

September 7  
Adults and Next Gen  
Lesson 35

2025  
**CHRONOLOGICAL BIBLE**

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**IS ANYONE ABOVE  
GOD'S AUTHORITY?  
Daniel 4**

## IS ANYONE ABOVE GOD'S AUTHORITY? Daniel 4

### MAIN IDEA

God's sovereignty extends over everyone and everything.

### OUTLINE

#### Weekly Reading Recap

#### Era Overview

#### Introduction

#### 1. God Is Sovereign Over Your Personal Life (Daniel 4:1–27, pp. 887–889)

- Elements of Nebuchadnezzar's Dream
- Explanation of Nebuchadnezzar's Dream
- Daniel's Plea to Nebuchadnezzar

#### 2. God Is Sovereign Over Your Public Life (Daniel 4:28–33, p. 889)

- God's character hadn't changed.
- Nebuchadnezzar's character hadn't changed.
- Result of When God's Character and Man's Character Conflict

#### 3. God Is Sovereign Over Everything (Daniel 4:34–37, p. 889)

- Nebuchadnezzar praised God.

#### Redemption Thread

**Call to Action** (Repent of your sin and follow Jesus.)

#### Conclusion

### Special Note

This Life Group series draws from the work of Iva May and her team at Chronological Bible Teaching Ministries Inc. Foundational concepts, such as dividing the Bible into 14 Eras, the Redemption Thread, and understanding how God speaks, acts, and reveals Himself in each era, come directly from her work. We are thankful for her willingness to allow us to utilize her

14 Era framework and concepts to create these lessons. Our aim with this series is to encourage participants to read the Bible chronologically, but it is not intended to replace or replicate the comprehensive work of Iva and her team. For more resources on reading the Bible chronologically, we highly recommend visiting [chronologicalbibleteaching.com](http://chronologicalbibleteaching.com).

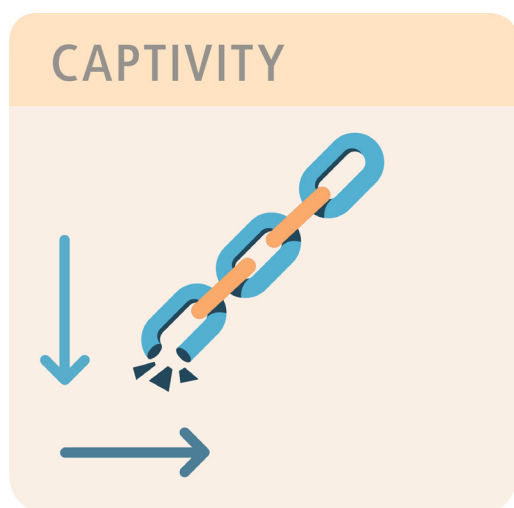


## WEEKLY READING RECAP

This week's reading covered some of the closing events of the exile of God's people, important genealogies, and visions of future restoration. In Ezekiel, we read about a vision of the temple's restoration and the return of the Lord's presence. Daniel 4 records how God humbled King Nebuchadnezzar and eventually restored him, prompting this pagan king to praise God. Psalm 137 captured the Israelites' sadness and yearning to be home, revealing the cost of their disobedience.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What did the vision of the temple's restoration communicate to God's people? Why was this message important?



## ERA OVERVIEW

*Leader, our lesson today takes place during the Captivity Era. Utilizing page A17 in your Chronological Bible, briefly review the Captivity Era and its connection to the larger story.*

## INTRODUCTION

When we read the book of Daniel, it's easy to believe that the events in the opening chapters all occur together. However, the events of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in Daniel 3 occur about 30 years before the events in Daniel 4, which is our lesson today. During that time, Daniel was faithful in his work and became prominent in King Nebuchadnezzar's court. Babylon also prospered and grew under Nebuchadnezzar's leadership, and it was the global superpower of its day.

Nebuchadnezzar was sovereign over the Babylonian Empire, which included many vanquished and defeated countries, but was he sovereign over all? Was the most powerful man in the world above God's authority? We'll examine that question and discuss its implications in today's lesson.

## GOD IS SOVEREIGN OVER YOUR PERSONAL

**LIFE** (Daniel 4:1–27, pp. 887–889)

The sovereignty of God means that God possesses absolute authority over all creation and that nothing occurs apart from His will or permission. *(Leader, for further explanation on God's sovereignty, check out the article in the Additional Resources section.)*

## Elements of Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

Daniel 4 begins with Nebuchadnezzar sending a message to his entire empire. He tells a story of having a dream that neither he nor his advisors understood. Nebuchadnezzar didn't realize it yet, but this dream was the beginning of God revealing His sovereignty over Nebuchadnezzar's life. Eventually, Nebuchadnezzar explained the dream to Belteshazzar (Daniel)—it consisted of these elements:

- A large, lush tree grew into the heavens for the whole world to see.
- The tree provided shade, protection, and food for the entire world.
- An angel appeared and commanded that the tree be cut down and the stump and roots be bound with a band of iron and bronze.
- The angel pronounced that he should be drenched with dew and live with the animals for seven periods of time.
- The angel said this would happen so everyone would know that God rules over the kingdoms of the world.

Using the gift given to him by God, Daniel interpreted Nebuchadnezzar's dream.

**NOTHING IS OUTSIDE OF GOD'S KNOWLEDGE OR REACH. HE KNOWS EVERYTHING ABOUT EACH PERSON, EVEN THE CONTENT OF THEIR DREAMS.**

## Explanation of Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

Read Daniel 4:19–22 (p. 888).

Daniel explained that the tree represented Nebuchadnezzar because he had become great and his empire was vast.

Read Daniel 4:24–26 (pp. 888–889).

Daniel explained that Nebuchadnezzar would be driven from human society and live like an animal for “seven periods of time” (Daniel 4:16, p. 888), until he was ready to admit that God rules the world's kingdoms. But Nebuchadnezzar would receive his kingdom back at the end of that time.

God's first step in revealing His authority over Nebuchadnezzar was by invading his dreams, which are deeply personal. By doing this, God revealed that nothing is outside of His knowledge or reach. He knows everything about each person, even the content of their dreams.

### **Daniel's Plea to Nebuchadnezzar**

Read Daniel 4:27 (p. 889).

Daniel called Nebuchadnezzar to repent and turn from his sinful ways. Knowing that God is merciful, Daniel pleaded with Nebuchadnezzar to turn to God.

This is a great reminder that nothing in our personal lives is hidden from the Lord. Are you hiding a sin in your life, desperately hoping that no one will ever find out? Listen to Daniel's plea—repent and turn to God quickly. Remember, sin always leads to consequences, so it's better to proactively fall into God's patient hands than to wait for His eventual discipline.

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. God was able to communicate through Nebuchadnezzar's dreams. What does that say about God's authority and power?
2. Why do you think God allowed Nebuchadnezzar to become so powerful?

**THERE'S ONLY ONE RESULT WHEN GOD'S CHARACTER AND MAN'S CHARACTER COME INTO CONFLICT: GOD WINS.**

### **GOD IS SOVEREIGN OVER YOUR PUBLIC**

**LIFE** (Daniel 4:28–33, p. 889)

Ask someone to read Daniel 4:29–30 (p. 889).

