

DISCIPLESHIP. LESSON 40

1	PRAYER
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Group leader. Pray for God’s guidance through his Spirit, for awareness of his presence and for listening to his voice. Dedicate this lesson about disciple making to the Lord.

2	SHARING (20 minutes) <i>[QUIET TIMES]</i> 1 SAMUEL 9, 10, 12 and 14
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Take turns and **share (or read)** from your notes) in short what you have learned from one of your quiet times out of the assigned Bible passages (1 Samuel 9, 10, 12 and 14). Listen to the person sharing, take him serious and accept him. Do not discuss what he shares.

3	MEMORISATION (20 minutes) <i>[DISCIPLESHIP]</i> (2) LUKE 9:23
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A. MEDITATION

Read Luke 9:22-27. And he said, “The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.” Then he said to them all, “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it. What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit his very self? If anyone is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God.”

(2)

Write the following memorisation verse on a white or blackboard as follows:

Denial Luke 9:23
If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. Luke 9:23

Write the Bible reference on the back of your card.

1. The Lord of the disciples himself must suffer, die and be raised up.

This was the very first time Jesus predicted his own suffering, death and resurrection clearly. Many Jews during the time of Jesus expected their Messiah and Saviour to live and conquer their enemies (the Romans). Therefore, this prediction came as a terrible shock to his disciples.

But the death of the Messiah was prophesied by the prophets in the Old Testament, was typified by the Old Testament sacrifices and was the reason why Jesus Christ came to the earth. “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep” (John 10:11). Jesus had to do what he came for. His death was a holy “must” (necessity) (Luke 24:44; Acts 4:12). It was the only way in which God the Father’s righteous anger against the sin of man was satisfied and in which the penalty for our sins was paid.

Notice that precisely those people who should have defended the religious interests of Israel crucified their Messiah-Saviour. “The elders” in Israel were the lay members of the Sanhedrin and consisted of members of the highly privileged aristocratic families in Jerusalem. “The chief priests” were members of the high priestly families and included the high priest himself. “The teachers” of the law were the trained and ordained theologians of the Old Testament. Their tasks were to study, interpret, transmit, copy and teach the Old Testament (the Torah).

2. A disciple of the Lord must deny himself (Luke 9:23).

(1) To come after Jesus Christ.

The words “come after” refer to attaching oneself to Jesus Christ as his “disciple” (follower-student). There were hundreds of people who literally came behind Jesus, following him where he went, listening to his teaching and watching his miracles. But here Jesus makes it very clear what he considered to be a *real disciple*.

(2) To deny yourself.

A real disciple first of all must deny himself. When Peter denied Jesus, he said, “I don’t know this person”. There “denial” means choosing not to know Jesus, deciding not to belong to Jesus. Here “denial” means to once-for-all-time say “no” to your old self, that is, the self as it is apart from God’s grace, “the not born again self”, the self-centred self. When you deny yourself, you give up all reliance on whatever you are by nature. You give up relying on your own wisdom, power, abilities, possessions and position. Instead, when you deny yourself, you depend for your salvation and your life only on God. Thus, “denial” has to do with whatever you rely on, depend on, trust in, lean upon, and cling to for salvation and real life. For example, Jesus commands the Teachers of the Law and the Pharisees to give up relying on keeping the law¹. Denial means to turn away from everything that is “sinful”, that is, from matters that express your independence from God or rebellion against God. See the examples of denial in 2 Corinthians 8:9, Matthew 4:19-22, Matthew 9:9 and Philippians 3:7-8

3. A disciple of the Lord must take up his cross daily (Luke 9:23).

“To take up the cross” is generally a picture of a condemned man who is forced to carry his own cross to the place of execution. However, here there is a difference. What the condemned man is forced to do, the disciple of Jesus Christ does willingly! He voluntarily accepts the oppression, persecution, rejection, shame and suffering because of his loyalty to Jesus Christ and Christ’s cause in the world. Every disciple will have to carry a different kind of cross.

Examples of “crosses” in the Bible:

- In Acts 5, the apostles were arrested, put in prison and flogged with a whip, because they preached the gospel to people. Their cross was torture and imprisonment.
- In Acts 7, Stephen was stoned to death, because he exposed his hearers as stiff-necked people with uncircumcised hearts and ears, who always resisted the Holy Spirit and who betrayed and murdered their own Messiah (Acts 7:51-52). His cross was martyrdom.
- In 2 Corinthians 11:23-28, the apostle Paul summarises his cross. “I have been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, ... I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; ... I have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches.” His cross was hard work accompanied by many dangers and difficulties.
- In Revelation 1:9 we read that the apostle John was banned on the island of Patmos, because of his preaching and teaching of the word of God and his testimony of Jesus Christ. His cross was banishment.

Every disciple must carry his own cross daily.

4. A disciple of this Lord must follow Jesus Christ (Luke 9:23).

A disciple not only begins to follow Jesus, but keeps on following Jesus. The meaning of “following”.

