

# Daily Discipleship

## Luke 4:1-13

**Prayers of Discipleship** – *To serve God Alone*

**Focus Question:** *O God, how might I serve you today?*

### **word of life**

Jesus answered [the devil], “It is written ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.’” Luke 4:8 (NRSV)

Read Luke 4:1-13

Forty days is a long time to be in the wilderness – especially when the wilderness is actually a desert. The terrain of Israel resembles more the deserts of the Southwest, rather than the rich woodlands of the Appalachian Trail. There is a minimal of trees to provide a respite from the scorching heat. More probably, a cave would have provided Jesus a safe haven from the wild animals.

1. *How do you imagine the wilderness scene?*
2. *What do you know about the terrain of Israel?*
3. *How does it compare to the terrain where you live?*

It is the Holy Spirit which drives Jesus to the wilderness to endure a time of temptations by the devil. In the heat of Israel, the drops of water from his recent baptism are long evaporated, but the empowerment of the Holy Spirit is still present. (See Luke 3:21-22)

4. *What does this story tell you about the Holy Spirit?*
5. *What does this story tell you about Jesus?*

Jesus eats nothing for forty days, and the very human form of Jesus is famished. At this point, the devil comes and tempts Jesus during this time of weakness. Each of the three temptations is followed by Jesus resisting the devil with a quote from Scripture.

The temptations involve power, priorities, and prestige. First, Jesus is tempted to serve himself, turning a stone into bread. Next, Jesus is tempted to claim power. This one has some irony because the devil claims ultimate authority of the kingdoms of the world, denying God’s reign.

But the devil saves the razzle and dazzle for the third temptation. Instead of fireworks at the grand finale, the devil teases Jesus into calling upon the angels to rescue him in mid-air.

6. *Which temptation seems the most tempting for Jesus?*
7. *How about for you?*

Focus your attention on the second temptation. Jesus is being challenged on the first commandment, “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house. You shall have no gods before me.” (Exodus 20:2) Here Jesus emphasizes worshipping God and serving only God.

It is impressive how clear Jesus is with his priorities and responses. Filled with the Holy Spirit, Jesus is able to resist the devil and his promises. It is the Spirit which keeps Jesus at one with God.

8. *What prayer might Jesus have offered during his forty days in the wilderness?*
9. *What prayer might Jesus have offered as he resisted the devil?*

## **word among us**

In the second temptation, the devil shows Jesus the kingdoms of the world and promises them to Jesus if he would simply worship the devil. Jesus resists, reminding the devil to worship God alone.

1. *What tempts you from worshipping God alone?*
2. *Describe this temptation in contemporary terms. In other words, where would the devil take you and what would the devil promise you?*

The season of Lent begins with Ash Wednesday and calls for people to repent and turn back from the temptations of this life and turn towards God. The first Sunday of Lent focuses on Jesus in his forty days in the desert. It is a time of prayer and discernment as Jesus claims his mission, but first he must resist the wiles of the devil and all his empty promises.

Jesus sets aside a little over a tithing (10%) of the calendar year for solitude, prayer, and discernment. It is a time when he faces the demons – both the wild beasts of the desert and his internal demons. During Lent, we are invited to follow the model of Jesus and set aside the forty days of Lent for prayer and discernment.

3. *What has been your practice for Lent?*
4. *Why do some people “give up something” for Lent?*
5. *How does that sacrifice connect with Jesus Christ?*

Not many have the luxury to go away to a retreat center or a monastery for forty days of prayer, but there are other ways to set aside the season. Like anything, it takes a concerted, intentional effort to allow Lent to become a blessing to you. Since the theme of *Daily Discipleship* during the spring is “Prayers of Discipleship”, consider a personal Lenten theme of prayer for your own life.

6. *How much time do you set aside for prayer each day?*
7. *How might your prayer life be strengthened?*

Today, you are invited to make a covenant with God to set aside Lent for God. (Lent ends on Easter, April 8, 2007.) During Lent, prayerfully ponder how God is calling you to follow Jesus Christ as a disciple. Consider your own path of discipleship as you strengthen your commitment to follow Christ.

8. *How does prayer help you to worship God alone?*
9. *Take time to actually write down your commitment for Lent. How will you set aside Lent? (Place your plan in your billfold and review it often.)*

Now that you have a plan, discuss ways to support each other during the Lenten journey. Blessings on your Lent!

### **Prayer**

Gracious God, send your Holy Spirit to be our guide during this Lenten season, Sustain with your grace as you draw us closer to Christ. Help us to serve only you. Amen

### **Dig Deeper**

Psalm 51

*last word*  
Each day, pray.

