

**LifeGroup Study**  
**THERE WILL BE TESTS**  
**The Desert**  
**2022-03-27**  
**Leader Notes**

**OVERVIEW:**

Welcome back to our series, There Will Be Tests. In Matthew 4:1-11 we read of Jesus' temptation in the desert. These tests are given so He will trust his identity, given at his baptism in Matthew 3. In the desert test, Jesus trusted that God is faithful to His word. His way and timing are the best. Here is a key lesson we can learn from Jesus – Trust God in the test. Jesus passed a test we never could. Jesus stands strong and ready to fill us with His power so we can pass the tests we face today.

**ICEBREAKER:** Now That's Tempting!

You know what it's like to catch the scent of your favourite food? Your senses awaken and your focus becomes honed in. When you catch that scent you might say – “now that's tempting!” So, what does it for you? Is it the smell of fresh bread, or the scent of coffee brewing? Is it the scent of dinner cooking that reminds you of home? Do you have a particular memory of a time the scent of food really drew you in? **Share your food temptation story with your group!**

**STUDY:**

1. On Sunday, Pete taught about the tests Jesus faced in the desert. In those tests, Jesus demonstrated the importance of trusting God. **What was a highlight for you from what Pete taught on Sunday?**
2. READ: Matthew 3:16-17

In today's study we're going to focus in on the fact that Jesus' understanding of His identity (who the Father says He is) was key to staying strong in His testing in the wilderness. **What did the Father say in these verses to confirm Jesus' identity? How do these words speak to our identity in Christ?**

**LEADER NOTE:** When Jesus comes up out of the water after being baptized, the Father speaks of Him and says, “This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy.” (Matthew 3:17). These words were the basis of Jesus' identity and they speak to our identity as well. In Christ, we are God's dearly loved children who bring Him great joy! We can be confident in our identity in Him.

READ: Matthew 4:1-11

3. In Matthew 4:1 we read how Jesus was led into the wilderness. It was in this environment that Jesus was tested. Think about the question - **What is my “wilderness” these days? Share your thoughts with the group.**

LEADER NOTE: Encourage your group members to share about their “wilderness”. Some of your group members may relate to the wilderness experience of feeling isolated and alone. Some may feel they’ve been “wandering” - moving away from God’s truth and plan, or feeling they’re not getting the direction they’re seeking. Some may feel they’ve been tempted in significant ways recently.

4. Jesus was tested in the wilderness. We can be tested in similar ways. One of the tests we can face is self-sufficiency. With this test we are tempted to say – “I don’t need God.” “I can do this on my own.” Jesus faced this test in Matthews 4:2-4. **How does Jesus respond to this test?**

LEADER NOTE: In this first test, Satan tempted Jesus in the area of self-sufficiency. In their wilderness experience in the OT, the Israelites failed this test. They complained there was no food. They failed to believe God’s faithfulness. But Jesus did not fail the test of self-sufficiency. Instead of trusting in Satan, He trusted in God. In verse 4, Jesus says, “People do not live by bread alone, but in every word that comes from the mouth of God.” NLT In this test, Jesus put his trust in God’s faithfulness. God would provide His needs. Most importantly, God would sustain Him by his Word.

5. In what way have you experienced the test of self-sufficiency? **What did you learn?**

LEADER NOTE: The test of self-sufficiency happens any time we are tempted to take matters into our own hands, rather than trust in God. For example, rather than wait for God’s timing, we take matters into our own hands and try to manipulate a result. Or, rather than trusting God will provide, we get what we think we need in a way that does not honour God. In the test of self-sufficiency, God wants us to learn to trust in Him. God is faithful. His timing and ways are perfect. These are key lessons we can learn in the test of self-sufficiency.

6. A second test we face is in the area of choices. In Matthew 4:5-7, Satan tempts Jesus to make an unwise choice by putting God to the test. **How does Satan test Jesus in this instance?**

LEADER NOTE: In this second test, Satan quotes Scripture to try to justify putting God to the test. Satan is a liar and the father of lies (see John 8:44). He can even twist Scripture to try and get us to make an unwise choice. In this case, Satan tried to lure Jesus to presume upon God’s protection by jumping off the Temple. But Jesus responded, “You must not test the LORD your God.” (Matthew 4:7).

7. As a group, see if you can brainstorm some examples of how Satan might test us by tempting us to make poor choices. **How might you use Scripture to stand firm in this test?**

LEADER NOTE: Here are some examples of how Satan tests us in the area of choices. Satan tempts us to make unwise relational choices. Satan tempts us to make unwise financial choices. Satan tempts us to make unwise spiritual choices. Encourage your group members to think of practical examples of when they have experienced this and to look for Scriptures that speak the truth and help them to make wise decisions in this area.

8. A third test we face is the test of power. Satan tempted Jesus to take power over all the kingdoms of the world. He said, "I will give it to you, if you will kneel down and worship me."  
**How did Jesus respond to this test?**

LEADER NOTE: Jesus responded to this test by quoting Scripture – "You must worship the LORD your God and serve only him." In this response, Jesus showed his ultimate allegiance to God. God and God only is worthy of all power, worship and praise.

9. Our world is filled with temptations to find our identity in power over other people. The temptation to control other people and our circumstances can easily pull us away from giving ultimate control to God. **How have you experienced the power test? What have you learned about how to respond?**

LEADER NOTE: The power test is something that is very real in our culture. Encourage your group members to share how they have experienced this test. This could be tied to where they get their identity from. For example, many find their ultimate identity in their role or title at work. Others find a sense of power and control in their finances or their relationships. While there is nothing inherently wrong with job titles or finances, as followers of Jesus, our ultimate identity should be in Him. He is the One who is in control of our lives and we follow His lead.

10. Think about the tests you are facing these days. **How might you lean into God's power for strength to endure the test?**

LEADER NOTE: Here are some key ways to lean into God's power when we are tested. **Remember who you are.** Spend some time reading Scriptures about your identity in Christ. <https://www.gotquestions.org/who-in-Christ.html> **Put God first.** Practice the daily habit of worshipping God. You can do this by listening to worship songs or reading Scriptures that exalt Him. **Put on God's Armour.** (Ephesians 6:10-18). Realize you are in a spiritual battle. Stand firm!

## **PRAYER**

This week let's pray for Celebrate Recovery and Celebration Place  
Prayer for more volunteer in the following:

- Transportation Team/or Free Bus
- Cafe Teams in late spring

-Worship Volunteers

-Celebration Place - Nursery & School age - variety of roles.

Prayer for participants who have stopped engaging in recovery over the past couple years, for various reasons, that God would prompt them to continue their recovery journey and join us on Friday Nights

Continued prayer for Step Study participants to continue through their study and finish strong.