- Following in the Bible means to believe in Jesus. In John 6:66-69 we read that because the disciples believed that Jesus was the Holy One of God, they did not turn back and stop following him, like most of the other people did.
- Following means to walk in Jesus’ footsteps. In 1 Peter 2:21 we read, “To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.”
- Following means to obey Jesus (Matthew 7:24-27).
- Following means to serve Jesus. In John 12:26 we read, “Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honour the one who serves me.”

According to this verse, Jesus Christ expects his disciple to do this every day of his life. Denial, carrying the cross and following Jesus Christ is another way of expressing genuine conversion and continuing sanctification. These are at the same time God’s gift and man’s responsibility.

5. A disciple of the Lord must lose his life for Jesus Christ (Luke 9:24-25).

Luke 9:24-25 says, “For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it. What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit his very self?”

The word “psuché” in Greek can be translated with “soul”, “self” and “life”.

(1) The word “soul” in “lose his life”.

In the first half of verse 24, the word “soul” describes the immaterial or invisible being of a person apart from God’s grace, that is, his not born-again soul or unregenerate self. If a person wants to save his “soul, self or life” (his essential being as a human being), that is, if he clings to his sinful life, his possessions, pleasures, prestige, position, fame and desires to live for himself, then he will lose his “life as an unregenerate man”! Whatever purpose God had for him (his soul, his life) will become increasingly narrow until at last it is destroyed in hell.

¹ The law, the Torah, the sharia

For example, in Luke 12:16-21, the rich young man said to “his soul” (that is, to himself), “You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.” But God said to him, “You fool! This very night your “soul” (that is, your life as a human being) will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself? This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich towards God.”

(2) The word “soul” in “save his life”.

In the second half of verse 24, the word “soul” describes the immaterial or invisible inner being of the person who by God’s grace has been born-again. When he loses “his soul (self or life as a human being)” for Christ, that is, devotes his life completely to Christ and to serve Christ in this world, he will save his soul, self or life. His inner being and outward life will increasingly gain more space to experience peace, assurance, joy and especially love in his relationships and in his purpose for living. Jesus is urging the people who want to become his disciples not to turn inward and live selfish lives, but to turn outward and live their lives for him and his kingdom.

Examples of “losing your life”:

- In Matthew 10:37-39 Jesus uses the words “losing your life (Greek: psuché)” in the context of “loving him more than your father and mother or your son and daughter”.
- In Matthew 16:21-25 Jesus uses the words “losing your life (Greek: psuché)” in the context of “suffering persecution for the sake of identifying with Christ and teaching the word of Christ”.
- In John 12:24-26 Jesus uses the words “losing your life (Greek: psuché)” in the context of “self-sacrificial service of Christ”.
- In Luke 17:30-33 Jesus uses the words “losing your life (Greek: psuché)” in the context of “being ready to go with Jesus at his second coming”.

Jesus Christ lays claim to our absolute devotion to him and his mission in all our relationships, in all the circumstances of our Christian service and in whole our future life. Even if a person could gain the whole world with all its material treasures, pleasures and prestige and in the process of doing this loses the life God could have given him, he ultimately gains nothing, but loses everything!

6. A disciple of the Lord must openly identify himself with Jesus Christ (Luke 9:26).

Luke 9:26 says, “If anyone is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels”. To be ashamed of Christ and his words means to be so fearful or proud that you want to have nothing to do with him or his cause in the world. People, who live their lives for themselves and deny or oppose Christ, cannot be saved.

In Luke 13:24-25 Jesus says, “Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to. Once the owner of the house gets up and closes the door, you will stand outside knocking and pleading, ‘Sir, open the door for us.’ But he will answer, ‘I don’t know you or where you come from’.”

7. Seeing the kingdom of God coming (Luke 9:27).

Luke 9:27 says, “I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God”. How is it possible that some of the disciples of Jesus would see the kingdom of God “come with power” (Mark 9:1)? Luke 9:26-27 belong together. They describe the end and the beginning of his work on earth.

- In verse 26, Jesus speaks of the end of his work at his second coming, when he will appear on the clouds with glory and with thousands of angels. Then he will judge all the people that have ever lived on earth on the basis whether he knows them and they have followed him or not.
- In verse 27, Jesus speaks of the beginning of his kingdom on earth at his resurrection, ascension and enthronement in heaven, the outpouring of his Holy Spirit and the rapid spread of the gospel to many nations during the first century. Hundreds of his followers witnessed with their own eyes his crucifixion, his resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:6) and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Many thousands of people personally witnessed the power of the gospel and their baptism into the Body of Christ (Acts 2:41-42).

B. MEMORISATION AND REVIEW

1. Write. Write the Bible verse on a blank card or on one page of your small notebook.
2. Memorise. Memorise the Bible verse in the right way. (2) Denial. Luke 9:23.
3. Review. Divide into twos and check one another’s last memorised Bible verse.

4	BIBLE STUDY (70 minutes) <u>[LIVING IN THE WORLD]</u> <u>(2) TEMPTATIONS IN THE WORLD: MATTHEW 4:1-11</u>
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Make use of the five steps method of Bible study and study Matthew 4:1-11 together.

