



A Guide for Spiritual Formation

Text for the Week: Matthew 4:1-11

Message for the Week: Control Test

Sunday, November 24

Opening:

What is one low (a bad thing) and one high (a good thing) that happened to you this past week? Write them down and take turns sharing them with the others in your group.

Where have you seen the work of the Holy Spirit in your life this past week?

What food is hardest for you to resist?

Preparation:

Spend 1-2 minutes in silence with God to center and prepare yourself for your time with God today.

Read:

Read / Have two people in your group read [Matthew 4:1-11](#) out loud.

(Clicking the link will bring you to multiple translations.)

As you read and/or listen to the text being read, circle, highlight, or underline what words, phrases, or ideas grabbed your attention and heart in these verses?

Write them down below and/or share them with those who are with you.

Respond / Reflect:

How would you define self-control? What does self-control involve / include?

Are self-control and restraint the same thing? Why or why not?

What was the devil tempting/testing Jesus with during Jesus' time in the wilderness?

In Luke 22:42 Jesus says in His prayer to God, "Not my will but your will be done." What does God's will have to do with self-control?

How are obedience and self-control connected?

When we are self-controlled, who is in charge?

Who or what is controlling your heart and life?

Take Away:

What is a main point or key message that you learned, understood, observed, or experienced that you are taking away with you from your group's reflections on the bible passage or your group's conversations today?

Prayer:

Spend time in prayer with/for the other people who are with you. Who in your group needs prayer today? Who in your group will you pray for?

Pray this prayer together:

Father, thank you for the gift of Jesus' obedience to the testing in the wilderness. Please show us how to live out the Word and allow it to shape and transform our inner being. Help us to see your transforming work in our lives. Encourage us to keep moving forward in faith giving you control of our lives. AMEN

"Try It" - Putting our Faith into Action:

This week, as you go about your daily routines, moving from one thing to another to another, you are encouraged to pray this prayer often throughout your day: "Lord, what do you have for me in this...and/or...Lord, what is your will for this...task, place, situation, meeting, conversation, or _____?"

Galatians 5:22-26 – New International Version

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. ²⁴ Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵ Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. ²⁶ Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

Matthew 4:1-11 - New International Version

4 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted^[a] by the devil. ² After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. ³ The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread."

⁴ Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'^[b]"

⁵ Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. ⁶ "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.'^[c]"

⁷ Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'^[d]"

⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. ⁹ "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me."

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

¹¹ Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

Footnotes

- a. [Matthew 4:1](#) The Greek for *tempted* can also mean *tested*.
- b. [Matthew 4:4](#) Deut. 8:3
- c. [Matthew 4:6](#) Psalm 91:11,12
- d. [Matthew 4:7](#) Deut. 6:16
- e. [Matthew 4:10](#) Deut. 6:13

Matthew 4:1-11 - The Message

4 ¹⁻³ Next Jesus was taken into the wild by the Spirit for the Test. The Devil was ready to give it. Jesus prepared for the Test by fasting forty days and forty nights. That left him, of course, in a state of extreme hunger, which the Devil took advantage of in the first test: "Since you are God's Son, speak the word that will turn these stones into loaves of bread."

⁴ Jesus answered by quoting Deuteronomy: "It takes more than bread to stay alive. It takes a steady stream of words from God's mouth."

⁵⁻⁶ For the second test the Devil took him to the Holy City. He sat him on top of the Temple and said, "Since you are God's Son, jump." The Devil goaded him by quoting Psalm 91: "He has placed you in the care of angels. They will catch you so that you won't so much as stub your toe on a stone."

⁷ Jesus countered with another citation from Deuteronomy: "Don't you dare test the Lord your God."

⁸⁻⁹ For the third test, the Devil took him to the peak of a huge mountain. He gestured expansively, pointing out all the earth's kingdoms, how glorious they all were. Then he said, "They're yours—lock, stock, and barrel. Just go down on your knees and worship me, and they're yours."

¹⁰ Jesus' refusal was curt: "Beat it, Satan!" He backed his rebuke with a third quotation from Deuteronomy: "Worship the Lord your God, and only him. Serve him with absolute single-heartedness."

¹¹ The Test was over. The Devil left. And in his place, angels! Angels came and took care of Jesus' needs.