

Sermon Based Small Group Guide for January 15, 2023 sermon:
"How to deal with temptation"

Warm up:

1. Did you make any "resolution" or commitment to change or improve something in the coming year? What was your resolution and just a little over a week into 2023, how are you doing?
2. In our nation, with all our abundance, food is a huge temptation! What is the most difficult food temptation for you to say "no" (or maybe "less") to?

Digging deeper: (20-30 minutes)

1. ASK: As the perfect God/man, have you ever thought about which part of his nature Jesus faced the temptations thrown in his face by Satan as? Did he face them in his divine nature or his human nature? What makes you think that?

Read Hebrews 2:16-18 and Hebrews 4:15-16. What do those passages in Hebrews reveal about the heart of Jesus for us when we are tempted? God cannot be tempted (James 1:13-14) so Jesus faced these tests in the same way that we face ours...as a human who has God's word revealing truth and exposing lies, and led and empowered by the Holy Spirit. What do these passages teach us about the tools God has given us to use when tempted? Galatians 5:16-18 James 4:7 Psalm 119:9-11

2. ASK: Is there anything that you used to believe about the Christian life (something you were taught growing up, or just believed you had discovered yourself) that turned out to be untrue? What was that, and how did you come to see it as a distortion?

We often point to the encounter between "the serpent" (Satan) and Eve and Adam that got us and our world into the sin-mess we find ourselves in today. How did Satan approach Eve about the instructions God had given them and the "reliability" of those instructions? (See Genesis 3:1-5 if you need a reminder.) Notice that Satan approached Jesus the same way; "IF you are the Son of God...", with the first two temptations. To a very hungry Jesus, Satan tried to also cast doubt on the goodness of the Father- "IF you are the Son of God, why doesn't He feed you and why do you have to suffer in this harsh wilderness?" When we go through times of pain, scarcity and struggle are we ever tempted to wonder, "IF God really loves us, why do we have to endure so much difficulty?" How does this passage destroy the lie that trouble means God is distant or punishing us? Romans 8:35-39 What is God doing? 1 Peter 1:6-7

Apply it: (10 minutes) In Hebrews, we are encouraged to "keep our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith". Our faith is not only grounded in who he is and what he did, but HOW he did it. Share how you keep your eyes (heart and mind) focused on Jesus in tough times...what have you learned that helps you say no to Satan's lies? Share requests and pray for each other.