

Goals

"For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body." (James 2:2)

This verse tells it all: Bridling our tongues might well be the hardest lesson to master in our spiritual cultivation. Our world today is full of lies and ungracious words. We have to shine as light by manifesting good speech in our dealings with people. It is not always easy, but at least, as Christians, we should be consciously trying all the time. The lessons in this section will highlight to the students important pointers about exercising control over the tongue. At the very least, they will be made aware of the importance of bridling this tiny faculty of the body.

unit
4**Teacher Devotional**

"A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver." (Prov. 25:11)

The gift of the tongue is often hard to come by. Not everyone is good with words. Even more rare are people who can always cheer another person by his or her words. As Christians, we are often careful with our words only because we do not want to face judgment from God. But, more importantly, the reason to watch our tongues is so we can edify people and bring blessings to our hearers. Hence, we should aspire to not utter words that will hurt others. We should strive to learn to say nice things so that people who interact with us can receive comfort and joy.

Let Our Speech Be a Source of Edification

"Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers." (Eph 4:29)

Lesson 10

Handling Temptations

Listed Scriptures

Mt 4:1-11

Lesson Aim

- 1) That the students will pinpoint three of their temptations and plan how to handle them with the word of God

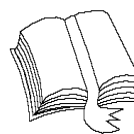
Memory Verse

"But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death." (Jas 1:14, 15)

Bible Reading For This Week (for students and teachers)

Mt 4-10

B I B L E B A C K G R O U N D



Temptations can be seen as tests. This testing is of good intent, meant for us to improve our character as Christians. However, the testing can be evil too, with the intent to harm the person. It is only in the last 300 years that the English word temptation has been used with the more restricted meaning of inducing a person to evil.

Jesus Christ was "led by the Spirit" (Lk 4:1) into temptation, but He was tempted by Satan. Both divine and Satanic powers were at work—with motives for the test. Satan is permitted to tempt Christians (Job 1:6-12), but only within certain limits. Satan may use pain, lies, success, lust, desires to tempt Christians.

Jesus Christ taught us to pray to God to "lead us not into temptation" (Mt 6:13), but "deliver us from the evil one" (2 Tim 2:22). 1 John 2:15 it tells us that sin originates when our sinful, inner desire latches on to things in our outer world.

Temptations can also be seen as arising out of our own desires (Jas 1: 13-15). "Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death."

When Jesus Christ was tempted, He quoted from the Book of Deuteronomy. This shows us that the word of God is an excellent sword and shield against temptation. It is vital to be able to cite verses and biblical principles when emergencies arise.

W A R M U P



1. Do you know that temptations are a normal part of life?
2. Why do you think our lives are so filled with temptations? (Students will probably suggest that Satan tries to keep us from growing as Christians. Some will say that God allows testing to cause growth in our character.)
3. No one likes temptations. What possible value might temptation have in our lives? (When we overcome temptations, we become stronger Christians. Sometimes our failures make us realize that we must depend more on God.)

We face temptation every day and dealing with them can be tough. Today's passage talks about three tough temptations that Jesus Christ faced—and how He overcame them.

B I B L E S T U D Y



The Temptation of Jesus Christ

Have your students read Matthew 4:1-11 one verse at a time. Go around the class so every student has the opportunity to read. Ask the students to do the following things as they are reading. They will need a few minutes to mark the passage as indicated.

1. Put squiggly lines under the three temptations Satan used on Jesus Christ.
2. Put a triangle by the place where each temptation happened.
3. Circle the responses Jesus Christ made to Satan's temptations.
4. Underline anything that tells us that Jesus Christ knew the Bible well.

Have your students read the following material on the experience of hunger during Jesus Christ's temptation. Ask them to think about what it might be like to go 40 days without food.

According to accounts of those who know, intense craving for food dominates the ravenous person's mind. He thinks constantly of food. After two weeks, the starving person struggles to hold down water without retching. (Note: Did Jesus Christ have water during His fast? We don't know.) Slowly, the lack of nourishment takes its toll. The person's body turns colder. His skin becomes parched and dry. His weight drops dramatically. But the worst experience of all occurs right around 40 days—the length of time the Lord Jesus fasted. —Time Magazine, August 17, 1981

From this material, we can see that Jesus Christ was extremely weakened. He knows what it's like to be tempted when it hurts most.

Questions to discuss:

1. **Why do you think Satan waited until Jesus Christ had fasted 40 days to attack? What can you learn from this?**
(Satan waited until Jesus Christ was hungry and more open to temptation.)
2. **Satan didn't really want bread from stones. What did he want in his first temptation of the Lord Jesus?**
(Satan wanted Him to obey him rather than God.)
3. **It is easy to see why Satan's first temptation might have been tempting. What kinds of physical temptations do you face today?**
4. **Satan didn't want to see a miraculous rescue in the second temptation. What did he really want?**
(He wanted Jesus Christ to put God to the test—to violate the Bible—in an effort to prove His divine Sonship.)

5. Write the second temptation in a way that it might come to you today.

("If you are such a good Christian, then why don't you prove it?") or ("You don't need to study for your midterms. If God loves you, He'll give you an A+ on the midterm.")

6. At first glance, Satan's third temptation doesn't seem to apply to us. But if Christian teens were completely honest, what things do you think they love more than God, and place before Him?

(Some may say that they put money, clothing or prestige ahead of God.)

