

**“Then Jesus was led up  
by the Spirit into the  
wilderness to be tempted  
by the devil”**

Matthew 4:1

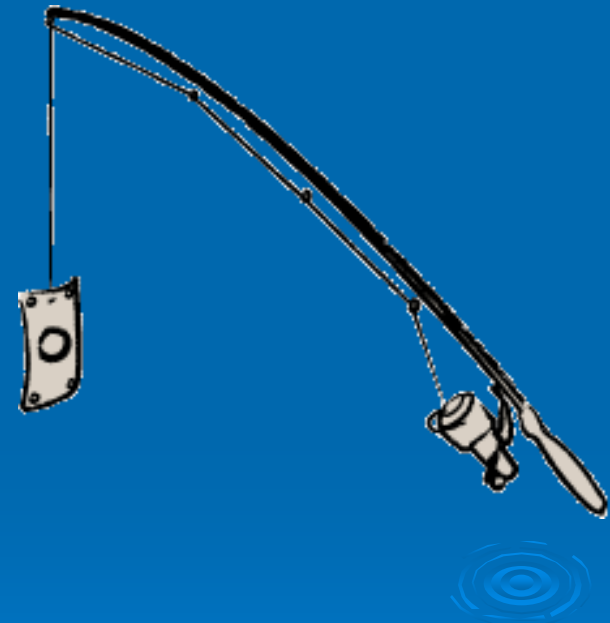


**What do we learn from  
“temptations”?**



# 1. We fall because of our passions

- “The soul has as many masters as it has passions” *Abba Zosimas*
- “But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death” *James 1: 4-5*
- “for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me”  
*John 14:30*



## 2. Silence and temptations help us to better understand ourselves

- What we discover is that we are not in control of ourselves, that we are wounded with our passions.
- Our passions indicate that we are not so much doing something wrong, but that we are not in control.



### 3. Passions distort the reality of who we are and what our world is

- The example of King Saul
- The Pharisees



## 4. Negative passions should be eradicated

- There can be no discussion or flirting with them; they must simply be suppressed and destroyed.
- **Abba Poemen** said: “When David was fighting with the lion, he seized it by the throat and killed it immediately. If we take ourselves by the throat and by the belly, with the help of God, we shall overcome the invisible lion.”





## 5. Passions also can be channeled for their intended positive purpose

- **Abba Isaiah** said: “Passions like anger, jealousy, and even lust are given to us with a particular and sacred purpose. Unfortunately, we have misdirected and misused them, so that they have now come to be regarded as evil. However, the original purpose of anger is for it to be used against injustice in the world; the proper reason for envy is so that we may seek to emulate the virtues of the saints; and the natural goal of our desire to thirst for God. However, we have bent these natural forces out of shape; and so now we are angry at our neighbor over petty reasons; we are jealous about material things; and we lust after earthly things.”

## 6. Acknowledging our passions and weaknesses leads us to God for help

- It was related of **Amma Sarah** that for thirteen years she waged warfare against the demon of fornication. She never prayed that the warfare should cease, but only said: “Lord, give me strength for the fight.”





# 7. Our weakness preserves our humility

- **Abba Poemen** said of **Abba John the dwarf** that he prayed to God to take his passions away from him so that he might become free of care. He went and told an old man about this: “I find my self in peace, without an enemy,” he said. The old man said to him: “Go, beseech God to stir up warfare so that you may regain the affliction and humility that you used to have. For it is by warfare that the soul makes progress.” So he besought God, and when the warfare came, he no longer prayed that it might be taken away, but he said: “Lord, give me strength for the fight.”

## 8. Awareness of our passions leads us to pity others and avoid judging anyone

- The example of the monk crying when seeing the sin of another fellow monk

