IDENTITY (1): TESTED
Take Responsibility
November 16, 2019

1 PREPARING

A. THE SOURCE

Luke 4:1-13 (NIV) • “Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry. The devil said to him, ‘if you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread.’ Jesus answered, ‘it is written: “Man shall not live on bread alone.”’ The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And he said to him, ‘I will give you all their authority and splendor; it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. If you worship me, it will all be yours.’ Jesus answered, ‘It is written: “Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.” ’ The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. ‘If you are the Son of God,’ he said, ‘throw yourself down from here. For it is written: “He will command his angels concerning you to guard you carefully; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.” ’ Jesus answered, ‘It is said: “Do not put the Lord your God to the test.” ’ When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time.”

Genesis 3:1-5 (NIV) • “Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, ‘Did God really say, “You must not eat from any tree in the garden”? ’ The woman said to the serpent, ‘We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, “You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.” ’ ‘You will not certainly die,’ the serpent said to the woman. ‘For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.’ ”

James 1:13-15 (NIV) • “When tempted, no one should say, ‘God is tempting me.’ For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.”

Deuteronomy 8:1-3 (NIV) • “Be careful to follow every command I am giving you today, so that you may live and increase and may enter and possess the land the Lord promised on oath to your ancestors. Remember how the Lord your God led you all the way in the wilderness these forty years, to humble and test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands. He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your ancestors had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.”
James 1:12 (NIV) • “Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.”

1 Corinthians 10:12, 13 (NIV) • “So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall! No temptation has overcome you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.”

Hebrews 2:17, 18 (NIV) • “For this reason he had to be made like them, fully human in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.”

B. WHAT’S TO BE SAID ABOUT “IDENTITY (1): TESTED”

The beginning of this four-part series on identity starts with a look at Satan’s primary attack on Christ in the temptations. Satan specifically targeted the core of Jesus’ confidence in His relationship to God. Identity is about relationships. Whom do I belong to? Where do I fit in? This lesson seeks to journey through the story of the temptations and discover how Christ overcame the tempter in the desert.

It may be that what Christ did to secure His sense of identity in that moment can help teens come to a sense of surety about their own place in the kingdom of God. The temptations come with a challenge, “if you are the Son of God . . .” and with that challenge is a tremendous danger to try to prove that we really are who we think we are.

Did Christ ever respond to the questioning of His identity? No. Christ knew who He was—God’s Son. He didn’t have to prove it to Satan. The moment we try to prove, justify, or validate what God has already done, we enter onto dangerous ground where our sense of security in Christ can be threatened. Instead, we follow the Savior by claiming what God has already declared about us in His Word, in His will, and in our worship. A focus on these three aspects of Christ’s identity formation—Word, will, and worship—may help students stand firm in their own place as a child in God’s kingdom.

Finally, we come to know ourselves in our times of testing. Men and women are defined by the tests of life. Teens need to understand that the times of testing enable them to really know who they are.

C. WHERE WE’RE GOING WITH “IDENTITY (1): TESTED”

As a result of this lesson, students will be able to:
1. Discuss the relevance of the temptations in today’s world.
2. Focus on the ways that God has given us a sense of identity.
3. Develop a plan to continually remind ourselves and one another of our place in God’s kingdom.

D. MATERIALS NEEDED

Beginning • (Activity A) paper, pens or pencils, chalkboard or flipchart; (Activity B) none.

Connecting • Bibles, student lessons, “The Temptations of Jesus” handout (p. 76), pens or pencils.

Applying • Pens or pencils.

A. WHERE WE’VE BEEN

Allow 10 minutes at the beginning of class for students to:
1. Share anything that was meaningful to them in this lesson.
2. Engage in a discussion about the topic of the lesson in connection to the belief highlighted this week.
3. Say the Bible memory text either individually or in a group.
4. Review the “Applying” section of their Friday lesson (if needed).

B. OTHER SABBATH SCHOOL COMPONENTS

>> Song service  
>> Mission emphasis (find a link for Adventist Mission for youth and adults at www.realt imefaith.net)  
>> Service project reports

NOTE TO TEACHER: Put together your own program with options from the categories below—Beginning, Connecting, Applying, and Closing. Please keep in mind, however, that the students need to have an opportunity to be interactive (participate actively and with one another) and to study from the Word.

A. BEGINNING ACTIVITY

Get ready • This exercise is an anonymous survey of the top five temptations for teens. Provide paper and something to write with.

Get set • Hand out a piece of paper and a pencil to each member of the class.

Go • Say: I want you to think about the top five temptations that teens face today. Be specific or general, but name five. Note: these don’t necessarily have to be temptations you struggle with personally. Write them down on the piece of paper. No names please. Keep this anonymous.

