

(T) Welcome to **Discipleship training On The Air**. In this Bible study series you may learn to become a disciple of Jesus Christ. Two teachers will do Bible study together about one important aspect of being a disciple of Jesus Christ. We will use a very easy Bible study method called the five steps method. As you listen to this programme, make notes in a notebook or record the programme. The fourth series of 5 Bible studies is about living in the world. We will be studying the following 5 Bible topics: “Money in the world”, “Truthfulness in the world”, “Temptations in the world”, “Spiritual warfare in the world” and “Suffering in the world”. Today’s Bible study is: A DISCIPLE RESISTS THE TEMPTATIONS IN THE WORLD.

(S) **STEP 1. READ**

Let us read Matthew 4:1-11. Let us take turns to read one verse each.

(T) Matthew 4:1-11. “Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. (S) After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. (T) The tempter came to him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.” (S) Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’ (T) Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. (S) “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down. For it is written: ‘He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.’ (T) Jesus answered him, “It is also written: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’ (S) Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour. (T) “All this I will give to you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.” (S) Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’ (T) Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.”

(S) **STEP 2. DISCOVER**

Let us discover and discuss some important truths in this Bible passage. “Which truth in this passage is important for you?” or “Which truth in this passage touches your mind or heart?” Think and write your answer in your notebook. After a few minutes take turns to share your discoveries with one another.

(T) An important truth for me is in Matthew 4:4, which says, “It is written!” Jesus used this expression whenever he quoted from the Bible. Here in Matthew, Jesus quoted three times from Deuteronomy 8 in the Old Testament. *Jesus had an exalted view of the Bible*. He 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!

(S) An important truth for me is in Matthew 4:11, which says, “Then the devil left him.” 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 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.

(T) **STEP 3. QUESTION**

Let us try to understand all the truths in this passage and ask our questions about the things we still do not understand. “Which question about anything in this passage would you like to ask?” Think and write your question in your notebook. Then discuss the questions and try to find answers.

1st Question. Jesus fasted forty days and nights. Should Christians still fast today?

(S) Jesus Christ teaches Christians to pray. He does not require them to fast. He also does not forbid them to fast. If Christians want to fast, they may, but according to Matthew 6:16-18, they should do it as inconspicuously as possible. However, with the coming of Jesus, the Old Testament law of fasting has been changed. In Matthew 9:15-17 Jesus teaches, “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 his disciples would mourn and fast only while the bridegroom was dead for three days. After his resurrection they would see him again, their joy would return and no one would take away their joy! Jesus would be with them until the end of the age. Jesus then continues to say that people do not pour new wine into old wineskins. If they do, the skins will burst, the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. People pour new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved. The old wine represents the mourning of the Jews during their fasting and the old wineskins represent the fasting days and fasting practices of the Jews. The new wine represents the joy of salvation and the new wine skins represent the

new form in which Christians express this joy, namely, the delightful relationship with God and the joyful service of God. The mourning of fasting and the joy of Christian salvation do not go together! Fasting is no longer a religious requirement and it may not be reintroduced as a religious requirement! Christians may fast if they like, but they may not require other Christians to fast.

2nd Question. What is a temptation?

(T) A temptation is something that wants to cause me to sin. A temptation always wants to pull my life down into defeat.

(S) Who can lead you into temptations?

(T) First. Our own *sinful nature* can lead us into temptation. 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.”

Second. *The world* in which we live has many things that can lead us into temptation. In 1 John 2:15-17, the apostle John says that these temptations have to do with the things we first see with our eyes, then desire in our hearts, and finally do. The eyes lust for forbidden things. The heart craves these sinful desires. Finally with the whole body people do what is wrong. And after people have sinned, they even boast about the wrong things they have done. The apostle John warns that this kind of world as well as worldly desires is passing away.

Third. *The devil* can lead us into temptation.

3rd Question. Who is the devil?

(S) The devil is a fallen angel. He opposes God and God’s plan of salvation. By controlling an army of demons and many people in the world, he seeks to hinder the preaching of the gospel. He tempts people to commit sins that would grieve God. He tries to capture the minds of unbelievers so that they will do his will. He is a formidable opponent and Christians can only resist him in the power of God. The strategy of Satan is to first tempt people into sin and after they have fallen into sin, he turns against them and accuses them before God.

4th Question. What is **the first temptation** of Jesus by the devil?

(T) According to Matthew 4:2-4, Jesus was very hungry after he had fasted for forty days. The devil challenged Jesus to turn stones into bread. By turning stones into bread, Jesus could quickly satisfy his material needs. In the first temptation, the devil tempted Jesus *to distrust God*. He tried to destroy Jesus’ confidence that God could take care of his material needs. He tempted Jesus to take matters into his own hands and to act independently from God. But Jesus overcame this temptation by relying on God’s word! If God could create the stars of the universe and the whole earth by his word, then Jesus trusted that God could also take care of everyone of his daily needs by his word.

5th Question. What do you think are the words that come out of the mouth of God?

(S) “The word that comes out of the mouth of God” is *God’s powerful spoken word*, by which he created and sustains the universe. By his spoken word, God created food 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 “the powerful spoken word of God” is the only source of man’s life and well-being.

6th Question. What is **the second temptation** of Jesus by the devil?

