

The Enemy of the New Normal

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 one consistent internal obstacle you have faced in your life that you would like to overcome?
2. What is one high and one low from the past week?

Read the following passages: Luke 3:21-22; 4:1-13.

The Jews of Jesus' day knew who their enemy was: Rome. Many Jews believed the Roman Empire was the fourth and final of a series of pagan kingdoms represented in Daniel's visions (see Daniel 2 and 7). Many Jewish people, therefore, were looking for a Messiah who would lead a revolution to throw off Roman oppression and exalt the people of Israel. But Jesus would not consider the Romans his enemy. In fact, Jesus resisted the temptation to make an enemy out of a wide variety of people groups: Gentiles, Samaritans, political leaders, religious leaders, his family members, the crowds, the mob that arrested him, even his own disciples who abandoned him. Instead, Jesus recognized that he really only had one enemy: the devil.

Questions for Discussion:

1. Throughout our lives, many different people cause us pain; sometimes intentionally and repeatedly, sometimes unintentionally or even unknowingly. How do we address this pain in our lives and keep ourselves from becoming fixated on these "enemies?"
2. Satan boldly tempted Jesus when Jesus was fasting in the wilderness. What are some of the ways demonic forces tempt us? How did Jesus resist demonic temptation? How can we stand firm in the face of demonic temptation? (See also Ephesians 6:10-20.)
3. Overall, how well are you doing in each of the following three areas?
 - Physical health (including sleep, diet, and exercise)
 - Emotional health
 - Overall sense of purpose and significance

What are one or two things you can do to improve in one of these areas?

4. There is a great deal of racial, political, and cultural polarization in our nation. This polarization often affects the church as much as the broader population. What are some things we can do to promote justice, peace, reconciliation, and unity within our church communities? What can we do to make a difference more broadly in the places in which we have relationships and influence?

Pray