As students complete the activity collect the pieces of paper. You can either read them out loud or have someone tally the results. Make a note of the most frequently stated temptation (for example—cheating in school received five votes). You can sing some songs, or read the Beginning Illustration while the votes are being tallied. You might list the top five temptations on the board without indicating the most frequent responses. Have them guess as to which they think is the number one temptation. Then debrief with the following questions.

Debriefing • Ask: Why do you think these temptations are so difficult for young people? Do you think some temptations are more severe than others? Explain. Which temptations affect only the individual being tempted? Which affect others as well? The word “temptation” can also mean a “test.” In a way, people are defined by the way they stand up to temptation. This week’s lesson is about how temptation exposes who we really are.

B. BEGINNING ILLUSTRATION

In your own words, tell the following story:

“”In July of 2004 the Arizona Game and Fish Department began nursing more than 30 emaciated, dehydrated, banged-up pelicans. During the previous two weeks the injured pelicans had been found from Yuma to Phoenix.

“The brown pelicans were injured when they descended from the sky, sailed low over sidewalks and asphalt highways, stretched out their feet as though to make a perfect splash landing in water, and then tumbled end over end when they instead hit the pavement.

“The pelicans, apparently suffering a food shortage in California, flew to Arizona looking for fish. From the sky, the shimmering hot air over the black asphalt appeared to the pelicans to be water. Down they flew for fish and a refreshing dip in a lake. What they found instead was solid pavement, dehydration, hunger, and near death. Reality hits hard.

“Thankfully, the Arizona Game and Fish Department came to their rescue.”—From Associated Press, “Pelicans Mistake Arizona Asphalt for Lakes,” CNN.com (posted 7-12-04).
Debriefing • Ask: How does this illustration describe the way temptation works? In what specific areas of life does this seem to apply the most?

4 CONNECTING

A. CONNECTING TO THE KINGDOM

Present the following ideas in your own words:

There is an enemy that opposes the kingdom of God. He hates all citizens who are loyal to the King. While temptation comes from within and without, what we learn from Jesus as He was tempted is incredible. The Savior resisted temptation because He clearly knew who His Father was and He had a vivid picture of who He was as well. When we are tempted, we tend to say and do things that are damaging to our identity because we either are uncertain or simply not aware of the greatness of God and who we are meant to be in Him.

When you see Jesus tempted in the desert, His sonship is challenged by Satan on several levels. When Satan tempts Jesus to turn stones into bread, Jesus makes it clear that His Father’s Word (Scripture, the Bible) is what is most important, not bread. Satan tempts Jesus to throw Himself down from the top of the temple, people would certainly accept Him as Messiah and King if He jumped and let the angels save Him.

For Jesus, the act would have caused many to worship Him. Satan’s way would have brought immediate popularity—but Christ came both to cause people to worship the Father and also to pay for their sin. Christ was to teach others about God’s love by His life and self-sacrificing love. Love would be the will and the way for Christ. Satan offered Jesus a shortcut if He would just bow down and worship Him. The shortcut was not the way or will that His Father in heaven had chosen for Him. Satan called Jesus to compromise—Jesus told Satan to take a hike.

Distribute handout from page 76. Students are to read the passage, answer the questions, and then discuss their answers as a class.

B. CONNECTING TO THE LESSON ILLUSTRATION

Ask someone beforehand to read or tell the story from Sabbath’s section of the lesson.

Ask: Have you ever been around someone who was always ready to blame someone else for their choices? Have you blamed others for some of your decisions and actions? Has there been a time in your life that you called out to God for help in resisting a temptation?

C. CONNECTING TO LIFE

Say: As mentioned earlier, the Bible tells us that we are tempted by a tempter (James 1:13, 14), by an enemy who is trying to bring us down (1 Peter 5:8). Read these texts together as a group. Ask: How do you overcome when you are being attacked from both the inside and the outside? What tools or resources do you have to defend yourself? (the Bible, prayer, seeking help from an adult)

How does your sense of belonging to the family of God help you stand firm in the face of temptation? What else might be helpful?

5 APPLYING

A. APPLICATION ACTIVITY

In the student lesson under Applying on Friday there is a table for students to use to prepare for overcoming temptation.

Have them fill out the chart by themselves first (if they haven’t already done so), then move them into groups of two or three if you think they will be comfortable sharing with each other. If not, ask for volunteers to share. Ask: How does “following through the thinking pro-
cess” help people stand firm against temptation?

You might refer back to the temptations that teens voted to be the most prominent at the beginning of the lesson. Take the top five temptations, follow the chart in the student lesson, and follow through the process of exposing the temptations for what they really are. For example, if teens say that cheating in school is a key temptation, then the chart might be filled out as shown.

B. APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. How would you define the word “temptation”?
2. In your opinion, can Satan read your mind and know your thoughts? What impact does that have on the way we may or may not be tempted?
3. How does our own sinful nature affect the way we are tempted? Is it just “The devil made me do it” or are we more responsible for the problem than we tend to admit?
4. When should you stand firm and resist temptation? When do you simply avoid the scenarios in which you might be tempted? Give examples of both.
5. What temptations do you think Christ faced that are similar to temptations teens face today? In what way were His temptations different?

SUMMARY

In your own words, conclude with the following ideas:

The tempter has been tempting since very near the dawn of time on earth. Satan manages to twist the truth around and make that which is wrong seem not so bad at all. Most of what Satan does is not so much overtly trying to get us to do “bad things” as much as it is convincing us that those things aren’t so bad. Even more, we are tempted to put self first and step away from the way our Father in heaven operates. God is selfless and longs to have His children learn the joy of Godlike love. The most important defense a child of God has in the moment of temptation is the certainty that God will help them through. But the hard part for us is, one, to think about what is happening and the possible outcomes. Two, to stop and ask God for help (and there are times that you may need to pray many times). And three, to act according

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<th>Will—Does God have a better way for me to go?</th>
<th>As a child of God, I am . . .</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cheating in school</td>
<td>Word—Honesty and integrity are themes in God’s Word.</td>
<td>Worship—To cheat on a test is a selfish act.</td>
<td>Will—God would rather see me struggle in school than to live a lie.</td>
<td>Compelled to be truthful because God is true and honest.</td>
<td>Peace. Authenticity. A sense of joy that I am not pretending to be something I am not. A smile on God’s face.</td>
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to God’s leading—run, don’t walk or look back, from the temptation! It is amazing how clear things become when we stop to think about where this temptation may lead. This thoughtful response may be challenging to develop, but a necessary one.

FOR LESSON SEVEN
THIS HANDOUT IS FOR CONNECTING TO THE KINGDOM.

The Temptations of Jesus

Directions: Circle the words or phrases in which Jesus’ identity is attacked. Put a rectangle around the words or phrases that convey worship as loyalty and honor to God instead of self. Underline the parts where Jesus has to choose between His will and God’s.

Matthew 4:1-11 (NIV)

No. 1—“Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to him and said, ‘If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.’ Jesus answered, ‘It is written: “Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.”’

No. 2—“Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. ‘If you are the Son of God,’ he said, ‘throw yourself down. For it is written: “He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.”’ Jesus answered him, ‘It is also written: “Do not put the Lord your God to the test.”’

No. 3—“Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. ‘All this I will give you,’ he said, ‘if you will bow down and worship me.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Away from me, Satan! For it is written: “Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.”’ Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.”

The fact that Jesus was human made some aspects of His life hard to bear. But the fact that He was also God made it even more difficult for Him to not use His power for His own good. Questions: Which temptation do you think was the hardest for Him as a human? Which temptation do you think was hardest for Him because of His divinity?
Sabbath
FOR STUDY

» Memory Text: “Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it” (1 Corinthians 10:12, 13, NKJV).

» Our Beliefs, no. 10, The Experience of Salvation: “Through Christ we are justified, adopted as God’s sons and daughters, and delivered from the lordship of sin. Through the Spirit we are born again and sanctified; the Spirit renews our minds, writes God’s law of love in our hearts, and we are given the power to live a holy life.”

» Ellen G. White, Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, pp. 116, 117

TAKE RESPONSIBILITY

Billy was a 4-year-old terror in his church kindergarten. He pushed the other children, knocked them down, tripped them, and generally kept things upset.

One day the teacher said to him, “Billy, would you like to pray?” The little fighter prayed a simple prayer: “Jesus, please help those little children not to fall down so much.”

What a masterful request! In one statement he absolved himself of all responsibility for the other children’s falling down and getting hurt.

Change and responsibility go together. We can have no real behavioral change unless we take responsibility for our actions. If we are merely victims of our environment, the environment becomes responsible. If we are simply the product of what others have done to us, then they are responsible.

All change begins with a sense of personal ownership of our actions. Unless we own our actions, we will excuse our behavior. God has given us the power of choice and has promised to empower our choices. His Spirit impresses us to do right and enables us to do it. Accepting that we are morally responsible for our behavior, confessing our sins, and choosing to change allows us to receive God’s pardon and power. God’s grace saves us from sin’s guilt and grip. As the old hymn says: “Rock of Ages, cleft for me; . . . be of sin the double cure, cleanse me from its guilt and power.”

Our environment influences our behavior. Our choices determine it. No one chooses for us. God has given us the capacity to make our own moral decisions.

