



PULLED

Galatians 5:17

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Week Three -

1. We continued this week our sermon series Pulled. This series focuses on the forces that pull on our lives - The pull of the flesh and the pull of the Spirit. Some of those forces are pervasive worries, temptations, and desires (righteous vs sinful). Others include the pull of our responsibilities, pleasing God and doing what is right. Openly share some of the things pulling on you this week.
2. This week we focused on the second temptation of Jesus. **Luke 4:5-8 "The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. 6 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. 7 If you worship me, it will all be yours.' 8 Jesus answered, 'It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve him only'."** As you read these verses what stands out to you? What can you learn about temptation from these verses?
3. In the sermon I discussed five ways this temptation might translate to us today. FIRST: To worship anything instead of God is also called idolatry. John Piper reminds us **"Anything that you treasure more than God, that is an idol. An idol is a disordered love or desire, loving more than God what ought to be loved less than God."** What are some examples of modern-day idols? Examples could include: trusting in money more than God, worshiping our children and allowing their desires to rule our homes, a hobby that overtakes one's life, a sports team, career accomplishments, a romantic interest, the list could go on and on. Have you ever come to the realization that you are putting something before/in place of God? What was it? What did you do?
4. Now let's examine the next way this temptation might relate to us. SECOND: Jesus was tempted to take the easy and immediate path instead of choosing the path of the Father's will. We live in a culture that values instant gratification and getting what we want...NOW! This has led to an overwhelming amount of debt, sexual promiscuity, an epidemic of childhood obesity, among many other consequences for our country. Do you feel the pull of this temptation on your life? In what area? How might this temptation be resisted?

5. The last two ways this temptation translates to us relates to power and control. Specifically in the sermon, I described the third iteration of this temptation this way - THIRD: the temptation to have power over others. Simply put this is the desire to force through manipulation, or threats, or the force of your personality people to do what you want. This may include your spouse, your children, co-workers, friends, and even strangers. This temptation is not about gentle persuading or sharing your opinion but literally wanting to control what others do. And FOURTH : The desire to control. This desire extends beyond other people into the areas of extreme control over yourself, your environment, your schedule, and even external things you have no hope of controlling. Could you identify world figures active today or in history that might be the worst examples of the desire for power and control?

Tim Keller states that "If you seek to serve people more than to gain power, you will not only serve people, you will gain influence." If you are very honest with yourself, you might find that there are at least some ways in which you would like more power and control. God grants us authority over areas of our life and calls us to manage things his way, this power and control is good - it is actually self-control and the Power of Christ - and leads to growth and health. But our desire for power and control can quickly become unhealthy, leading to an attempt to control and manipulate others and situations forcing our will upon them. Has anyone ever tried to manipulate or control you? How did that feel? Identify one area of your life where your desire for power and control may have become unhealthy and share it.

Sadly, for many who follow Christ, excuses are given for our attempts to exert power and control over others. Those excuses include wanting others to make the right choices and knowing if they just did it our way, everything would be better - in the end we believe know better. There is a fine line between seeking to impact and influence versus seeking power and control. How might you describe the difference?

6. One way to view the desire for power and control is to understand the final point I made in the sermon. The desire to impact others, to influence the world in some large or small way is embedded by God in the human heart. Do you agree with this idea? How are you currently desiring to impact others for God's glory? Is there a dream that God has given you, a desire for greater impact?