and reality of spiritual warfare?
- Why is recognizing the reality of spiritual warfare so important to our spiritual walk?
- What is the danger in both ignoring and romanticizing about the existence of a spiritual world that we cannot see with our eyes?
- How can we become more aware and alert of the spiritual attacks on our families and us?
- How are temptation and being tested related to one another?
- What determines how we respond to temptation and testing?
- God never tempts a person to evil, but He can use that temptation to build faith (See James 1:13). How can we respond to temptation in a way that increases our faith in God and gives Him glory?
- What do the temptations of self-gratification, self-protection, and self-exaltation look like to us in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century in our season of life?
- How do our attempts to fulfill our desires apart from God's will lead us to distrust God and His goodness and providence?
- Knowing that God will never tempt us to evil, why do we often blame Him for sinful desires, which are outside of His will? What does that indicate about our willingness to justify our sinful actions by usurping God's position in our lives?
- During what kinds of events or circumstances in life do we most often question God's presence, care, love, or competence in our lives?
- There will certainly be times in our lives when we are facing struggle and are tempted to wonder if God cares about us. How can we combat those thoughts?
- How can we remind ourselves of God's faithfulness in the past during current or future times of temptation and testing? How can we begin to keep accounts of God's faithfulness in our lives?
- How is pride the root of our tendency to question God and His character?
- What attitude change and/or thought change is necessary for us to defeat the temptation to have sinful pride in ourselves?
- How does knowing the outcome of this war encourage us to resist Satan through the power of the Holy Spirit?

#### ***Respond . . .***

*Encourage your group to break out into smaller, same-gender groups where they will respond to the truths of today's study. These groups will share with one another based on the following questions and then close in prayer:*

- What are some of the main truths that God wants you to know from this study?
- How do your thoughts need to adjust to align with these truths?
- According to the truths from this study, what does God want you to desire/value?
- How do your values need to change to align with His values?
- What actions does God want you to take according to the truths of this study?
- What is an action that you can start to implement today or tomorrow?
- What is going to be the most difficult aspect of this study to personally apply?

Close this time by praying for each other, specifically for strength to apply these truths, for personal needs, for the lost people with whom you are seeking to share the gospel, and for our weekly prayer focus as a church..

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***Weekly Prayer Focus ... (from our worship guide)***

- *Pray for our Lives: As we see Jesus tempted this week and watch him respond with dependence upon the Word of God, we see a perfect model of what it looks like to respond to the Enemy. Pray this week that our church would be completely dependent on the Word of God for every trial and temptation. Pray for our elders, that they would be guided by the Word in every area of leadership over us. Pray that we as a people would respond to individual temptations in the same way Christ did. Pray that we would store up God's Word within us that we might not give in to temptation and sin against him.*
- *Pray for our City: This week we are praying for the students in our Next Generation Ministry to be faithful and fruitful in making their lives a platform for the gospel as they return to their classes after their holiday break. We are also praying for Meadow Brook Baptist Church, Ron Summers, Pastor.*
- *Pray for our World: This week we are praying for Long-Term Missionaries, Bob and Ann Coe, serving in Conocoto, Ecuador.*