

Drawn In: Living Out the Creative Life with God, Series by Marcia McFee
“God Who Hovers”

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Kempton Providence U.M. Church

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The text for today is from Luke’s gospel, chapter 4, verses 1 through 13.

“Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, 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. The devil said to him, ‘If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread.’

Jesus answered him, ‘It is written, “One does not live by bread alone.”’

Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. 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. If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.’ Jesus answered him, ‘It is written, “Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.”’

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, for it is written, “He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you,” and “On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.”’ Jesus answered him, ‘It is said, “Do not put the Lord your God to the

test.” When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.” This is God’s word for God’s people. Please pray with me. God we pray your blessing on the hearing, reading, and understanding of your word today. Amen.

To “hover” means to linger closely. For example, you’ve seen hawks flying low and hovering in the wind. They look down and out across a wide expanse watching everything. God is also one who hovers in the wind. You might say it’s a posture to see the bigger picture. He knows when to stop, to wait, and he’s never in a hurry and always patient. God’s perfect courage is never afraid to wait and rest because the Spirit of God accepts only the leading of the Holy Spirit. Nothing distracts Jesus while focusing solely on his purpose in life.

For ourselves, we can have a million things at once we want to fix, but what if . . . we slowed down and made the decision to choose *one thing* to focus on? To take time to reflect and decide what we feel drawn to do as the Holy Spirit leads us—without hurrying or being afraid to wait and rest.

It takes godly courage to wait and linger before deciding on an action. It requires spiritual courage to listen to God’s inner voice for leading. How do you listen to God and wait on his guidance? Do we pursue God for this? And “What was the outcome?” “Did it help others or hurt them?” We need to consider John Wesley’s “3 Simple Rules”? Do no harm. Do good. Stay in love with God.

Jesus was confronted with three temptations. If you're hungry, change the stones into bread. If you're the son of God, jump from a tower and call out to the angels to save you. Worship the devil in return for all the kingdoms of the world. Jesus knew the spirit of God hovered and rested over him, but still, as one who was fully human, he must also rely on and acknowledge God the Holy Spirit.

By waiting and resting in the Holy Spirit Jesus made his choice to go where God led. There will always be distractions and temptations everywhere, but our highest goal is to "Love the Lord your God with all our heart, soul, strength, and mind and your neighbor as yourself." This is the greatest commandment.

Our aim, with each choice we make, especially how we treat one another, should be to allow God's love within to be our first and foremost choice. And anything that draws us from God's love should be resisted. Jesus resisted and acted on the side of love, and because of that—he disarmed the devil and set us free.

We don't always triumph over anger, self-interest, and self-righteousness. But Jesus always obeyed, followed the leading of God's spirit perfectly where we failed. The good news, we don't have to feel guilt from not handling things the way we wish we would have, because Jesus triumphed over temptation for us, in our place, on our behalf, and we never again need not struggle with guilt.

Imagine what we could accomplish in the world if we responded to each other as Christ does, angrily shaming and accusing him? Perhaps, this is what Jesus

meant when he said, “Greater works shall you do because I go to the Father” (Jn 14:12). When we take the time to seek God’s way, to rest and wait for leading, we don’t need to be afraid.

What we do need is to acknowledge the Holy Spirit to treat one another and others in the world the way God wants us to. We can’t do it all in our strength. Jesus said, “It’s impossible for human beings. But all things are possible for God” (Matt 19:26). Jesus said that when he was talking about giving up things. What might we have to give up to receive what God wants for us to become?

Please pray with me. O God, our prayer for our families, our church, and our world, is that the Holy Spirit would be invited to hover over us, to be acknowledged and waited on, and against our self-will and pride, to lead us in God’s loving kindness that makes the world a better place. Amen.

ON THE FLOOR

1. Looking at Jesus' human side, why do you think he had to withstand the temptation and suffer the abuse and humiliation rather than just blow the devil off the side of the earth like some of us would like to do?
2. What might we have to give up to receive what God wants for us to become?
3. How would you describe spiritual courage?