

LENT :
A Time of
Encounter,
Testing
&
Preparation

Study Guide – Sunday 7th March 2021 Lent Week 4 – Trusting God or Testing God



Please read Luke 4.9-12

The devil misquotes from **Psalm 91.11-12**, giving opportunity to turn it into a test for God. The devil twists the truth: "Look," he says, "it says here *IN THE BIBLE* that God has said he'll protect those who trust in Him."

The temptation works like this – God could easily do this for you – it's no big deal for him. But it could be a big deal for you – a way to get your messiahship off to a flyer. Wouldn't God be a rubbish Father if he didn't want to do this for his beloved? Go on, put His love for you to the test.

Jesus is being tested on whether he trusts in his Father's love and protection for him despite his difficult circumstances in obeying the way of God's choosing. He won't take the bait and try to force God's hand in loving and protecting him some other way.

1. Please share some of your own experiences of when you have faced this kind of temptation and testing in your life.
2. How has the devil tried to convince you that your testing God was justifiable?

Jesus replies to the devil using a quotation from **Deuteronomy 6.16** 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test as you did at Massah.' Please read **Exodus 17.1-4, 7; and Psalm 95.6-11** for the context.

3. What do you learn from how Jesus responds to the devil in this test?
4. Why is Moses so outraged at the people in Exodus 17 and, more importantly, why is God so angered by his people's actions and attitudes at Massah in Psalm 95?
5. Do you think we (Western Christians today) are inclined to underplay the seriousness of **testing** God rather than **trusting** God?
If you think yes, why do you think that is the case?
6. Are there ways where you are tempted to ask or even demand that God responds in a certain way for you – to demonstrate his care and love for you, or his protection over you? How do you relate to the idea that we needlessly - even recklessly - dig ourselves 'unholy holes' and then keep asking God to get us out?
7. In Psalm 95, the Lord says, '*they tried me, though they had seen what I did.*' Reflect back over your life and think about the ways in which you have personally experienced the power and presence of God – the saving, caring, delivering, loving and miraculous power and presence of God!

This will help us be more ready to Trust God rather than Test God, and to say No to the devil's temptation as Jesus did.