

## Day 1

May 14



*Pray / Thank God that you can be secure in your identity as his child.*

### REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE!

A certain mother goes out of her way to remind her children every night who they are and that they are loved. It goes something like this... I love you, your father loves you, your sister/brother loves you, your pets love you. But do you know who loves you the most? God loves you the most! Being reminded of who we are is a fundamental truth, that when overlooked, can make resisting temptation, feeling confident in our own self-worth, or even simply making it through our day turn into a tremendous feat. In Matthew 16:15, Jesus asks his disciples who they and others say he is. How each of us answers that question has temporal and eternal consequences. Knowing that the God who made the universe loves you so much that he is willing to adopt you as his own when you confess that his only son, Jesus, died and rose to reconcile you with God, is a powerful defense against temptation.



*Read / Romans 8: 14-17; John 1: 12-13; John 3:16*



*Reflect / Spend some time reflecting on the following questions.*

When is the last time you spent time thinking about what being God's child means for you and who you are? Right this moment is as good a time as any to spend some time reflecting on the implications for you personally.

Following Christ means being led by the Spirit to act, and potentially suffer, like Jesus did. It also means studying God's word so we can know God the Father's person and will. In what ways do these facets of faith help and encourage you?

God so loved... that he sent Jesus to do what we could not: keep God's laws. Consider the implications for the third person of the Trinity, Jesus the Son. Keep in your mind that everything hinged upon Jesus' follow-through for the divine rescue plan to work. Talk about pressure! Reflect on and thank God for allowing his one and only Son to bear this burden for you and for me.

## Day 2

May 15



*Pray | Whether triumphant or risking defeat, pray for strength.*

### FROM REASSURANCE TO VULNERABILITY.

Except for Hollywood's cheap imitations, have you ever experienced the Heavens opening up and God's voice offering you verbal reassurance? Like the proud parent of the winning point scorer in a big game saying, "Hey, that's my son/daughter!" Jesus' baptism was the ultimate expression of a child being reassured that their parent loves them and is proud of them. Such praise from God would leave a big impression on anyone experiencing it personally. Inexplicably existing as both man and God, Jesus relates to our human weaknesses and was tempted just like we are. Adam and Eve fell to temptation. God's chosen people's faith faltered in the wilderness. We still fall into temptations today. Soon we will see Jesus hungry and alone in the wilderness. Perhaps his past track record of success propelled the devil's move to tempt Jesus? God never fails, not even when alone and hungry.

Take solace in Jesus' triumph and the eternal benefit of salvation!



*Read | Hebrews 4:14-16; Matthew 3:13-4:2*



*Reflect | Spend some time reflecting on the following questions.*

Think about a time in your life when you gave in to temptation. Were there some things that were making you more vulnerable to temptation? Looking back at it now, in what ways can you use them as warning signs going forward?

Jesus was publicly affirmed by God, then spent 40 days fasting in the wilderness alone. It is a recipe for vulnerability if ever there was one. Aside from Jesus' divinity, what other tools might he possess to resist the devil, and how can you utilize the same in your life?

God is always waiting, wanting to reassure us that he forgives us, loves us, and is proud of us when we choose to accept his forgiveness and love. Think about a time when you accepted God's love and forgiveness, and thank him for it.

## Day 3

May 916



*Pray | God, please remind me that your way is the best way for me before I stray.*

INSTANT GRATIFICATION, AVAILABLE NOW!

The devil specializes in making things look better than they are. The results are often less than advertised and the consequences more than advertised. An example: You and I live where food is plentiful, maybe not exactly what sounds good all the time, but there is no lack of availability. If you have ever gone grocery shopping hungry, your cart was likely filled with tempting things that seemed good at the time. Usually, they do not satisfy as expected and your wallet has a bigger hole than intended! Imagine you have not eaten for 40 days, have the power to satisfy your hunger in an instant and it would taste as good as you imagine... would you give in to temptation? Jesus does not answer the challenge directly; rather, he corrects the devil's assumption that physical needs are more important than spiritual needs. Ask God to help you focus more on your spiritual than physical needs this week.



*Read | Matthew 4: 1-4; Deuteronomy 8:3; 1 Corinthians 10:11-13*



*Reflect | Spend some time reflecting on the following questions.*

Recently affirmed by God the father as being his Son, the same spirit that descended from God's side leads Jesus into the wilderness to face the devil's temptations. What dangers are there in assuming that God allowing us to be tempted is the same as God tempting us?