In these verses, we see two things:

#### **God's character hadn't changed.**

God is patient and gives people the opportunity to turn to Him. He waited an entire year to allow Nebuchadnezzar to repent.

**IF GOD WAS SOVEREIGN OVER NEBUCHADNEZZAR, THEN WHAT MAKES YOU THINK YOUR POSITION, PERSONALITY, OR PERFORMANCE IS ENOUGH TO PROTECT YOU FROM GOD'S PUNISHMENT FOR THE SIN YOU'RE HARBORING?**

#### **Nebuchadnezzar's character hadn't changed.**

Even after God's warning, Nebuchadnezzar still believed he was the pinnacle of power.

He looked around and believed his success should only be attributed to him.

However, there's only one result when God's character and man's character come into conflict: God wins.

### **Result of When God's Character and Man's Character Conflict**

Ask someone to read Daniel 4:31–33 (p. 889).

In one moment, Nebuchadnezzar went from leading an empire to believing he was an animal. Interestingly, there's a medical condition called zoanthropy, which is a mental disorder where a person believes they're an animal. And while "seven periods of time" is ambiguous, most scholars believe this means Nebuchadnezzar lived like this for seven years.

Publicly, the world was at Nebuchadnezzar's feet. He answered to no one, conquered foreign nations, and succeeded at every turn. There was no one stronger, wiser, or more powerful than him. His response to Daniel's warning shows he believed that he was strong enough to protect himself from anything God sent his way. But his public power and persona meant nothing to the Lord.

If God was sovereign over Nebuchadnezzar, then what makes you think your position, personality, or performance is enough to protect you from God's punishment for the sin you're harboring?

Read Luke 12:2–3 (p. 1,047, Gospel Era).

In our Chronological Bible readings so far this year, we've seen the Lord demonstrate His sovereignty over multiple leaders because of their sin:

- Moses was forbidden from entering Canaan because of his disobedience (Exodus Era).
- Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu, who were both priests, were killed because they didn't follow God's directions (Exodus Era).
- High Priest Eli and his sons were killed because of their sin and Eli's refusal to discipline his sons (Judges Era).

God has offered you grace by giving you time to repent of the sin you're harboring. But when confronting sin, God is no respecter of persons or positions. Because of His sovereignty, He will confront you, and He may discipline you by removing you from your position. Is your sin worth that?

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. Why does God consider sin such a big deal?
2. Why do people delay in repenting from their sins when they know they should?
3. Why is it tempting to think that, because nothing has happened yet, God is turning a blind eye to your sin?

### **GOD IS SOVEREIGN OVER EVERYTHING**

(Daniel 4:34–37, p. 889)

Ask someone to read Daniel 4:34–36 (p. 889).

Finally, Nebuchadnezzar looked to heaven. His sanity returned, and he was finally ready to praise and worship God. What he was unwilling to do for an entire year after being warned by Daniel he now willingly did after personally experiencing God's sovereignty and power for seven years. Nebuchadnezzar's stubbornness led him down a much more difficult path.

Nebuchadnezzar now fully understood that God was sovereign over all things. He learned that:

- God's rule will never end.
- God's kingdom is eternal.
- No one, including himself, can be compared to God.
- God does what He pleases in heaven and on earth.
- No one has power or authority over God.

What was the purpose of Nebuchadnezzar's encounter with God? Let's go back and look at Nebuchadnezzar's dream when its purpose was declared in Daniel 4:17a (p. 888)—"it is commanded by the holy ones, so that everyone may know that the Most High rules over the kingdoms of the world."

Did God accomplish this purpose?

**TO PROVE THAT HE IS SOVEREIGN OVER EVERYTHING, GOD SHOWED THE MOST POWERFUL MAN OF THE GREATEST EMPIRE THAT HE WAS SOVEREIGN OVER HIM.**

#### **Nebuchadnezzar praised God.**

Nebuchadnezzar wrapped up his letter to the entire kingdom with this statement in Daniel 4:37 (p. 889)—"Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and glorify and honor the King of heaven. All his acts are just and true, and he is able to humble the proud."

Nebuchadnezzar praised and glorified God before his entire empire, putting his adoration exactly where it needed to be.

While God sought to humble Nebuchadnezzar, He had a larger truth to teach to an entire nation, which Daniel declared in Daniel 4:25 (p. 889)—"until you learn that the Most High rules over the kingdoms of the world." To prove that He is sovereign over everything, God showed the most powerful man of the greatest empire that He was sovereign over him.

#### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. How does God's sovereignty over everything affect you personally?
2. Has God ever humbled you through experiences He allowed in your life? How did that impact you?

#### **REDEMPTION THREAD**

Scholars disagree on whether Nebuchadnezzar became a faithful follower of God. However, what's not in dispute is that God's character never changes. When Adam and Eve sinned in the Creation Era, God covered them with animal skins and promised to send a Savior who would defeat Satan. When God's people sinned in the wilderness during the Exodus Era, God repeatedly forgave them. In the Judges Era, God's people continually got caught in the sin cycle, yet God helped them every time they cried for help. When King David sinned during the Kingdom Era, God forgave him. God gave Nebuchadnezzar time to repent and even gave him a second opportunity, seven years later, to turn to Him. God offers us this same opportunity today. He has continued to provide you with time to turn from your sin because His character is one of patience and love. However, His character is also just, so He will eventually hold you accountable for your sin. Will you repent today?

#### **CALL TO ACTION**

*Leader, encourage the believers in your Life Group to repent of any sin they're currently entangled in.*

*Encourage your Life Group members who are not saved to repent of their sin and turn to Jesus. Briefly present the Gospel.*

#### **Outline to use to present the Gospel:**

1) Repent of your sin.

*Luke 13:3 NASB 1995—"I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish."*

2) Believe that Jesus died for your sins and rose from the grave.

*Acts 16:31 NASB 1995—"They said, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.'"*

3) Receive Jesus as your Lord and Savior.

*John 1:12 NASB 1995—"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name."*

#### **CONCLUSION**

Today's main idea is that "God's sovereignty extends over everyone and everything." God rules not only over the kingdoms of this world but also over our individual lives. God expects and deserves our obedience. This is why Bellevue values biblical truth—because we will find God's directions and commands for our lives in the pages of the Bible. Continue to read God's Word this year so you can continue to obey and follow Him!

# NEXT GEN

## IS ANYONE ABOVE GOD'S AUTHORITY? Daniel 4

### OPENING

#### Activity: Humble or Proud

Supplies: None

Read a series of scenarios to your students. Instruct everyone to offer responses to the scenarios that are either humble or prideful. As you work through each scenario, discuss how someone's response shows a heart of pride or a posture of humility.

Possible scenarios:

- You score the winning basket against your school's biggest rival.
- You receive a perfect grade on a major science test.
- Your coach reprimands you for lackluster effort and makes you run.
- You help a friend study for a test, and they get a good grade.
- You mess up your lines in the play that the whole school attended.

Explain that everyone has to live under authority and that in today's lesson, King Nebuchadnezzar learned that he had to live under God's authority.

