



the visual **faith** project

A Visual Faith Experience Pulled in Different Directions

By Dr. Dick Hardel

Theme: Pulled in Different Directions (Luke 4:1-13)

Intended Audience

Small discussion group of youth or adults, men's group, women's group, or intergenerational small group. Note to the facilitator: If the groups are large, divide them into smaller groups of four (for better discussion and limited time).

Outcome of Experience

The participants learn of the importance of staying connected to God when struggling with tough decisions that pull a person in different directions. The participants will learn of spiritual disciplines that keep them connected to God during those struggles.

Introduce Experience

God touches our heart in many ways to sense God's promise to be with us always. Music, artwork, poetry, storytelling, drama, dance, cultural instruments, nature, worship, Scripture and prayer time can all be used by God to touch and lift our hearts with various emotions. What were some of the emotions stirred up during such God Moments?

Scripture - Luke 4:1-13

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, 2 where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over, he was famished. 3 The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread." 4 Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone.'"

5 Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. 6 And the devil said to him, "To you I will give their glory and all this authority; for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please. 7 If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours." 8 Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'"

9 Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, 10 for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you,' 11 and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'"

12 Jesus answered him, "It is said, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" 13 When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.



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Pulled in Different Directions continued...

Image Selection

Choose one or two images that show in this Biblical story the stress of being pulled in different directions or looking for the easiest decision that challenges your identity.

Facilitators Questions To Guide Group Discussion

1. What do the images you have chosen indicate concerning the stress that Jesus was experiencing in this story?
2. Why, do you think, did both Luke and Matthew include this story early in their Gospels?
3. How was Jesus being pulled in different directions—directions where?
4. How does Jesus respond to the stress of being pulled in the different directions?
5. How does this story connect to God's plan of salvation in Scripture?
6. How does this story connect to you?

Now choose one or two images that depict emotions that you have felt when being pulled in different directions to make a decision concerning your identity, values or beliefs.

Facilitators Questions To Guide the Discussion

1. Using your chosen image(s) share the emotions and situation that make the decisions to be made so stressful. Share your story.
2. What questions do the others in the group have for the person who shared her/his story and image(s)?
3. What makes being pulled in different directions not a clear issue of right and wrong?
4. Was the stress or temptation to take the easy way out of a situation or to take a more difficult path or process?
5. Where might God have been in this experience?
6. How did you grow through this difficult experience?
7. How did it affect you?



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Application

- How are the spiritual disciplines that Jesus used in the stress of being tempted by the devil like or unlike the spiritual disciplines that you have used?
- What strengthens your faith and supports you identity as a child of God during and after such a stressful experience?
- Who do you trust to share such an experience and to support and guide you when being pulled in different directions?
- How does the last phrase of the last verse of this story, *he [the devil] departed from him until and opportune time*, connect to you and your experience(s)?

Closing Prayer Time

As the facilitator, create a holy space for the individuals and group to engage in prayer. Give each participant a copy of Romans 12: 1-2 and a pencil. Instruct them to circle the most important word or phrase in that text. Invite the participants to share what they have circled, and to express why they chose that word or phrase. When all have finished sharing, join together in praying the Lord's Prayer together noting what are the difficult words of the Lord's Prayer.

*Our Father, which art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread; And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive them that trespass against us,
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory,
For ever and ever.
Amen.*

Image Packs

We recommend the Assorted Set B (set of 100 printed images) for use with this experience or other images that you may already have. You can find the Assorted Set B at:
<https://vibrantfaith.org/shop/visualfaithcards>