

Application Guide: “Out of the Frying Pan & Into the Fire”

July 18, 2004: Nate Irwin, Associate Director of Outreach, continued College Park’s study of Matthew 4 by stemming off from Jesus’ use of Deuteronomy when he was tempted in the desert. Nate presented a message based on Deut. 8 that focused both on prosperity and trial, wealth and the wilderness.

1. Nate introduced his message by asking the question, “Why doesn’t God allow us to win the lottery?” Imagine for a moment all that could be done if a Christian won \$100 million. Nate’s conclusion was that if we were to obtain that much material wealth, “the Kingdom of God would have a hard time coming into our lives.” Evaluate your current financial situation:
 - a. How much do you focus on material wealth over spiritual wealth?
 - b. Where are you storing up your treasures? On earth or heaven? How is this revealed in your life?
2. Additionally, in the introduction, Nate mentioned that Jesus quoted Deuteronomy more than any other OT book, perhaps, because the book of Deuteronomy best depicts how a life ought to look when it is lived in the Kingdom of God.
 - a. How does Matthew 4-7 relate to Deuteronomy?
 - b. How does Nate’s sermon relate to Shane’s two sermons about the Kingdom of God?
 - c. Study through Deuteronomy. Why was this book so important to Jesus? Why should it be important to us? How does the beauty of Deuteronomy Law debunk most Evangelical’s preconceived notions about “the Law”?
3. Nate’s first major point concerned “The Purpose of the Wilderness” (vv. 1-5). The three purposes were:
 - a. “To humble us” – Are you going through a trying time in your life right now? What is God doing in your life to humble you, to give you NOTHING left to stand on but Him? Are you trying to live life on your own strength (“by bread alone”) or on His strength (God’s Word)? (see Isa 64:11; Lam 3:32, 33).
 - b. “To test us” – Nate said, “The proof of the pudding is in the eating, and the proof of believing is in the obeying.” Is God testing your faith right now to prove whether or not you are really His child? Do you consistently follow God even amidst the toughest times? Can your faith stand “the fire”? (see Judg 2:22; 2 Chron 32:31; Prov 17:3; Gen 22:1,2; John 6:5,6; 1 Cor 10:13).

- c. "To train us" – God has in mind what he wants us to become. Like little children sometimes need to be admonished and corrected, God chastens his children. We must learn what it means to look like Christ. If you are going through a tough time today, be encouraged – it is proof that you are God's child (Heb 12:4-11)! How is God using tough circumstances to refine you right now? With this thought in mind, study through Romans 8:18-30.
- 4. Nate's second major point concerned "The Perils of Prosperity" (vv. 6-20). Once we come out of the Wilderness and into the "Promised Land", there are three dangers we can face that are detrimental to our relationship with God:
 - a. "We may forget God" (v. 11a) – How are you living a life of remembrance and thankfulness for what God has provided and done for you? What are the evidences in your life (or the "Standing Stones") that God plays an active role in your everyday life? Do a word search on "remember" in the Bible and discover how God's past blessing ought effect our present lives.
 - b. "We may fail God" (v. 11b) – Like the man who wins the lottery, have you made God a distant memory? Are you forgetting the vine? Has your life stopped bearing fruit?
 - c. "We may forsake God" (v. 19) – Have you turned over to other "idols" in your life? What are they? What things in life do you give more time and energy and concern than your relationship with God? Upon what is your heart set on this day?

Suggested Reading: Alcorn, Randy. The Treasure Principle. Multnomah: October 4, 2001.
Yancey, Philip. Disappointment With God. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997.