### Discussion Questions

1. Why do students struggle to acknowledge someone else's authority?
2. What do you think it means when someone says, "God is sovereign"?
3. Do you believe God cares about both the secret and the public parts of your life? How come?

### APPLICATION

Give each of your students a piece of paper and a pen. Instruct them to answer each of these questions with one sentence:

- What's an example of a time when I was stubborn toward God and His directions?
- What was the consequence I experienced because of my stubbornness?
- How would that situation have been different if I had surrendered to God sooner?

Allow volunteers to share what they wrote on their papers.

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### Additional Resources

"What Happens to Those Who Walk in Pride (Daniel 4:37)?"

[gotquestions.org/those-who-walk-in-pride.html](http://gotquestions.org/those-who-walk-in-pride.html)

"What Does It Mean That God Is Sovereign?"

[gotquestions.org/God-is-sovereign.html](http://gotquestions.org/God-is-sovereign.html)

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September 14  
Adults and Next Gen  
Lesson 36

2025  
**CHRONOLOGICAL BIBLE**

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**IS THERE POWER  
IN MY PRAYERS?  
Daniel 9**



## IS THERE POWER IN MY PRAYERS? Daniel 9

### MAIN IDEA

God hears my prayers when I worship Him, confess my sin, and plead for restoration.

### OUTLINE

#### Weekly Reading Recap

#### Era Overview

#### Introduction

- 1. When Daniel Prayed, He Worshiped God (Daniel 9:4, p. 909)**
  - First, Daniel acknowledged God's power.
  - Second, Daniel acknowledged God's character.
- 2. When Daniel Prayed, He Confessed Sin (Daniel 9:5, p. 909)**
  - Daniel accepted responsibility.
  - Daniel humbled himself.
  - Daniel agreed with God.
- 3. When Daniel Prayed, He Pleaded for Restoration (Daniel 9:15–23a, pp. 909–910)**
  - Daniel understood the severity of their sin.
  - God responded to Daniel's prayer.

#### Redemption Thread

**Call to Action** (Write a prayer following Daniel's example.)

#### Conclusion

#### Special Note

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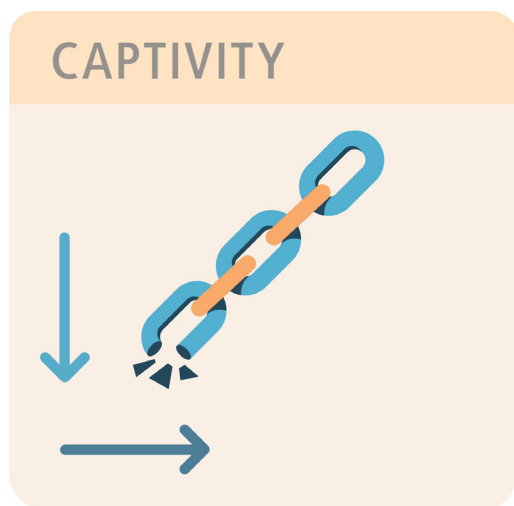


## WEEKLY READING RECAP

This week's reading revealed God's hand over His people as they returned from exile in Babylon. King Cyrus declared that the Israelites could begin rebuilding the temple, and Ezra recorded the people who returned to Jerusalem. When they returned, the people faced hardship and opposition, and the rebuilding of the temple was even stalled. However, it was restarted under the prophetic leadership of Haggai and Zechariah.

### DISCUSSION QUESTION

1. What's one new thing you learned about God's character in this week's reading?



### ERA OVERVIEW

Leader, our lesson today takes place during the Captivity Era. Utilizing page A17 in your Chronological Bible, briefly review the Captivity Era and its connection to the larger story.

### INTRODUCTION

Leader, share one new thing you've learned while reading the Chronological Bible this year.

When you diligently read God's Word, you'll learn new things you've never noticed before. Daniel was a godly man who loved the Lord, but as he was reading the prophetic words of Jeremiah, he learned a new truth.

Read Daniel 9:1-2 (p. 909).

Daniel learned from Jeremiah that God didn't intend for His people to live in captivity indefinitely but for 70 years. Let's look at those passages.

Ask someone to read Jeremiah 25:11-12 (p. 773, Divided Kingdom Era).

Ask someone to read Jeremiah 29:10 (p. 803, Divided Kingdom Era).

In today's lesson, we'll examine Daniel's response to reading God's Word and discuss how we can follow his example when we read the Bible today.

**DANIEL WAS DETERMINED TO GIVE HIS WHOLE ATTENTION TO THE LORD AS HE PRAYED AND SOUGHT GOD'S PRESENCE.**

### WHEN DANIEL PRAYED, HE WORSHIPED

**GOD** (Daniel 9:4, p. 909)

Ask someone to read Daniel 9:3-4 (p. 909).

It says Daniel turned to God in prayer, and the literal meaning of the original language is "I gave my face." Daniel was determined to give his whole attention to the Lord as he prayed and sought God's presence.

Daniel began his prayer by worshiping the Lord.

#### First, Daniel acknowledged God's power.

Daniel started by declaring God's greatness. As a student of God's Word, Daniel knew the stories of God's power.

He knew that God enabled Abraham and Sarah to have a child in the Patriarch Era when they were 100 and 90 years old, respectively. He knew that God liberated the Israelites from slavery in Egypt during the Exodus Era. He knew that God miraculously conquered Jericho through Joshua's leadership during the Conquest Era. He knew that God raised a shepherd boy named David to become the second king of Israel during the Kingdom Era. Plus, Daniel had discovered God's power personally when he took steps of obedience earlier in his life! His knowledge and study of God's Word ensured that he knew there's only one person who's great and awesome, and that is God.

#### Second, Daniel acknowledged God's character.

Daniel continued his worship by pronouncing that God always keeps His promises to those who love Him and follow His commands. Every example of God's power that we just named was tied to God's promises. God promised Abraham and Sarah they would have a son, and He honored His word. God promised Abraham that his descendants would be oppressed for many years but that He would liberate them and they would take the riches of their oppressors. God kept that promise. God told David through the prophet Samuel that he would become king. God kept His word. When God gives a promise, He is faithful to keep it!

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Daniel gave his face to God in prayer. What would it look like for you to give your full attention to God when you read His Word each day?

2. What are other instances in Scripture where God proved His greatness and character? Do you believe He still reveals these characteristics today?

### **WHEN DANIEL PRAYED, HE CONFESSED**

**SIN** (Daniel 9:5–14, p. 909)

Ask someone to read Daniel 9:5–14 (p. 909).

In this prayer, Daniel confessed both his personal sin and the corporate sin of all the Israelites. Daniel gives us an excellent example of what it looks like to honestly confess your sin before God.

**DANIEL DIDN'T STIFFEN HIS NECK AND STICK HIS FIST IN GOD'S FACE, ATTEMPTING TO JUSTIFY HIS SIN, BUT INSTEAD HE HUMBLY BOWED IN GOD'S PRESENCE.**

#### **Daniel accepted responsibility.**

Throughout his prayer, Daniel said “we” and “us” when confessing sin. At no point did he seek to separate himself as more righteous than anyone else. Daniel knew that even though he had sought to follow God throughout his life, he was just like everyone else. Even though there isn't a record in Scripture of any of Daniel's sins, he knew he was sinful and deserved God's judgment. He never attempted to highlight others' sins while downplaying his own; instead, he stood before a holy God knowing he had sinned against Him.