We will not be judged based on others’ decisions. We will be judged on our own. Moses’ appeal to Israel millenniums ago speaks to our hearts today. “I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live” (Deuteronomy 30:19, NKJV).

It is up to us to decide what path we will take when faced with temptation. But God has not left us to struggle alone. He has promised that if we call on Him, He will answer and help us out of all our trouble.

**Sunday**

**RESPONDING**

» Read James 1:12.

» Your best friend calls you frantically on the phone asking you to lie to protect them. They stayed out late one night and claimed to be with you when this was not the case at all. Punishment is undoubtedly going to take place when the parents call to confirm the story, unless you go along.

» What will you do? What are some of the real problems in the scenario? What would you say to your friend? They know they made a mistake and are sorry for it; they are pleading with you to cover for them. What would a good friend do? What are some of the options you have?

**Monday**

**BIBLE ANSWERS ON THE EXPERIENCE OF SALVATION**

» Read John 3:16, 17; Galatians 3:26; Romans 10:17.

» God’s love exceeds everything we can understand. While we were still sinners, Jesus came and died for us. How do we become sons and daughters through faith in Jesus? By studying the Word of God.

» How much time do you spend studying the Word of God?

» What do you need to do to make studying the Bible a priority?

» Fill in the blanks.

“For to this you were called, because ______ also suffered ______, ______ us an ______, that you should ______ His steps: ‘Who ______ no sin, nor was ______ found in His mouth’; who, when He was ______, did ______ revile in ______; when He suffered, He did not ______, but ______ Himself to Him who ______; who Himself ______ ______ ______ in His own body on the tree, that ______, ______ ______ ______, might ______ ______ ______ —______ ______ ______ ______.” (1 Peter 2:21-24, NKJV).

**Tuesday**

**REFLECTING**

» Read Hebrews 2:17, 18.

» If there is one common thread that runs through all of humanity, it is the reality that we all struggle under the pressure of temptation. In the Bible, temptation is not as much a “seduction” as it is a testing of our true convictions. Some might disagree, but for the most part, we tend to act on our deepest values. If you succumb to lying, it’s probably true that you believe the short-term benefit of avoiding responsibility outweighs the long-term benefit of being a person of integrity.
» The devil tempted Jesus to use His divine power to turn stones into bread. Have you ever been tempted to go outside and turn a few rocks into something to eat? The temptation Satan offered to Jesus was rooted in selfishness—“take care of yourself.” It would have been all about Jesus at that point. But Jesus’ life wasn’t about Him.

» What Jesus showed us was a thoughtful process for responding to Satan’s tricks. His anchor was in His Father’s words in Scripture.

» Jesus considers who His Father is and who He is in relation to His Father. He chooses the best way, His Father’s will over His, and the end result is the redemption of humanity. It was all about representing His Father and providing a way for our salvation. The promise for us still remains:

“Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it” (1 Corinthians 10:12, 13, NKJV).

Wednesday
BIBLE INSIGHTS

Match the texts with the correct phrase.

James 1:13-15 (NIV) _________
Psalm 91:11, 12 (NIV) _________
Deuteronomy 6:17-19 (NIV) _________
Psalm 2:8, 9 (NIV) _________
James 1:12 (NIV) _________
1 Corinthians 10:12, 13 (NKJV) _________
Hebrews 2:17, 18 (NIV) _________

1. “Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.”

2. “When tempted no one should say, ‘God is tempting me.’ ”

3. “But with the temptation [He] will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.”

4. “For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways.”

5. “Because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.”

6. “Be sure to keep the commands of the Lord your God and the stipulations and decrees he has given you.”

7. “Ask me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession.”

Thursday
CONNECTING

» Read Psalm 91.

» Review the memory text.

» Jesus refuted Satan using Scripture. That is why it is so important for us to study and memorize scriptures. When we have studied and learned Bible verses, the Holy Spirit will bring to mind these texts when Satan tempts us. In fact, this is what Jesus did in the wilderness. He used Scripture texts to send the devil away.

» The other thing Jesus said was “Yes” to His Father. In your moments of temptation, know that you can say yes to God and experience the fullness of God’s power to overcome.

» God longs for you to choose the best way out of a heart of love for Him and a deep sense that you belong to Him. It’s not
enough to know how to say no. You have to know why you’re saying it.  

**Friday**

**APPLYING**

» Read Matthew 4:1-11.

Don’t react! Think about it. Sometimes we get into big trouble because we respond without thinking. Think of a few temptations you struggle with and list them in the far left boxes. Then think about the three W’s of resisting temptation found in the wilderness story. Then remind yourself of what a child of God would/should do in response. And imagine the intended result.

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