STEP 1. READ.**GOD'S WORD**

Read. LET US READ Matthew 4:1-11 together.

Let us take turns to read one verse each until we have completed the reading.

STEP 2. DISCOVER.**OBSERVATIONS**

Consider. WHICH TRUTH IN THIS PASSAGE IS IMPORTANT FOR YOU?

Or WHICH TRUTH IN THIS PASSAGE TOUCHES YOUR MIND OR HEART?

Record. Discover one or two truths that you understand. Think about them and write your thoughts in your notebook.

Share. (After the group members have had about two minutes to think and write, take turns to share).

Let us take turns to share with one another what each of us has discovered.

(The following are examples of people sharing what they have discovered. Remember: In every small group, the group members will share different things, not necessarily these things)

4:4

Discovery 1. The expression: "It is written"!

Jesus used this expression whenever he quoted from the Bible. Here in Matthew, three times Jesus quoted from Deuteronomy 6 and 8 in the Old Testament. Jesus had an exalted view of the Bible. Jesus Christ regarded the Bible as the ultimate touchstone of the truth for life and doctrine and as the final court of appeal for the reason. He used the Bible to teach and train people. He used the Bible to preach and warn people. He used the Bible to answer people's questions. And he used the Bible to fight against the temptations of the devil!

4:11

Discovery 2. The devil left Jesus.

There are times when the devil tempts Christians. Like here, he can come with a series of temptations, one after the other, in order to try and make us Christians fall down, fail and get defeated. However, Jesus proves that we Christians can overcome the temptations of the devil. Moreover, God does not allow the devil to keep on tempting us without end. After a battle against temptation, the devil will leave. But we Christians must always be on the alert, because he will definitely return to try again to make us fall.

STEP 3. QUESTION.**EXPLANATIONS**

Consider. WHICH QUESTION ABOUT ANYTHING IN THIS PASSAGE WOULD YOU LIKE TO ASK TO THIS GROUP?

Let us try to understand all the truths in Matthew 4:1-11 and ask questions about the things we still do not understand.

Record. Formulate your question as clearly as possible. Then write your question in your notebook.

Share. (After the group members have had about two minutes to think and write, let each person first share his question.)

Discuss. (Then, choose a few of these questions and try to answer them by discussing them together in your group.)

(The following are examples of questions the students might ask and some notes about the discussion of the questions.)

4:1

Question 1. Who is the devil?

Notes. The devil is a fallen angel². He opposes God and God's plan of salvation. By controlling an army of demons and the unbelievers within this world, he seeks to hinder the preaching of the gospel, he tempts people to commit sins (and so to grieve God's Spirit) and to capture the minds of unbelievers to do his will (2 Timothy 2:26). He is a formidable opponent and Christians can only resist him in the power of God (Ephesians 1:21; 1 Peter 3:22). His strategy is to first tempt people into sin. After they have fallen into sin, he turns against them and accuses them before God (Revelation 12:10). Above all, the devil is a liar and the father of all lies (John 8:44). Thus, people who tell lies, do this under the inspiration of the devil!

4:1

Question 2. What is a temptation and who can lead people into temptation?

Notes. "A temptation"³ is something that wants to seduce us to sin, a "seduction". A "sin" is something that misses God's goal. A temptation always wants to pull our life down into defeat. We are tempted by the following.

(1) People are seduced by their own sinful nature.

In James 1:13-15 we read, "When tempted, no-one should say, 'God is tempting me.' For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death."

² Isaiah 14:12-15 and Ezekiel 28:14-15 are descriptions of the kings of Babylon and Tyrus in terms of the fall of Satan.

³ Greek: "peirasmos". depending on the context, this word may either mean "temptation" or "trial".

(2) People are seduced by the sinful world.

There are many different forms of temptations in the evil world. In 1 John 2:15-17, the apostle John says that these temptations have to do with the things we see, desire in our heart and then actually do. The eyes of people who belong to the sinful world lust for forbidden things. Their heart craves sinful things. Then their whole body actually does what is wrong. After they have sinned, they even boast about the wrong things they have done. They take pride in the wrong things they do. They take pride in sexual immorality. They take pride in cheating people. They take pride in opposing the authority. They take pride in killing people. The apostle John warns that this kind of evil world as well as its evil desires is definitely passing away.

(3) People are seduced by the devil.

The devil is like a roaring lion walking around its prey (1 Peter 4:8; Ephesians 6:16). His desire is to bring people to fall.

4:2

Question 3. Jesus fasted forty days and nights. Should Christians still fast today?

Notes.

(1) Fasting in Matthew 6:5-18.

“Fasting” was a part of the Old Testament ceremonial (ritual) law (Leviticus 16:29). At Christ’s first coming Jesus Christ fulfilled the Law (Matthew 5:17), cancelled (Colossians 2:14) and abrogated (Ephesians 2:14-15) the ceremonial law. Thereby he also cancelled and abrogated fasting (Mark 2:18-22)!