#### **Daniel humbled himself.**

Not only did Daniel cover himself with rough burlap and ashes (Daniel 9:3, p. 909), but also in his prayer, he stated, “our faces are covered with shame” (Daniel 9:7, p. 909), revealing that he approached God with a humble heart. He spiritually and physically took a humble position before God. He didn't stiffen his neck and stick his fist in God's face, attempting to justify his sin, but instead he humbly bowed in God's presence.

**IF YOU'RE STRUGGLING WITH THE SAME SIN REPEATEDLY, YOU MAY NEED TO EXAMINE WHETHER YOU'VE TRULY CONFESSED AND REPENTED OF YOUR SIN.**

#### **Daniel agreed with God.**

Daniel concluded his confession by saying, “The LORD our God was right to do all of these things” (Daniel 9:14b, p. 909). He agreed with God's definition of sin and His execution of their punishment.

How do you respond when you read Scripture and your sin is pointed out from its holy pages?

- Do you accept responsibility or deflect accountability?
- Do you humble yourself or stand defiantly in God's presence?
- Do you agree or disagree with God's definition of sin?

These are questions that demand to be wrestled with. If you're struggling with the same sin repeatedly, you may need to examine whether you've truly confessed and repented of your sin.

#### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. Why is it difficult to confess our sin, especially when we believe we're more righteous than others?
2. What keeps people from agreeing with God's definition of sin and the way He executes discipline?

**BECAUSE DANIEL UNDERSTOOD THE SEVERITY OF THE PEOPLE'S SIN, HE KNEW RESTORATION WAS IMPOSSIBLE THROUGH GOOD BEHAVIOR; IT WAS ONLY POSSIBLE THROUGH GOD'S GRACIOUSNESS.**

### **WHEN DANIEL PRAYED, HE PLEADED FOR RESTORATION**

(Daniel 9:15–23a, pp. 909–910)

Ask someone to read Daniel 9:15–23a (pp. 909–910).

#### **Daniel understood the severity of their sin.**

First, Daniel worshiped God. Next, he confessed his sin. Then Daniel ended his prayer by pleading with God for restoration. He knew that his sin and the sins of the people had driven them from the land God had promised them, and he knew they didn't deserve to be forgiven and restored. They had turned entirely away from God, and they deserved exile and death.

But Daniel called out to heaven and asked God to stoop low and offer mercy even though they (and he) didn't deserve it. Because Daniel understood the severity of their sin, he knew restoration was impossible through good behavior; it was only possible through God's graciousness.

#### **DISCUSSION QUESTION**

1. Why is it noteworthy that Daniel never attempted to earn God's forgiveness but instead asked for His mercy?

After Daniel worshiped, confessed sin, and pleaded for restoration, did God respond to his prayer?

Ask someone to read Daniel 9:20–23a (p. 910).

#### **God responded to Daniel's prayer.**

The moment Daniel began praying, he was heard by God. God took immediate action by giving orders

and sending an angel to communicate with Daniel. This was all based upon the prayers of one person.

Read James 5:16b (p. 1,226, Missions Era)—“The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.”

Daniel was righteous before the Lord because he repented and humbled himself in God’s presence. Do you feel like God doesn’t hear or answer your prayers? It could be that you’re holding on to your sin instead of submitting to God’s authority. Let today be the day you humble yourself and completely turn away from your sin.

Read Psalm 66:18 (p. 452, Kingdom Era)—“If I had not confessed the sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened.”

### **REDEMPTION THREAD**

The answer God sent to Daniel through Gabriel in Daniel 9:23–27 (p. 910) speaks to God’s redemptive plan for people through the Messiah. Gabriel spoke of “seventy sets of seven” (Daniel 9:24, p. 910), and many scholars believe each “seven” represented seven years. The first seven sets of seven (49 years) commenced with the command to rebuild Jerusalem, and those sets terminated with the completion of the work of Ezra and Nehemiah. The next 62 sets of seven (434 years) extended to Jesus’ crucifixion, for a total of 483 years. The last set of seven (seven years) refers to the seven years immediately preceding Christ’s second return, and this will be a horrible time of tribulation for the world. This prophecy symbolizes Jesus’ first and second coming. (There are several theories concerning this prophecy, but this is the one agreed upon by many conservative scholars.)

### **CALL TO ACTION**

Give each person in your Life Group a piece of paper and ensure everyone has a pen. Direct them to write a prayer that follows Daniel’s example in today’s lesson.

### **CONCLUSION**

Our lesson today started with Daniel reading God’s Word. It’s important to remember that reading God’s Word impacts our relationship with Him. Daniel’s response revealed a humble and repentant heart, which prompted God to act. Daniel also gave us an excellent example to follow when we pray: Worship God, confess sin, and plead for restoration. When we pray, we must remember that God’s answer may not always be in the form we expect. If you desire to see God move in significant ways in your life like He did for Daniel, it begins with reading God’s Word and authentically submitting yourself to Him. This is why Bellevue values biblical truth, because we believe that God’s perfect Word is our standard for life and faith.

## **NEXT GEN**

### **IS THERE POWER IN MY PRAYERS? Daniel 9**

#### **OPENING**

##### **Discussion Questions**

1. How would your time reading the Bible and praying during the week change if you gave God your full attention?
2. What’s the difference between *admitting* you did something wrong and truly *repenting* of it?
3. Can prayer really change things in the world? Why or why not?

#### **APPLICATION**

Instruct your students to pair up and pray together. Direct them to follow Daniel’s example from our lesson today:

- Worship God.
- Confess sin.
- Plead for restoration.

When everyone is finished, pray over your students.

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#### **Additional Resources**

“What Are Some Hindrances to a Potent Prayer Life?”  
[gotquestions.org/prayer-hindrances.html](http://gotquestions.org/prayer-hindrances.html)

“What Are the Seventy Sevens in Daniel 9:24–27?”  
[gotquestions.org/seventy-sevens.html](http://gotquestions.org/seventy-sevens.html)

\*All thoughts and ideas listed under Additional Resources may not be completely in agreement with Bellevue’s theology, and their listing should not be considered as an endorsement.

# CONGRATULATIONS— YOU FINISHED LESSON 36!



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September 21  
Adults and Next Gen  
Lesson 37

2025  
**CHRONOLOGICAL BIBLE**

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**HOW SHOULD I  
RESPOND TO GOD-  
SIZED CHALLENGES?  
Nehemiah 1:1–2:8**

## HOW SHOULD I RESPOND TO GOD-SIZED CHALLENGES? Nehemiah 1:1–2:8

### MAIN IDEA

I should pray wholeheartedly, wait patiently, and act boldly when I'm faced with a God-sized challenge.

