

## Expectations, Temptations, and Preparations Small Group Guide

**Warm-up Question:** (Choose one, make up your own, or skip this part all together, depending upon the nature of your group.)

1. What is your favorite dessert?
2. Describe one high and one low from the previous week.

**Read the following passage:** Luke 4:1-13.

Jesus' faithful obedience to God during his temptation in the wilderness demonstrated that he was the true Son of God and the rightful Messiah of Israel. Whereas Adam and Eve failed in the Garden and the people of Israel failed in the wilderness, Jesus obeyed God. In addition to the significance of these events in God's grand plan of salvation, Jesus' faithfulness under duress provides a powerful example for us.

**Questions for Discussion** (Choose several that are relevant for your group):

1. Jesus was a perfectly obedient and faithful Son whom God loved deeply. Yet Jesus still had to face great pressure and hardship when the Spirit led him into the wilderness. This conflicts with what many of us expect should happen if we faithfully walk in God's will. We often think that if we live the right way, and if God is really loving and just, then we should experience a pain-free, successful, and comfortable life. What examples from the Scriptures demonstrate that this is not a realistic expectation? What is the danger in holding unrealistic expectations? Can you think of areas of your life (past or present) in which you have had unrealistic expectations?
2. One of the passages of Scripture Jesus quotes is found in Deuteronomy 8:1-5. In this passage, Moses reminds the Israelites of their own experience in the wilderness and what the purposes of that experience were. Explain how tests and wilderness seasons can 1) produce humility; 2) reveal our hearts; and 3) teach us.
3. What are some things about God that we can really only learn in an imperfect world? Do you think this is one of the reasons that God has allowed evil in this present age?
4. What circumstances, internal or external, typically lead to temptation in your life? What are some areas in which you regularly experience temptation?
5. What, other than God, are you most prone to fixate on in an unhealthy way?
6. How can we engage the Scriptures to prepare ourselves to overcome temptation when we experience it? What should we do if we succumb to temptation?

7. What can you do this week to help you better engage the challenges life inevitably brings?

**Pray**