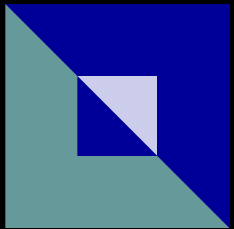


The Road to the Desert...

**Resist Satan, Your
Worst Enemy**

Lesson Nine



The Road to Success in Christian Living

The Road To the Desert...Resist Satan, Your Worst Enemy Page 2 of 5

COMMITMENT

I believe:

- that God the eternal Father, creator of all things, loved me so much that Jesus came to earth to be my Savior.
- that Jesus was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, died to pay for my sins, was buried, rose from the dead on the third day, appeared to many people, ascended to Heaven where He sits at the right hand of God, and will one day return to earth taking all believers of all the ages to be with Him in Heaven forever.
- that when I made declaration of this, my belief, to God, I became His adopted child and His Holy Spirit came to be with my spirit forever.
- that my relationship with God is in His hands, and He will never let me go.

The Road to the Desert...Resist Satan, Your Worst Enemy

Lesson Goal: To encourage believers to recognize Satan's power and to resist Satan.

Scriptures: Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13; John 1:1-34; James 4:7; I Peter 5:8-11; Hebrews 4:15; I John 4:1-6;

Memory Verse: "Jesus said to him, "Away from me Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'" Matthew 4:10

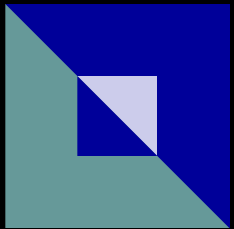
Jesus had just been baptized. He was about to begin His ministry among the people. John the Baptist has just said that Jesus was "the lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" He also said, "I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God." The Holy Spirit of God had just appeared on Jesus' shoulder in the form of a dove, and the Father's voice had come from Heaven saying, "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well-pleased." And, we have evidence that Jesus had known His mission in life for a long time before He was baptized by John.

So with all this, one would assume that Jesus was immune to temptation. However, the writer to the Hebrews said, (4:15) "...we have one (a High Priest, Jesus) who has been tempted in every way, just as we are (tempted)..." Jesus was tempted just exactly like you are tempted. When Satan accosted Him in the desert, Satan believed that he could convince Jesus to sin. Jesus took the road to the desert with the obvious intention to pray, seek God's will, and prepare Himself as He was beginning His earthly ministry.* It was a most important time for Jesus.

Satan came to Jesus with real temptation. Jesus was hungry so Satan offered Him something to eat, faster than a microwave oven could heat it. Jesus was about to begin a ministry about which He wanted people to know. Satan offered Him instant attention. All Jesus had to do was jump off the high place and let the people see Him caught in mid-air by angels. Jesus wanted to teach the world who God was. Satan offered Him instant access to all the nations of the world. All Jesus had to do was to acknowledge the power of Satan.

Jesus said, No, No, No! None of the instant solutions was acceptable. His road to the desert experience was like many roads in our life. At every turn, and right in the middle of the strait-a-way, Satan lurks ready to tempt us with the kind of things that seem to hurry us on our way to something good. At the end of each temptation that Satan offered Jesus was a good result. He could satisfy His hunger. He could get immediate attention for His message. He could have world-wide power for His message. What a great opportunity...but, what a great cost!

It is very tempting to get immediate attention to our needs. It is very tempting to get good things done quickly. It is very tempting to have all that we want without working too hard for it.



The Road to Success in Christian Living

The Road To the Desert...Resist Satan, Your Worst Enemy Page 3 of 5

The answer to getting what we want quickly is easy, Satan says. All we have to do is steal it. Oh, maybe it is not taking someone's car...but it could be taking someone's words and calling them ours...cheating on a test? Or, maybe it is taking office supplies from the place where we work without permission. Or, maybe it is running a red light, or speeding, when the police officer isn't looking. Or, maybe it is telling a little white lie about where you have been, so that you don't get into trouble with your parents. Or maybe it is taking drugs that are harmful to your body and allowing the drug to get control of you...addiction? Or maybe it is taking harmful things into your mind from the internet? Or, maybe it is "going off," having a temper tantrum, at someone who has said or done something that you don't like. Satan is the author of all those sins!

If Satan was brave enough and strong enough to face Jesus and tempt Him, Satan is certainly strong enough and brave enough to involve himself in your life and to try to get you off-track as you travel the road to success in Christian living. Satan's power is of this world. He has been called "the prince of this world." That means that he has abilities that give him what we might call "superpowers." He is not as powerful as God, but He is certainly more powerful than humans. He was kicked out of Heaven for trying to take God's place. He is intent on displacing God in everything. He wants you to worship him rather than worship God.

Satan is not good in any way! And, he is always on the job! He doesn't sleep or take vacations. Don't think that you can catch him away from his post. Remember, God is always with us to help! Satan is always with us to harm. He is truly your worst enemy.

