



Bethel Baptist Church
Temptations of Jesus
2024 Lenten Devotional

“Temptations of Jesus”

ASH WEDNESDAY, February 14, 2024
to
MAUNDY, Thursday, March 28, 2024

Dear Bethel Family,

Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

For Lent this year, we will again be engaging the work of that great prophet/mystic, Howard Thurman. Together we will study his book, *Temptations of Jesus*. **You may order the book if you like. However, there is no need to.** The book is available for order on Amazon or through any of the major bookstore chains.

During this season of prayer, reflection, and fasting, I invite you to a corporate fast and to meet me weekly for prayer and Bible study in the Virtual Sanctuary. Additionally, I want to encourage you to access our 2024 Lenten Playlist in *Bethel Connect* and use it as a soundtrack for your week. We will sing the songs listed there in worship.

On Sunday mornings, I will preach sermonic reflections on the temptations faced by Jesus as outlined by Thurman. On Wednesday nights, we will do a deeper dive into them in Bible study. We will meet for prayer in the Virtual Sanctuary at 7 AM on Ash Wednesday and every Monday morning of Lent thereafter.

We will again offer three different ways to participate in this year’s fast by: the physical, the social, and the financial. I am asking every Bethel-ite to make a covenantal commitment to participate in some area of this fast. Follow the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Have a most blessed and holy Lent,

The Reverend Xavier L. Johnson, D.Min.



WHAT IS A FAST?

Although many people choose to abstain from food, or certain types of food, when fasting, there are many types of fasts. Believers can choose to abstain from anything that can be a distraction from their walk with the Lord. The key is, that you offer to God, that which is a true sacrifice to you – that which costs you something!

WHAT DO I PRAY FOR?

Every week we will have “Reflection Questions/Prayer Activities” that compliment the themes and topics covered in Sunday’s sermon and our Monday morning devotional. I am asking that you set aside 10 minutes every day to pray about and reflect on these questions.

WHAT SHOULD I DO DURING MY FAST?

Decide how your time will be spent during the fast.

1. Spend time in prayers of repentance, trusting the Holy Spirit to reveal things that need to be dealt with.
2. Spend time reading and meditating on themes and concepts raised in Sunday’s sermon and the Monday morning devotional.

WHAT IF I BREAK THE FAST?

If you miss a day, fall behind or break the fast - don't give up – pick it back up and start again!!!

Important Note: Please consult your physician regarding any medications you may be taking and prior to participating in the physical portion of the fast.

FAST INSTRUCTIONS:

Please choose at least one (1) of the areas from the three (3) listed below and indicate your action items for the duration of the fast.

Example:

Joanna is participating in *Lent 2024*

Below are her action items for the fast.

Physical: Option 2

Social: Option 1

Financial: Option 1&2

PHYSICAL (*Please consult your physician before participating in this part of the fast*)

1. Diet: I will commit to...
 - a. Eliminating sweets, caffeine, and alcoholic beverages.
 - b. The Daniel's Fast
 - c. Eating no food from 6 AM- 6 PM.
2. I will commit to 30 minutes a day of physical exercise Monday through Friday.

SOCIAL/TECHNOLOGICAL

1. Eliminate Technology: I will commit to...
 - a. Fast from social media (i.e., *Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Snap Chat*)
 - b. Fast from television and movies (i.e., *cable and satellite TV, movie theaters, Netflix, Hulu*)
 - c. Both
2. I will commit to finding a prayer partner and praying with them daily.

FINANCIAL

1. I will commit to eliminating all non-essential spending on daily routine purchases and personal items. * (i.e., a cup of coffee, snacks, etc.)

**** Collect the money saved and give a tenth of it every week as an offering in support of missions!***

Daniel's Fast Instructions

Please make sure to **READ THE LABEL** when purchasing packaged, canned, or bottled foods. They should be sugar-free and chemical-free. Keep this in mind as you review the lists.