### OUTLINE

#### Weekly Reading Recap

#### Era Overview

#### Introduction

- 1. Pray Wholeheartedly (Nehemiah 1:4–11, p. 945)**
  - Celebrate
  - Confess
  - Claim
  - Call
- 2. Wait Patiently (Nehemiah 1:1b, 2:1a, p. 945)**
  - Waiting on God builds faith.
  - Not waiting on God brings failure.
- 3. Act Boldly (Nehemiah 2:1–8, pp. 945–946)**
  - Persian kings expected cheerful servants.
  - Nehemiah's request was risky.
  - Nehemiah understood the gravity of the moment.

#### Redemption Thread

**Call to Action** (Answer this question: How can I wait well while I wait on God to move?)

#### Conclusion

#### Special Note

This Life Group series draws from the work of Iva May and her team at Chronological Bible Teaching Ministries Inc. Foundational concepts, such as dividing the Bible into 14 Eras, the Redemption Thread, and understanding how God speaks, acts, and reveals Himself in each era, come directly from her work. We are thankful for her willingness to allow us to utilize her

14 Era framework and concepts to create these lessons. Our aim with this series is to encourage participants to read the Bible chronologically, but it is not intended to replace or replicate the comprehensive work of Iva and her team. For more resources on reading the Bible chronologically, we highly recommend visiting [chronologicalbibleteaching.com](http://chronologicalbibleteaching.com).



## WEEKLY READING RECAP

This week's reading revealed the challenges God's people faced in captivity and returning home. We finished Esther's account and saw how God used her courage to save the Jewish people under King Xerxes' rule. The Feast of Purim was implemented into the Jewish calendar to celebrate this victory. Under God's blessing, Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem to lead the people in rebuilding the city's walls in record time. Under Ezra's influence, the people repented of their sin and implemented much-needed spiritual reforms.

## DISCUSSION QUESTION

1. What did you learn about God's character this week as you read about His people coming home after 70 years in exile?



## ERA OVERVIEW

*Leader, our lesson today takes place during the Return Era. Utilizing page A18 in your Chronological Bible, briefly review the Return Era and its connection to the larger story.*

**IMPOSSIBLE SITUATIONS ARE ORDAINED BY GOD TO PROMPT HIS PEOPLE TO PRAY AND PREPARE FOR HIS ACTIVITY.**

## INTRODUCTION

Ask someone to read Nehemiah 1:1-3 (p. 945).

As the book of Nehemiah begins, we discover that Jerusalem is still in deplorable shape. The people who initially returned to Jerusalem to rebuild the city faced opposition and eventually were told to stop their

work by King Artaxerxes (Ezra 4:7-23, pp. 939-940). Because of this, the city still lay in ruin. Like a soccer team without a goalie, Jerusalem sat exposed and vulnerable to attack because the wall had been destroyed and the gates burned.

As the City of David, God's city, lay in ruins, what could Nehemiah do about it? Could he do anything at all? Or was this challenge too big for him to tackle?

Iva May, author of multiple Chronological Bible studies, said, "Impossible situations are ordained by God to prompt His people to pray and prepare for His activity."

Today's lesson will examine Nehemiah's response to this God-sized challenge, which led to one of the most extraordinary acts in Jewish history. Additionally, we'll see how we can follow Nehemiah's example in our own lives when we confront seemingly impossible challenges.

## **PRAY WHOLEHEARTEDLY** (Nehemiah 1:4-11, p. 945)

Ask someone to read Nehemiah 1:4-11 (p. 945).

Overwhelmed by the magnitude of the problem, Nehemiah prayed, taking his burden and grief directly to the Lord. Let's briefly examine the different elements of Nehemiah's prayer.

## **Celebrate** (Nehemiah 1:5, p. 945)

Nehemiah began his prayer by worshiping God and celebrating His greatness. Like Daniel, he called God "great and awesome." The Hebrew word used for "awesome" is the same word used for "to revere." God's awesomeness prompted Nehemiah to revere Him or, as the Old Testament often says, to fear Him. What characteristic about God prompted Nehemiah to worship Him? The fact that God always keeps His promises and that with each fulfilled promise, God reveals more of Himself to His people. (*Leader, refer to the examples in the first point of last week's lesson if you want to review them with your group.*)

## **Confess** (Nehemiah 1:6-7, p. 945)

Like Daniel, Nehemiah didn't attempt to elevate himself above other people. He distinctly called out his own sin and the sin of his family. Everyone, including himself, was guilty of breaking God's "commands, decrees, and regulations" given through Moses in the Exodus Era. Nehemiah didn't attempt to downplay the people's sin but called it exactly for what it was—an offense against a holy God.

## **Claim** (Nehemiah 1:8-9, p. 945)

Nehemiah claimed God's promise that He would bring His people home if they repented and returned to Him. Where did God make that promise?

Ask someone to read Deuteronomy 30:1-4 (p. 265, Exodus Era).



God didn't need to be reminded of His promise, but by claiming God's promise, Nehemiah revealed that he knew, believed, and trusted God's Word. By praying the words of God, he was praying the will of God, and we know that God will hear and answer our prayers that align with His will (1 John 5:14–15, p. 1,262, Missions Era).

**IN A CHRISTIAN'S LIFE, THERE IS NO ROOM FOR SUPERFICIAL OR UNTHOUGHTFUL PRAYER. GOD HEARS PEOPLE WHO COME TO HIM WHOLEHEARTEDLY AND SINCERELY.**

**Call** (Nehemiah 1:10–11, p. 945)

Nehemiah completed his prayer by calling on God to respond to a specific request. He knew that his only avenue of success lay through the king, whom he served directly, so Nehemiah asked for favor with him.

Both in last week's lesson and in this week's, we've seen examples of people who pray deeply to God. In fact, Nehemiah took his prayer to the Lord for multiple days and fasted as he cried out to God. At Bellevue, we believe that we grow in Christlikeness through prayer. In a Christian's life, there is no room for superficial or unthoughtful prayer. God hears people who come to Him wholeheartedly and sincerely.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. In Nehemiah's prayer, why do you think he didn't just jump to his request? How do your prayers line up with his?
2. How can we ensure we claim God's promises wisely without misusing them?

**WAITING ON GOD OFTEN REQUIRES MORE BRAVERY AND COURAGE THAN TAKING ACTION BECAUSE YOU'RE PLACING ALL YOUR HOPE AND TRUST IN HIM, NOT YOURSELF.**

**WAIT PATIENTLY** (Nehemiah 1:1b, 2:1a, p. 945)  
Read Nehemiah 1:1b and 2:1 (p. 945).

There are many four-letter words that Christians believe are crude and should not be uttered. You're probably familiar with multiple swear words, but are you familiar with the W-word that brings a chill down everyone's spine?

W-A-I-T.

Nehemiah 1:1 occurred in the month of Kislev, which is about November or December, and Nehemiah 2:1 occurred in the month of Nisan, around April

or May. That means Nehemiah had to wait for at least four months before he was able to take any action concerning this God-sized problem. Nehemiah may have been chomping at the bit to move, but he chose to wait until God opened a path for him to follow. How did Nehemiah learn to wait on God? Possibly it was from his father, Hacaliah, whose name means "wait patiently on YHWH."

**Waiting on God builds faith.**

Read Psalm 27:14 (p. 440, Kingdom Era)—  
"Wait patiently for the LORD. Be brave and courageous. Yes, wait patiently for the LORD."