Satan will use anything he can to tempt you. He can, and will, use the needs of your body, like hunger, thirst, and even sexual needs. He used the hunger that Jesus experienced after many days in the desert without food. He will use friends, even family members to tempt you. He will certainly use the potential of popularity, or fame. He has, and will, use good things like our beliefs and what is expected of Christians to tempt us.

An example of this would be the Crusades of the Middle Ages, when Christians felt that it was proper to kill people in Jesus' name. These days, it is much more likely to be the destruction of someone's reputation by accusing them of doing something wrong. Intolerance, like racial prejudice, is also one of the favorite tools of Satan to cause pain.

The Bible tells us to resist Satan. (I Peter 5:9) That means that we must be alert all day, every day, to what Satan may be leading us to do, or not to do.

*Underlined sentences in the Teacher's Guide appear in the Student Worksheet with blanks to be filled in by the student during the lesson. Words in the Student Worksheet may not appear exactly as printed in the Teacher's Guide.

The Road to Success in Christian Living

COMMITMENT

I believe:

- that God the eternal Father, creator of all things, loved me so much that Jesus came to earth to be my Savior.
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- that my relationship with God is in His hands, and He will never let me go.

The Road to the Desert...Resist Satan, Your Worst Enemy

Memory Verse:

"Jesus said to him, "Away from me Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'" Matthew 4:10

Satan, Your Worst Enemy:

>Jesus took the road to the desert with intention to _____, seek God's will, and _____ Himself as He was beginning His _____ ministry.

>Jesus said, No! _____ of the instant _____ Satan offered were acceptable.

>It is very tempting to have all that _____ without working too hard for it.

>Satan is the author of sins like taking someone's _____ and calling them ours... _____ on a test; taking office supplies from the place where we work without _____; running a red light, or _____, when the police officer isn't looking; taking drugs that are _____ to your body and allowing the drug to get _____ of you...addiction.

>Satan has been called "the _____ of this world." That means that he has what we might call "_____."

>Satan is not as _____ as God, but He is certainly more powerful than _____.

>The Bible tells us to _____ Satan. (I Peter 5:9) That means that we must be alert _____, every _____, to what Satan may be leading us to do, or _____ to do.

Resist Satan, Your Worst Enemy

O. K., so the Bible says that we should resist Satan. How do you go about resisting Satan? He is more powerful than humans. He has been around since before the world began. He was right there when Adam and Eve were in the Garden of Eden. He tempted them, even though God had spoken directly to them. God even visited them in person. If Eve and Adam were victims of Satan's power, how can we resist it? The short answer is to never yield to his temptation...just like Jesus refused to let Satan take control.

There is a Scripture that is quoted often. It says, "...the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world." (I John 4:4) John has just been telling his readers that they should test the "spirits." He says that humans are able to discern which spirits are from Satan and which ones are from God. He also says that there is a spirit of truth and a spirit of falsehood.

First, what does he mean when he says that we can test the spirits? What he does not mean is that we should apply some otherworldly test that we can't control and can't fully understand. John is talking about humans dealing with a human situation. Though it is true that Satan inhabits the spirit world and attacks us at the point of our spiritual life, we must remember that he is attacking humans...you and me. He attacks us where we think, where we have physical needs, where we deal with emotions, where we confront other humans...and yes, where we relate to God. John's good advice is to test the spirits at the point of our relationship with God. Christians have a human-to-Creator relationship. This means that we depend on the revelation of God to guide us. That is the Bible! God's Word is also an important way He speaks to and leads us. If you want to know if a spiritual, or physical, urge is from Satan, just let God guide you through His Word, or through remembering how He has led you previously. John contends that the spirit that "acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh" is a spirit from God.

Second, what does he mean when he says that there is a spirit of falsehood? All of us know the difference between truth and a lie. What we may not understand is that sometimes Satan can make a lie sound like truth. Satan can talk God's language. He uses that language to sell his falsehoods. John gives us good advice. He says to listen to what is being said. If it does not place Jesus first, if it sounds more like Earth than Heaven, if it gives you the perspective of Earth more than that of Heaven, it is most likely falsehood. Just because someone sounds like they know God, and speak His language, doesn't mean that they are speaking for God. When Satan tempted Jesus, Jesus answered the temptation. It sounded like a good deal, but Jesus knew better and He answered with truth from the Scripture. If it was good enough for Jesus, it is certainly good enough for us.

When John, inspired by God's Holy Spirit, tells us that not all spiritual information is from God Himself, He is warning us to always be ready to discern the true source. The Psalmist (25:4, 5) prayed, "Show me your ways, O Lord, teach me your paths; guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long." This prayer should always precede our acceptance of spiritual truth. It should always precede our willing participation in things of a questionable nature.

John, the apostle, who was almost 100 years old at the time, wrote his "dear friend Gaius." He said, "It gave me great joy to have some brothers come and tell about your faithfulness to the truth and how you continue to walk in the truth. I have no greater joy..." (III John 3, 4) With God's leadership, in spite of the presence of your worst enemy, (Satan,) that can be your testimony.