But in the last part of the first century A.D. fasting returned as a part of asceticism in some religious circles, including in certain parts of the Christian Church. But Matthew 17:21 like Matthew 6:13b was not part of the original manuscript of Matthew. Jesus Christ taught Christians to pray. He does not require them to fast and he does not forbid them to fast. But if Christians want to fast they must do it inconspicuously (Matthew 6:16-18). Christians may not impose fasting on to other Christians.

(2) Fasting in Matthew 9:14-15.

Fasting belongs to “mourning” and “the absence of Jesus Christ”. In Matthew 9:15 Jesus taught, “How can the guests of the bridegroom mourn while he is with them? The time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them: then they will fast”. Christ is the bridegroom and Christians are the bride. In John 16:16-22 Christ teaches that Christians would mourn and fast only while the bridegroom was away from them “for a little while”. That “little while” was:

- first of all the three days that he was in the grave
- but especially the ten days between his ascension and outpouring of his Spirit.

After the outpouring of the Holy Spirit their joy would return and no one would take away their joy! In and through the Holy Spirit Jesus Christ is with and in Christians until the end of the age (Matthew 28:20; John 14:16-17)!

(3) Fasting in Matthew 9:16-17.

Fasting belongs to the old wine that was poured into old wineskins. That is to say, that fasting belongs to the ceremonial laws in the Old Testament. The content is “mourning, not eating and not drinking” and the form is “the fasting days” (Zechariah 8:19). But with the first coming of Christ came the new contents that required a new form. Jesus says that if people poured the new wine into the old wineskins, these wineskins would burst and the new wine and the old wineskins would be ruined. People pour new wine into new wineskins that can still expand and so both the new contents and the new forms are preserved. New contents require a new form!

During the Old Testament period only one day a year of “denying yourself” was required of the people of Israel and that was on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:26-32)(1407 B.C.). The prophet Isaiah (740-680 B.C.) very clearly teaches what “denying yourself” meant. It does not mean “abstaining from eating and drinking”, but “abstaining from injustice and oppression!”

The kind of fasting (denying yourself) that God has chosen is to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke. It is to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter, to clothe the naked and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood (your needy family members)(Isaiah 58:6-7; 1 Timothy 5:4,8). It is to do away with the pointing of the finger and malicious talk, to spend yourself in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed (Isaiah 58:9-10)!

However, soon after the exile (538 B.C.) the Jews interpreted “denying yourself” as “fasting” (that is, as “abstaining from food and drink) and made it a part of the ceremonial law that had to be kept. After the exile the Jews fasted during the fourth, fifth, seventh and tenth months (Zechariah 7:5-10; Zechariah 8:19), deliberately ignoring what the earlier prophets (Isaiah 58:6-12) taught about “denying yourself”! During the time of Jesus the Pharisees even fasted twice a week (Luke 18:12)!

“The old wine” represents “the mourning”, which had become a significant characteristic of the Jews after the period of the exile. “The old wineskins” represent the old forms of fasting days and fasting practises (sack and ash) of the Jews. “The new wine” represents the salvation and blessings, which Jesus Christ brought and “the new wineskins” represent the new forms of “joyous worship of saved Christians” (John 4:23-24; Ephesians 5:18-20). What Jesus is saying is that

the joy of saved Christians does not go together with the mourning of fasting Jews. The joy of saved Christians in the New Testament period leads to another way relating to God and serving God than the joyless rituals of the Jews during the Old Testament period. The old way of fasting excluded joy!

After the exile the Jews interpreted the meaning of the law in a legalistic way and even added hundreds of new laws. But the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ fulfilled the moral law and restored it to its original meaning in Exodus 10:1-17 (Matthew 5:17-48). The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ also *fulfilled* (Matthew 5:17) and then *cancelled* the ceremonial law as “shadow of the reality that would come” (Colossians 2:17; Hebrews 9:8-10; Hebrews 10:1-4) and *abrogated* it (Ephesians 2:14-15). The traditional fasting of the Jews was never a requirement during the Old Testament period and may certainly not be introduced as a requirement in the Christian Church during the New Testament period! Christians may fast if they like, but may not make this a requirement for other Christians.

(4) Fasting in Matthew 17:21.

Just as in Matthew 6:13b and Mark 16:9-20, Matthew 17:21 was a later addition to the Greek New Testament text. The oldest Greek manuscripts of the New Testament do not have these words.

4:2-4

Question 4. What was the first temptation of Jesus by the devil?

Notes. After fasting for forty days, Jesus was very hungry. The devil challenged Jesus to turn some stones in the desert into bread. By turning stones into bread, Jesus would be able to satisfy his physical need. In the first temptation, the devil tried to seduce Jesus to trust in himself (and not in God). He tried to destroy Jesus’ confidence that God could take care of his physical and material needs. He tempted Jesus to take matters into his own hands and to act *independently* from God.

Jesus overcame this temptation by relying on and quoting God’s written word. “It is written: Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD” (Deuteronomy 8:3) If God could create the stars of the universe and the whole earth *by just speaking a word*, then Jesus trusted that God could also take care of all his daily needs by simply speaking a word.

4:4

Question 5. What are meant by “the words that come out of the mouth of God”?