Waiting on God often requires more bravery and courage than taking action because you're placing all your hope and trust in Him, not yourself. Throughout the previous eras, we've seen that when people wait on God even though they're afraid, they witness His great power. Each time this occurs, it builds their faith so they will trust Him again in the future.

**Not waiting on God brings failure.**

One man who grew afraid during a fearful situation and didn't wait on the Lord was King Saul during the Kingdom Era. Saul was instructed to wait for the prophet Samuel to offer a sacrifice to the Lord, but because he was surrounded by enemies, Saul became afraid and offered the sacrifice himself. The result?

Ask someone to read 1 Samuel 13:13–14 (p. 348, Kingdom Era).

Nehemiah knew he couldn't accomplish this task without God's help, so he chose to be patient and wait for God to provide a path forward. This decision helped ensure that his faith would be strong in the right moment and ensured that he wouldn't fail when the time came.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. How does prayer, like Nehemiah's in chapter 1, help strengthen people when they must wait on God to act?
2. Have you ever had to wait on God when facing a challenge that was too big for you? What did you learn during that waiting period?

**ACT BOLDLY** (Nehemiah 2:1–8, pp. 945–946)  
Read Nehemiah 2:1–8 (pp. 945–946).

Nehemiah may have chosen to wait, but that doesn't mean the burden of Jerusalem's condition didn't continue to weigh on him physically, emotionally, and spiritually. As he served the king one day, his guard was down. The king saw Nehemiah's burden and asked why he was sad. Nehemiah's fearful reaction is understandable for several reasons:

**Persian kings expected cheerful servants.**

Nehemiah had never before been sad in the king's presence for good reason. Kings believed that their presence was so exalted that any sign of sadness could be seen as disrespectful or dangerous.

### **Nehemiah's request was risky.**

King Artaxerxes had already authorized the stoppage of rebuilding Jerusalem's walls because of the people's history of rebellion (Ezra 4:7–23, pp. 939–940). Asking to restart the project could be seen as disrespectful at best or treasonous at worst. Neither one of those outcomes would be favorable for Nehemiah. He needed God to intervene in order to succeed.

## **NEHEMIAH WAITED WELL TO BE PREPARED WHEN GOD PROVIDED THE RIGHT MOMENT.**

### **Nehemiah understood the gravity of the moment.**

History is often made in small moments, and Nehemiah knew this was one of those moments. He desired to see God's redemptive plan move forward and felt the weight of the potential outcome of this one conversation.

After one last prayer, Nehemiah laid out his request to the king. But he didn't just make a request; he presented a bold plan that revealed he had spent his waiting period strategically working through the details. In other words, he waited well to be prepared when God provided the right moment.

How can we tell that Nehemiah prepared so that he was ready to make his bold request? Nehemiah told the king:

- What he needed to accomplish.
- How long he would be gone.
- Which governors could provide him safe passage to Judah.
- The supplies needed to build the temple, the wall, and his house.

Nehemiah may have been taking a step of faith, but he was not stepping into the dark. He could take a bold step because he waited well and figured out what he needed.

And the result? Verse eight says, "And the king granted those requests, because the gracious hand of God was on me" (Nehemiah 2:8c, p. 946).

When Nehemiah received this impossible "yes," he knew it wasn't because of his wisdom or planning but because God had moved on his behalf. Nehemiah didn't take credit for God's actions; he pointed to his Heavenly Father for accomplishing only what He could have done.

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. When you're stuck and forced to wait on God, how can you wait well?
2. How do planning and faith go hand in hand?

### **REDEMPTION THREAD**

When God brought the Israelites to the promised land in the Exodus Era, He told them that if they obeyed His commands, He would bless them. However, He made it clear that if they disobeyed, He would curse their land and drive them into captivity. Even so, God promised to bring His people home and provide a Messiah who would save them from their sin and iniquity. When God makes a promise, He is faithful to keep it. God honored His promise by working through Nehemiah and allowing the people to come home. This was the first step in showing the people that He could be trusted to eventually send the Messiah, who would provide salvation not just for them but for the entire world.

### **CALL TO ACTION**

Instruct your Life Group members get into smaller groups. Tell the groups to talk about how they're having to wait on the Lord in one area of their lives. Have them discuss this question: "How can I wait well while I wait on God to move?"

### **CONCLUSION**

Our main idea today is "I should pray wholeheartedly, wait patiently, and act boldly when I am faced with a God-sized challenge." Recently, we've talked a lot about the importance of prayer, so if you're still only throwing out a one-sentence prayer as you walk out the door each morning, may this be the week that you get up earlier and spend intentional time with the Lord before your day starts. He wants to help you with the large and small challenges you face, but you must proactively spend time with Him first to receive His help.

# NEXT GEN

## HOW SHOULD I RESPOND TO GOD-SIZED CHALLENGES?

Nehemiah 1:1-2:8

### OPENING

#### Activity: Wall-Building Challenge

Supplies: Plastic cups and a timer

Help your students get into two or three equal-sized teams. Give each group a large number of plastic cups. Inform them that they'll have two minutes to build the biggest wall possible. The team that creates the biggest wall is the winner!

Explain to the students that in today's lesson they'll learn how Nehemiah responded when he realized that Jerusalem's wall needed to be rebuilt.

### Discussion Questions

1. What's the biggest challenge you've ever faced? How did you handle it?
2. What do you think people mean when they say, "Wait on the Lord"?
3. Why do you think prayer is essential when facing significant challenges?

### APPLICATION

Help your students get into several small groups. Direct the groups to discuss these questions:

- Where in your life are you waiting on God right now?
- What would it look like to wait well in your situation?

After the groups discuss their answers, direct them to pray for each other.

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### Additional Resources

"Who Was Nehemiah in the Bible?"

[gotquestions.org/life-Nehemiah.html](http://gotquestions.org/life-Nehemiah.html)

\*All thoughts and ideas listed under Additional Resources may not be completely in agreement with Bellevue's theology, and their listing should not be considered as an endorsement.

# CONGRATULATIONS— YOU FINISHED LESSON 37!



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September 28  
Adults and Next Gen  
Lesson 38

2025  
**CHRONOLOGICAL BIBLE**

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**CAN I OVERCOME  
TEMPTATION?  
Matthew 4:1–11**

## CAN I OVERCOME TEMPTATION? Matthew 4:1-11

### MAIN IDEA

I can overcome temptation by knowing and obeying Scripture.

### OUTLINE

#### Weekly Reading Recap

#### Era Overview

#### Introduction

1. **I Am Tempted by the Lust of My Flesh (Matthew 4:1-4, p. 989)**
  - Satan's Temptation
  - Jesus' Response
1. **I Am Tempted by My Pride (Matthew 4:5-7, p. 989)**
  - Satan's Temptation
  - Jesus' Response
2. **I Am Tempted by the Lust of My Eyes (Matthew 4:8-11, p. 989)**
  - Satan's Temptation
  - Jesus' Response
3. **How To Overcome Temptation**
  - Jesus knew Scripture.
  - Jesus obeyed Scripture.