LIST OF ACCEPTABLE FOODS ON THE DANIEL FAST

All fruits. These can be fresh, frozen, dried, juiced, or canned. Fruits include but are not limited to apples, apricots, bananas, blackberries, blueberries, boysenberries, cantaloupe, cherries, cranberries, figs, grapefruit, grapes, guava, honeydew melon, kiwi, lemons, limes, mangoes, nectarines, oranges, papayas, peaches, pears, pineapples, plums, prunes, raisins, raspberries, strawberries, tangelos, tangerines, and watermelon.

All vegetables. These can be fresh, frozen, dried, juiced, or canned. Vegetables include but are not limited to artichokes, asparagus, beets, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, celery, chili peppers, collard greens, corn, cucumbers, eggplant, garlic, ginger root, kale, leeks, lettuce, mushrooms, mustard greens, okra, onions, parsley, potatoes, radishes, rutabagas, scallions, spinach, sprouts, squashes, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, turnips, watercress, yams, zucchini, veggie burgers are an option if you are not allergic to soy.

All whole grains including but not limited to whole wheat, brown rice, millet, quinoa, oats, barley, grits, whole wheat pasta, whole wheat tortillas, rice cakes and popcorn.

All nuts and seeds including but not limited to sunflower seeds, cashews, peanuts, sesame. Also nut butters including peanut butter.

All legumes. These can be canned or dried. Legumes include but are not limited to dried beans, pinto beans, split peas, lentils, black eyed peas, kidney beans, black beans, cannellini beans, white beans.

All quality oils including but not limited to olive, canola, grape seed, peanut, and sesame.

Beverages: Spring water, distilled water, or other pure waters.

Other: Tofu, soy products, vinegar, seasonings, salt, herbs, and spices.

FOODS TO AVOID ON THE DANIEL FAST

All meat and animal products including but not limited to beef, lamb, pork, poultry, and fish.

All dairy products including but not limited to milk, cheese, cream, butter, and eggs.

All sweeteners including but not limited to sugar, raw sugar, honey, syrups, molasses, and cane juice.

All leavened bread including Ezekiel Bread (it contains yeast and honey) and baked goods.

All refined and processed food products including but not limited to artificial flavorings, food additives, chemicals, white rice, white flour, and foods that contain artificial preservatives.

All deep fried foods including but not limited to potato chips, French fries, corn chips.

All solid fats including shortening, margarine, lard, and foods high in fat.

Beverages including but not limited to coffee, caffeinated teas, carbonated beverages, energy drinks, and alcohol.

Remember, READ THE LABELS!

LENTEN ACTIVITY CALENDAR

Week	Dates	Reading and Reflection Questions
1	Wednesday, February 14 - February 17, 2024	<p style="text-align: center;">What spiritual dilemmas are you facing?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Read Matthew 4:1-11</p>
2	Monday, February 19 - Saturday, February 24, 2024	<p style="text-align: center;">What things do your mind and spirit hunger for?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Read Psalm 42 and Matthew 4:1-4</p>
3	Monday, February 26 - Saturday, March 2, 2024	<p style="text-align: center;">What are the things that tempt you?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Read Matthew 4:1-4 and James 1:12-18</p>
4	Monday, March 4 - Saturday, March 9, 2024	<p style="text-align: center;">In what ways do you tempt God?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Read Psalm 91 and Matthew 4:5-7</p>
5	Monday, March 11 - Saturday, March 16, 2024	<p style="text-align: center;">What good is it to gain everything and lose yourself?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Read Deuteronomy 6:13 and Matthew 4:8-11</p>
6	Monday, March 18- Saturday, March 23, 2024	<p style="text-align: center;">What difficult choices are you facing?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Read Luke 9:51-55</p>
7	Monday, March 25 - Thursday, March 28, 2024	<p style="text-align: center;">What does it mean to fully surrender to God's will?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Read Mark 14:32-36</p>

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Bethel Missionary Baptist Church

401 S. Paul Laurence Dunbar Street

Dayton, Ohio 45402

937-222-4373

The Rev. Xavier L. Johnson, D.Min., Pastor

www.bmbcd Dayton.org