Notes. “The word that comes out of the mouth of God” is God’s powerful spoken word, by which he created the universe (Hebrews 11:3) and sustains it until today (Hebrews 1:2-3). By his spoken word, God created food (manna) for the Israelites in the desert and cared for them. By his spoken word, God would create and sustain conditions that would care for Jesus in the desert after he had fasted forty days. While the devil believed that ordinary *bread* is absolutely necessary to keep alive, Jesus declared that not bread, but *the powerful spoken word of God* is the only source of man’s life and well-being on earth.

4:5-7

Question 6. What was the second temptation of Jesus by the devil?

Notes. The devil challenged Jesus to throw himself from the roof of the temple in order to prove that he believed in God’s written Word in Psalm 91:11-12 that says that God’s angels would catch him. In the second temptation, the devil tried to seduce Jesus to have a false trust in God and God’s written Word (the Bible). His temptation was in the area of the super-natural and he tried to tempt Jesus to do something spectacular and sensational, but stupid, namely, to throw himself from a high building! The devil wanted to seduce Jesus to trust/believe in something that is wrong, in something God never promised! He tried to seduce Jesus to exchange his faith for presumptuous arrogance! Jesus had to put God to the test to see whether he would keep his Word. But what God promises in Psalm 91:11-12 is that he would care for people who trust in him, and not that he would save people who put God to the test with stupid actions suggested by the devil!

Jesus overcame this temptation by quoting the Word of God in the right way. “It is also written, ‘Do not put the LORD your God to the test’” (Deuteronomy 6:16)!

The following are examples of temptations to have a false trust in God:

- If someone asks God to heal him, while he continues to live an unhealthy life-style.
 - If someone asks God, “Lord, turn my eyes away from worthless things” (Psalm 19:37), while he is watching an immoral or violent movie!
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4:6

Question 7. Why is it important not to twist God's Word by quoting it out of context?

Notes. In Psalm 91:11-12 the Psalmist points to the work of God's angels on behalf of God's people (Hebrews 1:14; Genesis 28:12). For example, an angel guided a believer (Genesis 24:7) and angels protect believers (2 Kings 6:16-17; Psalm 34:7).

But Satan quoted Psalm 91:11-12 in order to mislead Jesus. He twisted God's Word and challenged Jesus to put God to the test by throwing himself from the roof and see whether God's angels would catch him! In John 8:44, Jesus says that the devil is murderer and a liar from the beginning, even the father of all (political, religious, economic, scientific) lies. The devil never speaks the truth! Although the words in the Bible are the truth in their context, the enemies of God can twist them into lies.

The words in the Bible should be understood according to the original intention of God. Therefore, the words in the Bible should be explained:

- in accordance to the meaning of the original Hebrew words of the Old Testament and Greek words of the New Testament
- in accordance with the historical context
- and in accordance with what the Bible teaches as a whole.

The devil deliberately neglects these rules. False teachers do the same. They pretend to believe in the Bible, but read their own interpretations into it in order to mislead unsuspecting people.

Jesus knew the intentions of the devil. He countered the wrong use of a quotation from the Bible with a correct quotation. "Do not put the LORD to the test" (Deuteronomy 6:16)!

4:8-9

Question 8. Why is it not true that all the kingdoms in the world belong to the devil?

Notes.

(1) The devil made a false claim.

In Luke 4:6 the devil said, "I will give you all (the kingdoms of the world and their authority and splendour, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to)". The question is whether this claim of the devil is true or not. People, who answer positively, base their answer on four statements in the Bible:

- Ephesians 2:2 ("The devil is the ruler of the kingdom of the air")
- Ephesians 6:12 (Christians struggle against the rulers, authorities and powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms")
- 1 John 5:19 (Christians know that *the whole world* is under the control of the evil one")
- Luke 4:6 (The devil describes himself as the rightful owner and ruler of *all the kingdoms in the world*).

Luke 4:6 is not a statement of Jesus Christ, but of the devil himself! Ephesians 2:2, Ephesians 6:12 and 1 John 5:19 only speak of "the world of evil", "the world controlled by demons and demonic governments" and not of "the earth and everything in it and all who live in it" (Psalm 24:1) and also not of "the Lord who reigns forever" over the heavens and the earth (Psalm 146:6,10)!

Precisely the opposite is true. The Bible teaches very clearly that "all things have been committed to Jesus Christ" (Matthew 11:27), that "all authority in heaven and on earth have been given to Jesus Christ" (Matthew 28:18), that "God has given to Jesus Christ the place on his right hand above all rule and authority, power and dominion and every title that can be given in the present age and in the one to come" (Ephesians 1:20-21; see also 1 Peter 3:22)! The devil cannot give away what does not belong to him!

The Bible teaches that "the devil is a murderer from the beginning, a liar and the father of all lies" in history (John 8:44). Therefore the claim of the devil in Luke 4:6 is a presumptuous and arrogant lie! The devil would like people to believe in his lies and fear his power!

(2) The word "world" (Greek: kosmos) has different senses in the Bible.

The context determines its true meaning.

