



PULLED

Galatians 5:17

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Week Two -

1. This week in our sermon series Pulled, we studied the first temptation of Jesus. Please read Luke 4:1 **Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness.** This passage begins by revealing to us one of the forces that should pull on our lives, the Holy Spirit. It says Jesus was full of the Spirit and led by the Spirit. Tell the story of a time when you know you were led by the Spirit.

Paul reminds us that we need to be continually refilled by the Spirit. Ephesians 5:18, **Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.** What do you think it means to be filled with the Spirit? How do you personally become refilled by the Spirit?

2. The story continues in Luke 4:2-4 **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.** Jesus is fasting. This means he is intentionally taking time away from something, in this case food, to focus on God more fully and to learn the invaluable lesson that God can supply all you need. Have you ever fasted from something?

This verse also demonstrates something that pulls on our life: hunger. Jesus is experiencing two kinds of hunger: spiritual hunger and physical hunger. We all know the experience of physical hunger. But have you experienced spiritual hunger, a burning desire to know God more, to serve Him and to teach others with your words or example how to follow him? Tell the story of a time when you were truly spiritually hungry. Be sure to include what it felt like and the effect your spiritual hunger had on your life.

3. In the first temptation, the devil plays off of Jesus' physical hunger Luke 4:3-4 **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.'** Bread was a staple food - something that Jesus had eaten everyday of his life - something that he would have been craving. Jesus is tempted here with the same temptation that we find in our lives as well: to place physical needs over the way of the Spirit. He is not to live on bread alone. This is the classic conflict mentioned in our theme verse Galatians 5:17 **For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want.** In our lives, the desires of the flesh are obvious. They include choosing to sleep in instead of seeking God, gluttony, lashing out with angry words when we are hurt, lying or manipulating others to get our way, feeling superior after gossiping about someone else, the thrill of spending money to have and possess things you really don't need, lust and the list goes on and on. We turn rocks into bread anytime we choose to do what feels good in the moment over following God's commands and living out the way of love. Have you felt this conflict in your life: the pull of the flesh against the pull of the Spirit?

One verse that well illustrates this is James 1:19-20 **My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Every one should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry,²⁰ because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.** Our flesh desires that we don't listen, speak immediately upon insult and allow our anger to rage inside of us. The way of the Spirit is to listen well and not allow anger to boil up or boil over. This is the way of love. What is one place of conflict for you right now between the flesh and the Spirit? On your best days, how do you not fall to the temptation of the flesh?

4. When we feel the pull of the flesh in our lives, it often feels like fulfilling the desires of the flesh is the way toward fulfilment. If we just sleep more, eat more, buy more, have more pleasure or tell someone off, we will be fulfilled. One of the ways to better understand this conflict is to understand what truly does bring fulfilment. In the sermon I said, "The issue is not about depriving myself of some need to somehow please God, the question is how the deepest desires of my heart are truly satisfied. Jesus does call us to deny ourselves but that is not the end of the story". Consider this quote by C.S. Lewis. **"The New Testament has lots to say about self-denial, but not about self-denial as an end in its-self. We are told to deny ourselves and take up our crosses in order that we must follow Christ; and nearly every description of what we shall ultimately find if we do so contains an appeal to desire. Indeed, if we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the gospels, it would seem that our Lord finds our desires, not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like ignorant children who want to go on making mud pies in a slum because we cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at sea. We are far too easily pleased."**

What do you think of this quote?

Is it hard to believe that denying your flesh is the way to ultimate satisfaction?

5. In my last point in the sermon, I gave some tools to help in the battle between our flesh and the Spirit. I said, **In the conflict between the flesh and the Spirit, we need to utilize the Word of God, help from the people God has placed in our lives and the power of the Spirit.** Do you agree? How would you specifically incorporate these three things into your life?