#### Redemption Thread

**Call to Action** (Find a passage of Scripture to help with a common temptation.)

#### Conclusion

#### Special Note

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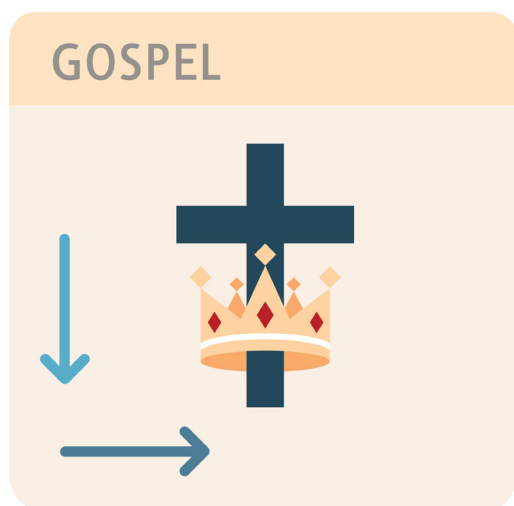
14 Era framework and concepts to create these lessons. Our aim with this series is to encourage participants to read the Bible chronologically, but it is not intended to replace or replicate the comprehensive work of Iva and her team. For more resources on reading the Bible chronologically, we highly recommend visiting [chronologicalbibleteaching.com](http://chronologicalbibleteaching.com).

## WEEKLY READING RECAP

In this week's reading we ended the Return Era as God's prophets called the people to turn from sin and corruption wholeheartedly and pursue God. Malachi rebuked the priests and the people for offering blemished sacrifices and withholding their tithes. Joel called the people to repentance while pointing them forward to a time when God would send an outpouring of His Spirit. Four hundred years passed during the Silent Era, and the Gospel Era began with the birth of the promised Messiah, Jesus Christ. John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus, who began His earthly ministry through miracles and teaching.

## DISCUSSION QUESTION

1. How has reading the Old Testament chronologically helped you better understand people's need for Christ?



## ERA OVERVIEW

*Leader, our lesson today takes place during the Gospel Era. Utilizing page A19 in your Chronological Bible, briefly review the Gospel Era and its connection to the larger story.*

**NO MATTER WHAT ERA, PEOPLE STRAYED FROM GOD'S WORD BECAUSE OF THE LUST OF THEIR FLESH, THE LUST OF THEIR EYES, AND THEIR PRIDE.**

## INTRODUCTION

In the Creation Era, Adam and Eve met an adversary who tempted them with a piece of fruit. When Eve determined that "the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes,

and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise" (Genesis 3:6, p. 9) (ESV), she ate the fruit. Satan had a clear plan in his attack against God's creation in Genesis 3, and we find it out in 1 John 2:16 (p. 1,259, Missions Era) (NKJV)—"For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world."

Satan tempted Adam and Eve through the lust of their flesh because the tree was good for food. He enticed them through the lust of their eyes because the fruit was a delight to their eyes. He lured them closer by appealing to their pride because they wanted to be like God.

Throughout the Old Testament, Satan never veered from this simple yet incredibly effective plan. No matter what era, people strayed from God's Word because of the lust of their flesh, the lust of their eyes, and their pride.

No matter how many times the people repented or were confronted by the prophets, they kept falling for these temptations. Would anyone ever be able to stand up to Satan and defeat him?

In today's lesson, we'll examine how Satan tried to tempt Jesus to sin and how Jesus responded to each attack. You'll also learn how to follow Jesus' example and find victory over temptation in your own life.

## I AM TEMPTED BY THE LUST OF MY

**FLESH** (Matthew 4:1–4, p. 989)

Ask someone to read Matthew 4:1–4 (p. 989).

Before this passage, Jesus' public ministry began dramatically with His baptism by John the Baptist. Following this "mountaintop" experience, the Holy Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness, where Satan tempted Him.

Alone and physically weak, Jesus became the target of Satan's attempt to derail Him from God's plan. Although Jesus was fully God, He was also fully human. This means He could choose His own path if He wished. In Jesus' exposed and weakened state, Satan saw an opportunity to strike.

**JESUS RESISTED TEMPTATION BECAUSE HE KNEW SCRIPTURE.**

## Satan's Temptation

Following his usual pattern, Satan first tried to create a lust of the flesh in Jesus. After a long

period without food, Jesus was extremely hungry, and Satan offered a simple solution to alleviate His hunger: All Jesus had to do was use His powers for personal gain to solve His problem.

Satan tempted Jesus with a harmless solution: “Turn these stones into bread.” It directly appealed to Jesus’ physical hunger—what the Bible calls “lust of the flesh.” The desire to eat isn’t sinful. But in this moment, Jesus was fasting in obedience to God. Breaking that fast would have meant stepping outside of God’s will to meet a legitimate need illegitimately.

The “lust of the flesh” often refers to the urge to fulfill our bodily appetites, such as hunger, security, sex, and protection. Are any of these needs inherently wrong? No, many are essential to life. However, when we’re filled with these appetites, the question is whether we will seek to fulfill them in a way that contradicts God’s plan or whether we will trust God and His ways. When we stray from God’s design to meet our needs, we fall into Satan’s temptation to fulfill our desires independently rather than relying on God.

### **Jesus’ Response**

Jesus responded to Satan with three crucial words: “It is written.” He resisted temptation because He knew Scripture. He quoted Deuteronomy 8:3, where Moses reminded the people that God miraculously provided manna for them in the wilderness. God wanted His people to remember that life isn’t solely about satisfying temporary appetites, which can never fully satisfy anyone. True satisfaction comes from living in obedience to God’s Word. By quoting this verse, Jesus emphasized that obeying God’s Word is what truly meets His needs, not the fulfillment of any appetite.

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. Satan attacked Jesus when He was physically weak. What are some practical lessons we can learn from this?
2. When your heart feels empty or vulnerable, what are the ways you’re most tempted to rely on yourself (or the world) instead of turning to God?

**THERE’S A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FAITHFULLY FOLLOWING GOD’S WORD AND FOOLISHLY PLUCKING A PORTION OF SCRIPTURE OUT OF CONTEXT.**

**I AM TEMPTED BY MY PRIDE** (Matthew 4:5–7, p. 989)  
Ask someone to read Matthew 4:5–7 (p. 989).

### **Satan’s Temptation**

Having failed at tempting Jesus through the lust of the flesh, Satan attempted to entice Jesus by pursuing the pride of life. Satan tempted Jesus to seek instant fame by creating a spectacle. Satan used

Psalm 91:11–12 to tempt Jesus to launch His ministry by creating a huge following just by stepping off a building. What better way to create an admiring crowd than to have a host of angels carry you to the ground? That’s a sure way to launch a huge following and convince everyone you’re God’s Son.

### **Jesus’ Response**

However, Jesus wasn’t interested in creating a spectacle, and, once again, He responded by saying, “It is written,” this time quoting Deuteronomy 6:16. There’s a difference between faithfully following God’s Word and foolishly plucking a portion of Scripture out of context. Jesus saw through Satan’s blatant misuse of Scripture and refused to follow that path. Jesus had a different agenda, and it had nothing to do with amassing admirers and followers.