Expertly twisting words, the devil knew perfectly well who Jesus was and what he could do. When he said, "If you are the Son of God" he wanted Jesus to validate his divinity, solving immediate needs while straying from God's plan. Can you discern and heed the warnings in your life that are temptations to gratify immediate needs outside of God's plan?

For catchy reminders of scriptural truth, nobody does it like the Christian parody band, Apologetix. Read their lyrics about 1 Corinthians 10:13 using this link:

[http://www.apologetix.com/music/song.php?freebie=true%20&song\\_id=518](http://www.apologetix.com/music/song.php?freebie=true%20&song_id=518)

What things in your life are reminders that God wants you to beat temptation?

*Day 4*  
May 17



*Pray | Lord, please help me to not only to know scripture,  
but also to know you.*

DUELING SCRIPTURE REFERENCES.

Bell rings... It's fight night with Jesus and Satan facing off in the ring here in the desert. As we've seen already, the devil learned his lesson in round 1 (Matthew 4:1-4) and comes out swinging. Satan knows scripture too and he's trying to use it against Jesus here. The devil leads off with a powerful right hook -- "If you are the son of God—" then follows up with a scriptural combo going for the knockout punch. That's right, if Jesus jumps and God does not rescue him, the devil wins. If Jesus jumps and God rescues him the devil still wins because Jesus is taking instructions from the father of lies instead of the Heavenly Father. It's the same attack, but with a twist: the devil wants Jesus to doubt who he is, but also wants him to question whether God will keep his promises. Jesus' response was only one punch, but likely the earliest readers of the Bible understood the full scriptural context of why God should not be tested.



*Read | Matthew 4: 5-7; Psalm 91:11-12; Deuteronomy 6:16*



*Reflect | Spend some time reflecting on the following questions.*

Generally, it is not a good idea to test God. However, the Bible has instances where God encourages or at least tolerates it. Why is the devil suggesting Jesus test God a bad idea? How are these things applicable in your life?

Jesus' defense is based upon his understanding of God (as revealed through scripture). If Jesus used scripture to defeat the devil, our defense is the same. What dangers or differences are there between using scripture and understanding scripture contextually (immediately and within the whole Bible)?

God knows we forget who he is, and when we do, we forget who we are through him. Just as Jesus thwarted temptation by using scripture, the Bible can help us when we are weak or tempted. Have you ever experienced the truth of a special Bible verse in your life? If not, ask God to help you find one.

## Day 5

May 18



*Pray | God help me to resist the devil and his “easy” shortcuts.*

### THE MOTHER OF ALL SHORTCUTS.

Why does torture work? Likely you have an aversion to pain and suffering, especially if you are the one experiencing the pain or doing the suffering. Torture is effective because we believe there is a quick and easy way to make the pain stop by giving the torturer what they want. Jesus always existed (eternity past and future) yet at this moment the clock ticks closer to the fulcrum of God’s salvation plan. This plan has Jesus being tortured, suffering, and dying unimaginably horribly on behalf the very people who wanted him killed. He will bear the wrath of God alone, being separated from God the Father and Spirit in a way that has never happened. Before the plan is implemented, the devil is there offering a shortcut that avoids all the pain. Jesus can have everything without suffering under God’s cruel plan if only he would worship Satan instead, and skips the horrors of the cross!



*Read | Matthew 4: 8-11; Deuteronomy 6:13*



*Reflect | Spend some time reflecting on the following questions.*

You’ve likely never met anyone like Jesus before who would willingly take pain and suffering upon himself so that you do not have to face God’s judgement. If you’ve never chosen to receive Jesus’ gift of salvation, you can accept his eternal love and forgiveness today. If you want to pray with someone to receive the gift of salvation, reach out to your small group leader, a close Christian friend, or call the church.

The mother of all shortcuts is putting something other than God in the place where only God belongs. The devil knows this firsthand and wants you to be collateral damage of his shortcut. Whom will you follow: Jesus, who died in your place, or Satan, who wants to throw you under the bus?

The only triumph over temptation means completely trusting all the promises of God’s word. The false identities promised by Satan and the world are easy shortcuts that rob us of our identity found only in Christ. Whom are you living for right this moment -- yourself or God?

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