- "The world as the organized universe" (John 1:10; John 17:5,24), the earth (John 21:25).
- "The world as the theatre of human history", the people on earth, mankind (John 1:9; John 3:19; John 9:39; John 11:27; John 12:46; John 14:31; John 16:21,28; John 17:18; John 18:36-37; 1 John 4:1,3; 1 John 4:9).
- "The world as the general public" (John 7:4; John 14:22).
- "The world as lost mankind": people estranged from God, bent under a load of sin, subject to God's righteous judgement and in need of salvation (John 3:19); the world of lost people without distinction of background (race, nationality, language) (John 1:29; John 3:16; John 3:17; John 6:33,51; John 8:12; John 9:5; John 11:52; John 12:32; 1 John 2:2; 1 John 4:14-15)(see John 4:42). It does not refer to the world as the domain of evil (as below). "This world" does not refer to every single human being that has ever lived! It refers to (the world of) people that do not realise that they are lost; who do not know that they have to be born again; who do not know that Jesus Christ died

for sinners and was raised from the dead; who have not yet heard that all their sins can be forgiven; in short, the world that is in need of a Saviour, but has not yet heard the gospel.

- “The world of evil”; the world of lost mankind as in John 3:19 but with the additional thought that they are people who do evil and are openly hostile towards the God of the Bible, Christ and Christians (John 7:7; John 8:23; John 12:31; John 14:17,30,31; John 15:18; John 17:9,14-16,25; 1 John 2:15-17; 1 John 3:1,13; 1 John 4:4-5; 1 John 5:4,5,19).

God so loved “the world of lost people” (as in John 3:16), but God does not love “the world of evil”. God does not love the world of people who continually suppress the truth by their wickedness (Romans 1:18), who continue to hate God (Psalm 5:5-7; Psalm 11:5) and are “enemies of God” (James 4:4).

While Christians are “born of God”, this “whole world is under the control of the evil one (the devil)” (1 John 5:19). But the evil one (the devil) cannot touch (take hold of) him (the born-again Christian), because “the one who was *once for all time* born of God (namely, Jesus Christ) *continually* keeps him safe” (1 John 5:18b)⁴!

- “The world that is saved” by Jesus Christ (John 4:42; 1 John 4:14); the world for which Jesus Christ has become the atoning sacrifice for sin⁵ (1 John 2:2; cf. 1 John 4:10 and John 10:11).

(3) Only the world of evil is under the control of the devil.

When the apostle John says that the whole *world* is under the control of the evil one (1 John 5:19), he does NOT mean that every country and all people in the world are under the control of the devil. Here “the world” is not “the whole created world”, not “the world of people”, not “the world of Christians that are saved”, but “the world of evil”, “the world of non-Christians who are still slaves of sin”, “the world of governments that persecute Christ and Christians, “the world in which the devil and his demons reign” (Colossians 1:13a).

- The devil can only do a particular evil to Christians when God allows it in his sovereign will and plan (Job 1:12; 1 Corinthians 5:5).
- The devil can shoot flaming arrows (seductions, temptations) at Christians (Ephesians 6:16).
- But the devil cannot touch (take hold of) born-again Christians. “We know that ... the One who was born of God (Jesus Christ) keeps him safe, and the evil one cannot harm him” (1 John 5:18)!
- The devil or one of his evil spirits (demons) can never possess a born-again Christian, because the Holy Spirit already possesses a Christian. “The One who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world” (1 John 4:4).
- The devil has no control over what happens to Christians. “We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose” (Romans 8:28)!

(4) The whole wide world is in the hands of Jesus Christ.

During the Old Testament period. The owner and sovereign (almighty) Ruler over the whole world from eternity to eternity is God and not the devil (Psalm 2; Psalm 9:7; Psalm 29:10; Psalm 93:1-2; Psalm 145:13; Psalm 146:10; Jeremiah 32:17,27). A historic example is when the Angel of the Lord crushed a whole evil army in just one night (Isaiah 37:36-37)!

During the life of Jesus Christ on earth. Already when Jesus Christ lived on earth he knew that God the Father had put all things under his power (John 13:3). Jesus Christ never participated in any “holy war”⁶. He spoke against participating in a holy war, “Put your sword back in its place,” Jesus said to him, “for all who draw the sword will die by the sword” (Matthew 26:52). Jesus Christ had the power to call on God the Father and God would at once put at his disposal more than twelve legions of angels. But where other religious leaders took up the sword to destroy people, Jesus Christ gave his life to give people eternal salvation. He had a much higher purpose: namely, to fulfil the Law (the legal requirements, the types/shadows) and Prophets (the prophecies and promises) in the Scriptures and in this way to save people for eternity (Matthew 26:53-54; cf. Matthew 5:17). Nevertheless, no evil person has the power to do anything against Christ or Christians if it were not given to him from above (from God in heaven) (John 19:11)!