Ask someone to read Philippians 2:5–8 (p. 1,219, Missions Era).

Jesus came not to be served or celebrated but to humble Himself and serve others—even to the point of dying on the cross. If He had stepped off that building when Satan tempted Him, Jesus would have declared that people’s admiration was more important to Him than the approval of God the Father.

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. What does this interaction between Satan and Jesus teach us about the importance of interpreting Scripture correctly?
2. How are we tempted today to make a name for ourselves instead of pointing people to Christ?

### **I AM TEMPTED BY THE LUST OF MY**

**EYES** (Matthew 4:8–11, p. 989)

Ask someone to read Matthew 4:8–11 (p. 989).

Jesus was faced with a dilemma when Satan put the world’s kingdoms before Him. Jesus aspired to eventually establish God’s kingdom here on earth, so would it matter if He took a shortcut to achieve His goal?

### **Satan’s Temptation**

Satan tried to tempt Jesus with the lust of the eyes by putting all the world’s kingdoms before Him. Satan hoped that by showing Jesus everything He sought to accomplish, he could tempt Jesus to throw His plans to the wind and take a shortcut.

Not only was Satan’s offer a shortcut, but also it was a path that didn’t involve a cross—success without suffering, triumph without trial. Surely, Jesus would jump at the opportunity to achieve His goal quicker with less hardship. All He had to do was bend His knee to the one who had wrecked all of creation. Satan attempted to entice Jesus to fulfill His ambition outside the will of His Father.

### **Jesus’ Response**

From the very beginning of time, this is what Satan has craved—worship. If he could get Jesus to



worship him, then he could entice anyone to do so. However, there was no hesitation in Jesus' reaction as He said, "It is written," one last time and quoted Deuteronomy 6:13. Jesus quickly reminded Satan that God was the only one worthy of worship.

Jesus directed Satan to leave Him, and Satan had no choice but to obey His command.

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Satan put the kingdoms of the world before Jesus, hoping Jesus would desire what He saw. What are the things we look at that fill us with lustful desires?
2. Jesus chose obedience over comfort, truth over compromise, and God's glory over His own ease. What's one decision you're facing where you need to follow Jesus' example?

#### HOW TO OVERCOME TEMPTATION

Satan's interaction with Jesus was very different from his interaction with Adam and Eve. Where Adam and Eve folded quickly, Jesus stood strong and resisted Satan's temptation. We may think Jesus fared better because He was Jesus, but was it a foregone conclusion that Jesus wouldn't sin?

Read Hebrews 4:15 (p. 1,241, Missions Era)—"This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin."

When Jesus was on earth, He faced all the temptations we face, yet He never sinned. This shows us that He had a choice every time He faced temptation, but He made the right decision *every time*. How did He do it, and is it possible for us to do the same thing?

Ask someone to read Psalm 119:11 (p. 671, Divided Kingdom Era)—"I have hidden your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you."

It all comes down to God's Word. Jesus' response to each of Satan's temptations reveals that He lived out the truth of Psalm 119:11 every day.

**WHEN FACED WITH TEMPTATION, KNOWING SCRIPTURE POINTS YOU IN THE DIRECTION YOU SHOULD GO, BUT YOU STILL MUST CHOOSE TO OBEY. IT'S NOT ENOUGH TO KNOW WHAT'S WRITTEN IF YOU DON'T DO WHAT'S WRITTEN.**

#### Jesus knew Scripture.

Each time Satan tempted Jesus, Jesus responded by saying, "It is written," and quoting a portion of Scripture. Jesus' one source to keep Him from choosing sin was Scripture. The only way He could have responded so quickly with God's Word in each situation is by reading and memorizing it. This level of mastery reveals a man who spent significant time with God's Word, not someone who read a quick verse and prayed as He walked out the door each morning.

#### Jesus obeyed Scripture.

When faced with temptation, knowing Scripture points you in the direction you should go, but you still must choose to obey. It's not enough to know what's written if you don't do what's written. This is what sets Jesus apart from every other person. He chose to obey Scripture every time. Many of us know the right thing to do, but we still choose to make the wrong choice.

If you don't value biblical truth and spend time learning the Bible, then you'll continue to succumb to temptation. Reading God's Word is the best way to know how to glorify God in every situation you'll face this week.

#### REDEMPTION THREAD

Throughout the eras of the Old Testament, innocent blood had to be shed for the forgiveness of sin. That's why God set up the sacrificial system during the Exodus Era. However, sacrificing an unblemished lamb only covered someone's sin temporarily. The people had to return repeatedly with sacrifices to cover their sin year after year. A perfect sacrifice was needed to cover everyone's sin for all time. Jesus' ability to turn away from Satan and overcome temptation ensured He would be that perfect sacrifice. Unlike anyone before Him, He was pure on the inside, which allowed Him to fulfill the requirements of God's law concerning sin.

#### CALL TO ACTION

Give everyone an index card and a pen. Instruct your Life Group members to think of a temptation they consistently struggle with. Direct them to use their Bible's concordance to find a verse that will help them overcome that temptation. Instruct them to write the verse on their card, and encourage them to pray that verse the next time they face temptation.

*Leader, here are some common temptations people face that you can write on your board:*

- Lust or pornography—2 Timothy 2:22 (p. 1,236, Missions Era)
- Pride—Proverbs 11:2 (p. 506, Kingdom Era)
- Seeking constant recognition—Matthew 6:1 (p. 1,006, Gospel Era)
- Sex outside of marriage—1 Corinthians 6:18–20 (p. 1,157, Missions Era)
- Overspending—Hebrews 13:5 (p. 1,250, Missions Era)
- Overwhelming desire to make money—1 Timothy 6:10 (p. 1,232, Missions Era)

#### CONCLUSION

No matter how long you've walked with Jesus, temptation is still part of your everyday life. Are you tired of capitulating to your desires and instead want to live victoriously? Then remember our main idea today—"I can overcome temptation by knowing and obeying Scripture." Take your temptation seriously this week and go to Scripture whenever you're tempted to sin. Jesus showed us that it's possible to defeat Satan's temptation tactics; all you have to do is follow His example. May this be the week when you find victory over your temptations!

# NEXT GEN

## CAN I OVERCOME TEMPTATION? Matthew 4:1-11

### OPENING

#### Discussion Questions

1. What are the biggest temptations that students face today?
2. Why is temptation harder to defeat when you're tired, lonely, or stressed?
3. What's a "harmless" shortcut you've been tempted to take recently, and why was it so appealing?

### APPLICATION

Give each student a note card and a pen. Direct them to find a Bible verse related to a temptation they struggle with and then write a prayer with these elements:

- Admit they struggle with their temptation.
- Agree with the truth they found in the Bible verse.
- Ask for strength and help as they face their temptation in the coming week.

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### Additional Resources

"How Can I Overcome Temptation?"

[gotquestions.org/overcome-temptation.html](http://gotquestions.org/overcome-temptation.html)

\*All thoughts and ideas listed under Additional Resources may not be completely in agreement with Bellevue's theology, and their listing should not be considered as an endorsement.

**CONGRATULATIONS—  
YOU FINISHED LESSON 38!**



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