

## A PERSONAL LENTEN DISCIPLINE REFLECTING THE THREE TEMPTATIONS OF JESUS

In this discipline, there are three steps or components. I am hoping I can better explain it by developing a compare/contrast essay and thereby connect to the process Christ went through with his three temptations. I have several quotes from Maureen Dillon (author and member of “The Mystical Humanity of Christ”) to reinforce my point. So, here is my humble attempt!

*“Our Lenten fasts and disciplines are great practices for both empowering our will and relocating of our focus away from the demands of the flesh, back toward the demands of the spirit and the spiritual nourishment that we receive from God.”* (Maureen Dillon)

### THE FIRST TEMPTATION: Matthew 4:1-4

***The first temptation deals with the flesh. Choosing something physical and then depriving oneself for 40 days prepares us for the second and the third steps. (Do not choose something that will jeopardize your health in anyway.)***

The key is following the second and third steps. It may actually have a benefit that will enhance your own sense of wellness, but that is NOT your main focus! “Man does not live on bread alone.”

### THE SECOND TEMPTATION: Matthew 4:5-7

***The second step is to approach the moment of craving or urges with a prayer going outward, not inward. It may be a focused prayer on a person who is struggling with an eating or drinking problem or something more generic, such as a ministry or hunger appeal. In other words, try not to pray asking for God’s help to get you through the difficult moments, but think about someone else who is struggling as well.***

*“Do not put the Lord to the test.”* MT. 4:7 *“In the second temptation, Satan takes Our Lord to Jerusalem and, placing Him on the ‘pinnacle of the temple,’ urges Him to throw Himself down since, ‘if [He is] the Son of God’ He will be born up ‘lest [He] dash [His] foot against a stone’ (Matt. 4:5-6). Here Our Lord’s temptation is one of the world—the need for signs of God’s loving care and for display of our importance. In withstanding this temptation also, Christ ‘[teaches] us that we must overcome the devil, not by miracles, but by forbearance and long-suffering, and that we should do nothing at all for display and vainglory. Building our trust in God and setting our sense of value more firmly in Him will combat the attacks of vanity and the image of appeal that come from the world and its fallen standards. We are invited to meditate on the true humility of our state during Lent: “Remember, man, that you are dust and to dust you shall return.”* (Maureen Dillon)

**THE THIRD TEMPTATION: Matthew 4:8-11**

***The third step is to take your “outward prayer” and convert it to an action that will become a ministry or passion reflecting the service and love of Christ. It then becomes a moment of worship of God rather than a moment of boasting and idolizing oneself. (NOT “Look what I have done!”)***

*The final test that Christ faces is one near to the heart of Satan, since it is the test that he himself failed. This is the temptation of power and glory, pride and violent ambition. “Fall down and worship me” the devil commands Our Lord, offering Him “all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor” in exchange for this homage (Matt 4:8-9). Christ now gives us the true key to victory before all temptation: “Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him” (Matt 4:10). If we can allow our hearts to be formed around this commandment, we will know what vigilance is. (Maureen Dillon)*

An additional quote:

*C.S. Lewis, 20th century*

"How little people know who think that holiness is dull....When one meets the real thing, it's irresistible."

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Hope this informal essay helps the reader delve into a Lenten discipline that will nourish and strengthen one’s relationship with God; and then translates to a servant life with Christ, the greatest servant of all!

Peace and faith always,

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February 25, 2017