(T) According to Matthew 4:5-7, the devil challenged Jesus to test God by throwing himself from the roof of the temple in order to see whether God’s angels would really catch him. In the second temptation, the devil tempted Jesus *to have a false trust in God*. His temptation was in the area of the super-natural and he tried to tempt Jesus to do something spectacular and sensational. The devil wanted Jesus to prove that something is right by doing something that is wrong. He wanted Jesus to prove something good by doing something stupid. He wanted Jesus to prove that God would protect him by throwing himself down from a high building. He wanted to seduce Jesus to trust God for the wrong things! He tempted Jesus to substitute presumption for faith and shameless arrogance for submission to God’s guidance. He tempted Jesus to make an experiment on God and test God to see whether God was really God. The devil suggested that Jesus could prove that God existed and did what he promised by jumping of the roof. He tempted Jesus to have confidence in God in areas, which the devil suggested, not in areas, which God demanded. But Jesus overcame this temptation by quoting another word from the Bible, “Do not put God to the test!”

An example of false trust in God is when I would ask God to heal me from a sickness, while at the same time I lived an unhealthy life-style. Another example of false trust is when I watch an immoral or violent video and at the same time pray, “Lord, turn my eyes away from worthless things”. Jesus says that I should not tempt God by trying out situations in which I have a false trust in God.

7th Question. Should Jesus not obey the words in the Bible, which the devil quoted?

(S) In John 8:44, Jesus says that the devil is a liar and the father of all lies. The devil never speaks the truth. While the words in the Bible are the truth, the enemies of God and Christians can twist them. The words in the Bible should be understood according to the original intention of God. Therefore, the words in the Bible should be interpreted within its historical setting and context, according to the meaning of the original Hebrew and Greek words and in harmony with what the whole Bible teaches. When these rules are ignored or deliberately neglected, then the words in the Bible can be grossly misinterpreted. That is exactly the intention of the devil and also the intention of the enemies of Christians. By quoting the Bible, they pretend to believe in the words of the Bible. However, in reality they force their own interpretations onto the Bible in order to mislead people. Jesus knew the intentions of the devil. He knew that the devil was giving the Bible a false meaning. Jesus countered his attack by once more quoting the Bible according to its true meaning. No one should put the God of the Bible to the test!

8th Question. What is the **third temptation** of Jesus by the devil?

(T) According to Matthew 4:8-10, the devil tempted Jesus to by-pass God. He tempted Jesus in the area of power. Probably through a vision, he showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world. Then he promised that he would give Jesus all the authority (Luke 4:6) and splendour of all the kingdoms of the world, if Jesus would bow down and worship him. The devil wanted Jesus *to trust him instead of God*. The devil wanted Jesus to take a short cut to glory and obtain the crown of all the kingdoms of the world without enduring the cross. But the devil is a liar. His claim that all the kingdoms of this world had been given to him (Luke 4:6) is false. He does not own any kingdom in the world and also not its authority or splendour. Therefore, he cannot give away what he does not have. The owner and sovereign ruler over the whole world is God. Jesus overcame this temptation by again quoting a word of God from the Bible, which says that the God of the Bible is the only God worthy of worship and service.

I see many people who go to religious buildings and listen to the promises and threats of their religious leaders. I also see many people who believe the lies that are written in religious books and so-called scientific books. The devil is trying very hard to make people trust in anything except to trust in the Living God, who revealed himself in the Bible. The real desire of the devil is that people worship him instead of the Living God. But Jesus says that I should only worship the God who revealed himself in the Bible.

9th Question. Is it true that the whole world belongs to the devil?

(S) The devil boasts that all the kingdoms of the earth belong to him. Even the apostle John says in 1 John 5:19 that the whole world is under the control of the evil one. First. The word “world” is used in several different senses in the Bible. In 1 John 5:19, the “world” is not the whole earth and all its kingdoms, but only the sinful world, the world consisting of unbelievers, the authorities who oppose Christ, evil people and the devil’s army of demons. Second. Matthew 28:18 clearly teaches that after the resurrection and ascension of Jesus, all authority and power on the whole earth has been given to Jesus Christ. Even the devil and the whole evil part of the world are under his feet. Jesus Christ is now the King of all kings (Revelation 19:16). Third. The devil is a liar (John 8:44) and likes to make people believe that the world is under his control (Luke 4:6). His boast is an empty boast.

10th Question. Can Christians have victory over temptations?

(T) In 1 Corinthians 10:13 we read, “No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.” God shows his faithfulness firstly by not allowing any temptation bigger than what we can bear. And secondly by providing us with a way of escape from every temptation! Therefore, Christians can have victory over temptations!

(S) **STEP 4. APPLY and STEP 5. PRAY.**

After brainstorming with one another and recording a list of *possible applications*, consider which possible application does God want you to turn into a *personal application*. Pray as a response to God.

(T) **ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK**

First. The next time you are tempted, what will be your reaction?

Second. Prepare next week’s Bible study. The topic is “Spiritual warfare in the Bible”. And the passage is Ephesians 6:10-18. Join a house fellowship that does Bible study. See the workbooks “Go and make disciples” and Internet on www. Etc

Third. Listen on short wave radio every SATURDAY to WEDNESDAY to “Discipleship training on the air”.