At the death of Jesus Christ. During the first coming of Jesus Christ (his death, resurrection, ascension and enthronement) the devil and his evil army of demons have been defeated. From that time onwards they have no more a place in heaven and can they no longer accuse Christians before God (Job 1:6; Revelation 12:7-12). The devil was also cast out of his position of power over the non-Christian nations on earth so that he can no longer mislead them, that is, he can no longer keep the message of the Bible away from them (Daniel 10:13-14; Matthew 12:28-30; Matthew 24:14; John 12:31-32; 1 John 3:8; Revelation 20:1-3).

After the resurrection of Jesus Christ. After Jesus Christ was resurrected from the dead, all power in heaven *and on earth* belongs to Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:18) and all good angels in heaven and all evil powers on earth (both demons and the evil governments of the nations) are in complete submission to the sovereign (almighty) power of Jesus Christ

⁴ Greek verse 18: οἰδαμεν οτι πας ο γεγεννημενος (perfect tense) εκ του θεου ουχ αμαρτανει (present continuous tense), αλλ ο γεννηθεις (aorist tense) εκ του θεου (Christ NIV, NBV; and not: the Christian HSV) τηρει (present continuous tense) αυτον (the Christian NIV, NBV; and not: himself HSV) και ο πονηρος ουχ απτεται (present continuous tense) αυτον.

⁵ Greek verse 19: οἰδαμεν οτι του θεου εσμεν (present continuous tense) και ο κοσμος ολος εν τω πονηρω κειται (present continuous tense).

⁶ Greek: ιλασμος

⁶ Arabic: jihad

(Ephesians 1:20-22; 1 Peter 3:22)! Since his enthronement in heaven, only Jesus Christ breaks all the seals of the scroll in heaven with writing on both sides and only Jesus Christ determines the revelation and execution of God's plan on earth (Revelation 5:8-14)! Only Jesus Christ draws people from all nations in the world to himself (John 12:32)! Only Jesus Christ rules in his kingdom over all people that have been set free from the power of the devil (Colossians 1:13)! Only Jesus Christ has once for all overcome "the world of evil" and since then "the world of evil" remains overcome for ever (perfect tense) (John 16:33)! Already now Jesus Christ is "the King of kings and the Lord of lords", even though the kings and governments on earth still do not acknowledge him (Revelation 1:5,8; Revelation 3:26-27; Revelation 5:8-14; Revelation 6:2; Revelation 12:10-12; Revelation 17:14; Revelation 19:16; Revelation 22:13)! Already now Christians are "more than conquerors" in Jesus Christ (Romans 8:37) and together with Jesus Christ gather people from every nation on earth into the kingdom of Christ (Matthew 12:30; Matthew 28:19; 2 Timothy 2:25-26)!

4:8-10

Question 9. What was the third temptation of Jesus by the devil?

Notes. The devil tempted Jesus to by-pass God and instead to choose for the devil. In the third temptation the devil tried to seduce Jesus Christ to trust in the devil. The temptation was in the area of power and possession in this world. Probably through a vision, the devil showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world with all their glory and splendour. He tried to make Jesus Christ believe that he (the devil) could give this to Jesus. The devil wanted to seduce Jesus Christ to take a shortcut (by not dying on the cross for the sins of the world and by not resurrecting from the dead) to become the possessor of the world, just as God had prophesied (Psalm 2:6-8; Hebrews 1:1-5). But the devil is a liar (John 8:44) and masquerades as an angel of the light (2 Corinthians 11:14). The devil puts on a mask to make people believe that he is a messenger of light (2 Corinthians 11:14). The devil certainly does not own or control any kingdom in the world, because the kingship of the God of the Bible (Psalm 24:1,10) is an everlasting kingdom and his dominion endures through all generations (Psalm 145:13)! He reigns forever (Psalm 146:10)! The devil cannot give away what he does not possess! Jesus overcame this temptation by again quoting the right Word of God in the Bible, "Worship the LORD, your God, and serve him (i.e. the God of the Bible) only" (Deuteronomy 6:13; Exodus 20:3)! Another "god" does not even exist (Isaiah 43:10-11; Isaiah 45:5)!

Today we still see people who go to temples and strike bargains with idols: For example, if the "god" would do his wish, then he would do something back for the "god". And we see how the gods of the religions in the world make false promises to their followers. For example, a person's wish would be granted if he participates in a particular religious festival. Or he would go straight to paradise if he would die in a so-called "holy war" or in "a terrorist attack"! Only false prophets make such promises. We also see many people who believe the lies that are written in newspapers, books and magazines or what is said on television or what religious leaders proclaim from their pulpits. The devil is trying very hard to make people trust in anything except in the God of the Bible. The real desire of the devil is that people worship him instead of the God of the Bible. Jesus says that people should only worship the God, who revealed himself in the Bible.

Question 10. Can Christians have victory over temptations?

Notes. In 1 Corinthians 10:13 we read, "No temptation (and no trial) has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted (and tried) beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted (and tried), he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it."

God shows his faithfulness to Christians by not allowing any temptation or any trial bigger than what every single Christian can bear! And God provides every Christian with a way of escape from every temptation or trial in his life! Hebrews 2:18 says, "Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted" Therefore, Christians can have victory over temptations (and in trials) if they want to!

STEP 4. APPLY.

APPLICATIONS

Consider. WHICH TRUTHS IN THIS PASSAGE ARE POSSIBLE APPLICATIONS FOR CHRISTIANS?

Share and record. Let us brainstorm with one another and record a list of possible applications from Matthew 4:1-11.

Consider. WHICH POSSIBLE APPLICATION DOES GOD WANT YOU TO TURN INTO A PERSONAL APPLICATION?

Record. Write this personal application down in your notebook. Feel free to share your personal application.

(Remember that people in every group will apply different truths or even make different applications of the same truth. The following is a list of possible applications.)

1. Examples of possible applications from Matthew 4:1-11.

4:1. Character training. God can bring a Christian into a situation where he is being tempted by sin (or tried by some difficulty) in order to put him to the test (James 1:12). However, God does tempt him to do evil (James 1:13) and also does not want him to fall into sin. But God wants to test him (James 1:12) and teach him to be dependent on God and trust God's faithfulness to provide a way of escape (1 Corinthians 10:13). Overcoming

a temptation trains character (endurance and perseverance)(James 1:2-4; Romans 5:3-5) and it brings glory to God in the face of the tempter, Satan (Job 1:21-22), and Christ is served by angels (Matthew 4:10).

- 4:2. Fasting or denying yourself things. Although Jesus fasted for 40 days in the desert, the Bible nowhere requires that Christians must fast. If a Christian wants to fast, he must do it in the way of Isaiah 58:6-12 and inconspicuously (Matthew 6:16-18). But he may not enforce fasting on other Christians, because the fasting on the Day of Atonement has been fulfilled by Jesus Christ (Matthew 5:17), has been cancelled (Colossians 2:14,16-18) and abrogated (Ephesians 2:14-15).
- 4:3. Christians are targeted for temptations. The devil especially tempts Christians, because they are no longer under his control (Colossians 1:13; James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8-9)!
- 4:4. Live from the Bible. A Chinese Christian made an important decision, “No Bible, no breakfast!” In the morning, he first meditated on the words in the Bible before he ate his breakfast.
- 4:5. Remember that the devil will try to tempt you into sin even in your church and other places where Christians meet! Do not give him a chance!
- 4:6. Christians can be misled by people making the wrong quotations from the Bible! Watch out for false prophets and false teachers who falsify the Bible and misuse it to serve their own purposes (2 Corinthians 4:2). Learn to handle the Word of truth correctly (2 Timothy 2:15)!
- 4:7. Use the sword of the Spirit. Use an appropriate Bible verse to counter temptations (Ephesians 6:17; Psalm 119:9,11), just as Jesus did in Matthew 4:1-11!
- 4:8. Avoid places of temptation. The devil will lead you to places where temptations (seductions) are easy.
- 4:9-10. The purpose of temptations. Temptations (seductions) are designed to pull you away from Jesus Christ. See through the intention of the temptation and turn it into an opportunity to witness for Christ, “Worship the Lord, your God, and serve him only!”
- 4:11. Temptations are temporary. “When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time” (Luke 4:13). Remember that you will not be tempted constantly. But beware, the devil will always come back to try and tempt you again!

2. Examples of personal applications from Matthew 4:1-11.

I want to start using the Bible whenever I am tempted. I want to learn to answer the temptations of the devil with God’s answers in the Bible. Therefore, I will read the Bible every day, so that I will get to know the Bible very well and so that I will be able to answer the devil whenever he tempts me.

I have become much more aware that when the devil tempts me to do wrong, his real intention is to destroy my relationship with God. His temptations are intended to cause me to distrust God, or to have a false trust in God or to trust the devil instead of God. Therefore, I must resist him more diligently, because he is not only my enemy, but God’s enemy as well.

<u>STEP 5. PRAY.</u>	RESPONSE
LET US TAKE TURNS TO PRAY ABOUT ONE TRUTH THAT GOD HAS TAUGHT US in Matthew 4:1-11. (Respond in your prayer to what you have learned during this Bible study. Practise to pray only in one or two sentences. Remember that people in every group will pray about different issues.)	

5	PRAYER (8 minutes)	<i>[INTERCESSION]</i> PRAY FOR OTHERS
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Continue to pray in groups of two’s or three’s. Pray for one another and for the people in the world (Romans 15:30; Colossians 4:12).

6	PREPARATION (2 minutes)	<i>[ASSIGNMENT]</i> FOR NEXT LESSON
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(Group leader. Give the group members this preparation for at home in writing or let them copy it down).

1. **Commitment.** Be committed to make disciples.
Preach, teach or study the Bible study of Matthew 4:1-11 together with another person or group of people.
2. **Personal time with God.** Have a quiet time from half a chapter of 2 Samuel 15, 17, 18 and 22 each day.
Make use of the questions method. Make notes.
3. **Memorisation.** (2) Denial: Luke 9:23. Daily review the last 5 memorised Bible verses.
4. **Prayer.** Pray for someone or something specific this week and see what God is doing (Psalm 5:3).
5. **Update your notebook** on making disciples. Include the notes on your personal time with God, memorisation notes, Bible study notes and this preparation.