

No shortcuts to glory. Matthew 4.1-11

Day One.

Listen to the episode. Read the following question, and write your answers in the box provided.

Fasting. Jesus fasts and prays in preparation. Fasting is a spiritual discipline. It has been used historically to deepen the spiritual life. It is also used in times of need, to focus the spiritual concentration. It is a temporary rejection of food, to demonstration dependence on God. **Highly recommended reading:** The chapter on fasting from Richard Foster's classic, *Celebration of Discipline*. Borrow the book from someone or buy it.

Reflection: Is God calling you to undertake a fast, either simply to draw closer to Him, or perhaps as a discipline associated with a special need in your community? Eg. Need for finances, sickness, family breakdown. Ask God to speak to you on this matter. Be bold, and obey if God is calling you to fast.

Prayer.

Day Two.

Listen to the episode. Read the following questions, and write your answers in the box provided.

Temptation. What is temptation? "The devil made me do it." Have you heard that refrain before? What is wrong with it? To what extent is the devil involved when you're tempted?

Reflection: Tools for dealing with temptation. Read James 1.13-15 and discuss what God is teaching through this short passage. What specific temptations are you struggling with? How has the passage taught you to deal with the temptation you're confronting? Ask God to equip you with the armour of God to resist the devil. Spend some time worshipping God. Worship re-focuses the heart back on God.

Prayer.

Day Three.

Listen to the episode. Read the following questions, and write your answers in the box provided.

The Devil. Either we're too interested in him, or we ignore him. That's a paraphrase from C.S. Lewis' writing. Do you agree? What middle way might be preferable? See James 4.7-8. What is James' advice for dealing with the devil?

Reflection: Read Ephesians 6.10-18. Be encouraged that this armour is available each day.

Submission. Jesus ends up submitting to the way of the Father. Following a path of suffering. Is there anything you need to surrender to God? Could that be a means for dealing with some of the temptations you're struggling with at the moment? Ask God to guide you as you consider how He's speaking to you today. Take time in prayer to listen and meditate on the passage as you ask for His guidance.

Prayer.