7. Which temptation do you think was hardest for Jesus Christ? Explain.

(The first temptation dealt with physical needs. This was difficult, but probably not the hardest. In the second, Satan used God's word to try to test Jesus Christ to put God to the test. This was deceiving, but was probably not as hard as the final temptation. In the third temptation, Satan tried to get Jesus Christ to escape the cross and still rule the world. Jesus Christ knew how horrible the cross would be, but He did not sin. He simply trusted God to deliver Him out of the temptations.)

8. What would have happened if Jesus Christ had given in to Satan's temptations?

(He would have sinned, and then could not have been the perfect sacrifice for our sins.)

9. How are the three responses Jesus Christ gave alike?

(All three of the answers were quotations from the Bible.)

10. Satan stopped each temptation when Jesus Christ used the Bible. Why do you think this happened? What can we learn from this?

(Satan knew that when Jesus Christ quoted the Scriptures, He knew what was right and was going to obey God's word rather than succumb to the temptations.)

11. How was the way that Jesus Christ used Scripture different from the way Satan used it?

(Jesus Christ believed in Scripture, interpreted it correctly and used it for good purposes. Satan used Scripture for an evil reason—to tempt the Son of God. He probably didn't believe the Scripture anyway and wanted Jesus Christ to

destroy Himself by throwing Himself down.)

12. Jesus Christ used Scripture to help Him through Satan's difficult temptations. What does this tell you about Bible study and memorization?

(Jesus Christ didn't have written Scripture with Him during Satan's temptations, but He knew the Scripture very well. When we study and memorize the Scripture, God's words are always with us.)

C H E C K F O R U N D E R S T A N D I N G



1

What were the three temptations Satan posed to the Lord Jesus?

2

Satan also used the Scriptures when he tempted the Lord Jesus – how did he manage to turn God's words into temptations?

3

Our Lord Jesus overcame the temptations by using the Scriptures too. What does this teach us about how to fight temptations?

L I F E A P P L I C A T I O N



Handling Temptation

There are four reasons why Scripture is a valuable tool for countering temptation.

1. Scripture gives us examples of people who resisted temptation as we can follow their examples.
2. Scripture tells us the boundaries for our actions. It lets us know what is right, and what is wrong.
3. Scripture gives us guidelines on how to fight temptation, such as fleeing from evil and praying so that we don't fall into temptation.
4. Scripture gives us godly values and attitudes so that by relying on the power of the Holy Spirit, we don't desire many of the things that used to tempt us.

Why do you think Scripture is a valuable tool for overcoming temptation? (Because the person is changed on the inside, and temptation gradually loses its power; it makes us want to do what's right and tells us right from wrong.)

Allow your students to role-play and discuss how to handle temptation.

Scenario 1:

Jenny is on her way to a friend's party from school. Jenny didn't suspect anything before, but the first thing she notices when she enters the room at the party is the smell of beer and alcohol. "You have drinks here?" "Sure," her friends reply.

Scenario 2:

Renee stayed out past her curfew and is worried about what her parents will say. Her friend at school has told her to tell them that they had an accident on the highway and they were held up. What should Renee say?

Scenario 3:

Nathan is walking to a football game with two friends. One of them spots a car with its key in the ignition. "Hey," he says, "Let's take this thing for a ride." The other friend quickly agrees, and the two pile in. "Well, come on, Nathan," his friends say.

After they have read each scenario, have the class role play the inner struggle of the teens at the moment of decision. Half the class should play the inner voice urging the teens to resist the temptation. The students playing this voice should use any Scripture that might help the teens. For example, in the first situation, the class would play the inner struggle Jenny is experiencing at the party. The students playing the voice of temptation might say, "Come on. You don't want to look weird in front of your friends. Have a drink." The other students might respond, "Don't worry about what they think. Stand firm." To make the role plays more effective, you may want to place the two voices on opposite sides of the classroom. Cut the action when the arguments for giving in or resisting begin to repeat themselves. After each role play, tie the action together by asking the class the following questions:



Questions to think about:

- 1.** *How do you think the teen feels at this moment?*
(Pressured, scared or confused. The teen probably feels he has no time to make a decision.)
- 2.** *What makes this situation such a difficult one?*
(To go against his conscience and what he knows to be right, to risk losing friends or to be punished.)
- 3.** *How do you think the teen could handle this situation?*
(Don't give in.)
- 4.** *Not giving in to temptation takes real strength. What are some ways we could prepare ourselves to not give in to difficult temptations we will encounter in the future?*
(Pray for the fullness of the Holy Spirit, the more we are filled with God's Spirit, the less we want to do something that would disappoint Him; share our problems and difficulties with Christian friends who can help pray for us and encourage us; read the Bible more often since it gives us principles for fighting against temptation and new thoughts to change our lives.)

Next time you are faced with the most difficult temptation, ask yourself the following questions:

1. What time of day is it?
2. Where are you?
3. Who is around?
4. How have you reacted in the past in this situation?
5. Is it possible to leave the situation and avoid the temptation?
6. If you can't leave the situation, how would you like to react to the situation?

Most of the time, your students may have chosen to avoid the situation completely and that is great! Or they may have decided they can't avoid getting into the situation, but they can leave the place of temptation once it starts. Finally, your students may have decided they can't avoid or leave the situation, but they can face it with the word of God and the power of the Holy Spirit.



When unavoidable temptations arise, there are three ways to respond: give in, run from the situation or face it. Giving in to evil thoughts or actions is sin—what none of us want to do. In order not to give in to temptation, we need to pray to God and receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit.