“Blessed is the man who perseveres in temptation.”
James 1:12a
Overview
What do you mean by Intentional Disciple?
Few Christians would argue the premise that we are called to be disciples of Jesus Christ. What “being a disciple” means and what that looks like in our lives, is a great deal more confusing. At St. Dominic’s, we invite you to engage the concept of discipleship head-on. Maybe you’re already a disciple. If so, hopefully you will discover how to be more intentional about your discipleship. Maybe you’re not yet a disciple. If so, hopefully you will enter into a deeper understanding of what it means to be a disciple and become more hungry to respond to Jesus’ call.

What is asked of me?
First, pick up a booklet at St. Dominic’s each month and follow along. If you can, attend one of the Explore (everyone is welcome) sessions offered each month. If you want to go deeper, sign up for a Small Christian Community. Small community will meet twice a month to discuss. We hope to be able to offer committed small communities and drop-in small communities as we get a better understanding of people’s interested. Please see the back cover for specific dates.

When did the Intentional Disciples initiative start?
St. Dominic’s kicked off the Intentional Disciples initiative in September 2013. We are gradually rolling it out to the whole parish. We hope to be able to connect people whenever they learn about the initiative or are ready to get involved.

What if I’m not sure how much of this I’m ready to do?
Pick up a booklet, and try it out. Pray about it.

I’m interested, but I just don’t have the time.
We understand that this will not fit everyone’s interest or schedule. We would like to ask you to pray for this initiative in the parish.

Jesus, let us hear your call anew.
Bless us with the courage to respond.
Clear away all barriers. Make us your disciples.
Format

Each month we'll pick several scripture passages around an aspect or theme of discipleship. We'll spend the month exploring that theme, going deeper and challenging ourselves. In September and October, we rolled this out to the parish. We have formed several small communities, but it is not to late to join one if you are interested (see the back cover). We plan to make this a yearlong initiative. Here’s the planned format for each month:

**Week 1 - Explore**
Break open the scripture and explore discipleship. Our goal here is not just to understand how discipleship functioned when Jesus walked the Earth, we want to understand what discipleship means in our lives, today.

You can explore the scripture on your own through this book, or you can attend one of the presentations offered (see the upcoming schedule on the back cover).

**Week 2 - Share**
Consider joining a small community to discuss the meaning of discipleship to you. There is something powerful about gathering with others to explore our relationship with Jesus.

If you can’t join a small community, you can take time each day to pray the scripture and reflect on your own journey.

**Week 3 - Act**
This week we’ll challenged ourselves to take some practical step exploring discipleship in our daily lives. We’ll do this on our own, so if you’re part of a small community, there will not be a meeting this week.

**Week 4 - Share**
Gather again in your small community or reflect on your own.
To kick off this initiative, we asked:

Are you a disciple of Jesus Christ? (Yes, No, I Don’t Know)
Was this question easy or hard to answer?
Is this an important question?
What would you need to be able to answer this question?

This month:

**Starter**

*What is temptation?*

*Once we become a disciple, does temptation go away?*

*If not, how do we deal with temptation as disciples?*
We all know that we should resist sin and evil. But, what about temptation? Temptation isn’t sin. Jesus was like us in all things but sin. Yet, Jesus was tempted. He faced those temptations, avoided the slippery slope to sin, and teaches us how to do the same. This month we’ll explore the role of temptation in the life a disciple. Yes, disciples face temptation! Lent is a wonderful time for us to reexamine our lives, to be honest with ourselves about the temptations we encounter and often fail to address.

Temptation is an encouragement to sin, arising either internally or externally. Temptation “works” by presenting some alternative good (i.e., lesser good). We, often, then follow temptation into sin by playing along, convincing ourselves that we’re really doing good. New circumstances in our lives can remove old temptations, but also present us with new ones. For example, when I become a disciple of Jesus Christ, perhaps I’m no longer tempted to go out drinking every night, but then my new status as a disciple leads me to be very judgemental of people who aren’t Christians. As we grow in discipleship, temptation becomes more subtle.

Throughout the centuries, Christians have reflected on the root causes of sin. Whether it’s the Seven Deadly Sins (lust, gluttony, greed, sloth, wrath, envy, pride) or the four things that St. Thomas says we substitute for God (honor, pleasure, power, wealth). There is plenty for us to reflect on. Our goal as disciples is to face our temptations and, through God’s grace, avoid sin. We are invited to see our temptations for what they really are: ways we wrestle with God for control.

We do not believe that God puts temptations in our lives (we’re plenty good at that on our own). We do believe that God allows temptation as an opportunity for us to grow in virtue and trust. This month, as Lent begins, we’ll focus on those opportunities. What are the temptations we face? And, how does Jesus offer us a way, his way, to avoid following those temptations into sin?

“For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be exalted.”

Luke 14:11
Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. He fasted for forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was hungry. The tempter approached and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become loaves of bread." He said in reply, "It is written: 'One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God.'" Then the devil took him to the holy city, and made him stand on the parapet of the temple, and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down. For it is written: 'He will command his angels concerning you and with their hands they will support you, lest you dash your foot against a stone.'" Jesus answered him, "Again it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord, your God, to the test.'" Then the devil took him up to a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in their magnificence, and he said to him, "All these I shall give to you, if you will prostrate yourself and worship me." At this, Jesus said to him, "Get away, Satan! It is written: 'The Lord, your God, shall you worship and him alone shall you serve.'" Then the devil left him and, behold, angels came and ministered to him.

Read prayerfully: What is at the root of the temptations that Jesus faces? (Hint: look to his reply)
Mark 10:35-45

Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him and said to him, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you." 36 He replied, "What do you wish me to do for you?" 37 They answered him, "Grant that in your glory we may sit one at your right and the other at your left." 38 Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Can you drink the cup that I drink or be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?" 39 They said to him, "We can." Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink, you will drink, and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized; 40 but to sit at my right or at my left is not mine to give but is for those for whom it has been prepared." 41 When the ten heard this, they became indignant at James and John. 42 Jesus summoned them and said to them, "You know that those who are recognized as rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones make their authority over them felt. 43 But it shall not be so among you. Rather, whoever wishes to be great among you will be your servant; 44 whoever wishes to be first among you will be the slave of all. 45 For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Read prayerfully: What is tempting about power? What sins can our desire for power lead to? How can we resist the temptation?
Wealth

Mark 10:17  As [Jesus] was setting out on a journey, a man ran up, knelt down before him, and asked him, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"  18 Jesus answered him, "... 19 You know the commandments: 'You shall not kill; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness; you shall not defraud; honor your father and your mother.'"  20 He replied and said to him, "Teacher, all of these I have observed from my youth." 21 Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said to him, "You are lacking in one thing. Go, sell what you have, and give to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me."  22 At that statement his face fell, and he went away sad, for he had many possessions.

Read prayerfully: What is tempting about wealth? What sins can our desire for wealth lead to? How can we resist the temptation?
Then Jesus spoke to the crowds and to his disciples, saying, "The scribes and the Pharisees have taken their seat on the chair of Moses. Therefore, do and observe all things whatsoever they tell you, but do not follow their example. For they preach but they do not practice. All their works are performed to be seen. They widen their phylacteries and lengthen their tassels. They love places of honor at banquets, seats of honor in synagogues, greetings in marketplaces, and the salutation 'Rabbi.' As for you, do not be called 'Rabbi.' You have but one teacher, and you are all brothers. Call no one on earth your father; you have but one Father in heaven. Do not be called 'Master'; you have but one master, the Messiah. The greatest among you must be your servant. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled; but whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

Read prayerfully: What is tempting about honor? What sins can our desire for honor lead to? How can we resist the temptation?
Self-Righteousness

Luke 18:9  He then addressed this parable to those who were convinced of their own righteousness and despised everyone else. 10"Two people went up to the temple area to pray; one was a Pharisee and the other was a tax collector. 11The Pharisee took up his position and spoke this prayer to himself, 'O God, I thank you that I am not like the rest of humanity--greedy, dishonest, adulterous--or even like this tax collector. 12I fast twice a week, and I pay tithes on my whole income.' 13But the tax collector stood off at a distance and would not even raise his eyes to heaven but beat his breast and prayed, 'O God, be merciful to me a sinner.' 14I tell you, the latter went home justified, not the former; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be exalted."

Read prayerfully: What is tempting about self-righteousness? What sins can self-righteousness lead to? How can we resist the temptation?
Jesus' Example

John 13:1

Before the feast of Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to pass from this world to the Father. He loved his own in the world and he loved them to the end. 2 The devil had already induced Judas, son of Simon the Iscariot, to hand him over. So, during supper, 3 fully aware that the Father had put everything into his power and that he had come from God and was returning to God, 4 he rose from supper and took off his outer garments. He took a towel and tied it around his waist. 5 Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and dry them with the towel around his waist. 6 He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Master, are you going to wash my feet?" 7 Jesus answered and said to him, "What I am doing, you do not understand now, but you will understand later." 8 Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered him, "Unless I wash you, you will have no inheritance with me." 9 Simon Peter said to him, "Master, then not only my feet, but my hands and head as well." 10 Jesus said to him, "Whoever has bathed has no need except to have his feet washed, for he is clean all over; so you are clean, but not all." 11 For he knew who would betray him; for this reason, he said, "Not all of you are clean." 12 So when he had washed their feet and put his garments back on and reclined at table again, he said to them, "Do you realize what I have done for you? 13 You call me 'teacher' and 'master,' and rightly so, for indeed I am. 14 If I, therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet. 15 I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do. 16 Amen, amen, I say to you, no slave is greater than his master nor any messenger greater than the one who sent him. 17 If you understand this, blessed are you if you do it.

Read prayerfully: How does Jesus use his power? What is “powerful” about this?
Key Insights

General

- In the Bible, Satan is also known as “the tempter.”
- Satan can’t make you sin, but he can make the path of sin look more enticing (i.e., attractive, reasonable).

Jesus’ Temptations

- The three Synoptic Gospels mention Jesus’ temptations.
  - All three place them immediately after his Baptism (i.e., before his public ministry).
  - Jesus is in the desert for forty days, a number that echoes back to the forty years the Israelites spent in the desert before they reach the promised land.
- Note: The following insights come from Donald Gelpi, S.J.
- In the desert, Jesus is fasting, an expression of trust in God.
- Luke and Matthew describe three temptations (different orders).
- All three temptations are related to “trust.”
- “command that these stones become loaves of bread”
  - Jesus is invited to trust himself instead of God.
  - Jesus refocuses on God.
- “throw yourself down...angles...will support you”
  - Satan says to Jesus, if trust is good, test God first.
  - “You shall not put the Lord, your God, to the test.”
- "All these I shall give to you, if you will prostrate yourself and worship me."
  - Ok, you’re good at trusting. How about trusting me [Satan] instead of God?
  - Jesus: I worship and serve God alone.

Power

- James and John feel like discipleship should give them power over others.
- They are giving up a lot. They expect something in return.

Wealth

- Wealth is not always bad, but in this case it becomes an impediment.
- He wants eternal life, but he want’s his possessions more.
Honor

- The scribes and the Pharisees are trying to follow God and God’s law.
- They seem to expect that this path should give them status and command respect.
- They begin to do things publically “to be seen.”
- We need to respect what they say, but not what they do.
- Their motivation has become distorted.

Self-Righteousness

- Clearly, the Pharisee is doing some good things and avoiding some bad things.
- He seems to see this as an excuse to look down on others.
- I like the way the Pharisee speaks the prayer “to himself.” He seems to have become his own god.
- The Tax Collector recognizes his dependency on God.

Jesus’ Example

- This is John’s Last Supper (i.e., we don’t get a institution narrative).
- Jesus demonstrates, with his actions, what he taught in the previous passages.
- Jesus' power leads to service!
- “I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do.”
Further Readings

James on Temptation

James 1:12 Blessed is the man who perseveres in temptation, for when he has been proved he will receive the crown of life that he promised to those who love him. 13 No one experiencing temptation should say, "I am being tempted by God"; for God is not subject to temptation to evil, and he himself tempts no one. 14 Rather, each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. 15 Then desire conceives and brings forth sin, and when sin reaches maturity it gives birth to death. 16 Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers: 17 all good giving and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no alteration or shadow caused by change. 18 He willed to give us birth by the word of truth that we may be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures. 19 Know this, my dear brothers: everyone should be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath, 20 for the wrath of a man does not accomplish the righteousness of God. 21 Therefore, put away all filth and evil excess and humbly welcome the word that has been planted in you and is able to save your souls. 22 Be doers of the word and not hearers only, deluding yourselves. 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his own face in a mirror. 24 He sees himself, then goes off and promptly forgets what he looked like. 25 But the one who peers into the perfect law of freedom and perseveres, and is not a hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, such a one shall be blessed in what he does. 26 If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, his religion is vain. 27 Religion that is pure and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to care for orphans and widows in their affliction and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

Power

Mark 9:33 [Jesus] began to ask them, "What were you arguing about on the way?" 34 But they remained silent. They had been discussing among themselves on the way who was the greatest. 35 Then he sat down, called the Twelve, and said to them, "If anyone wishes to be first, he shall be the last of all and the servant of all." 36 Taking a child he placed it in their midst, and putting his arms around it he said to them, 37 "Whoever receives one child such as this in my name, receives me; and whoever receives me, receives not me but the one who sent me."
Wealth
Luke 16:19  "There was a rich man who dressed in purple garments and fine linen and dined sumptuously each day. 20 And lying at his door was a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, 21 who would gladly have eaten his fill of the scraps that fell from the rich man's table. Dogs even used to come and lick his sores. 22 When the poor man died, he was carried away by angels to the bosom of Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried, 23 and from the netherworld, where he was in torment, he raised his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. 24 And he cried out, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me. Send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am suffering torment in these flames.' 25 Abraham replied, 'My child, remember that you received what was good during your lifetime while Lazarus likewise received what was bad; but now he is comforted here, whereas you are tormented. 26 Moreover, between us and you a great chasm is established to prevent anyone from crossing who might wish to go from our side to yours or from your side to ours.' 27 He said, 'Then I beg you, father, send him to my father's house, 28 for I have five brothers, so that he may warn them, lest they too come to this place of torment.' 29 But Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the prophets. Let them listen to them.' 30 He said, 'Oh no, father Abraham, but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.' 31 Then Abraham said, 'If they will not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone should rise from the dead.'"

Honor
Luke 14:1  On a sabbath he went to dine at the home of one of the leading Pharisees, and the people there were observing him carefully... 7 He told a parable to those who had been invited, noticing how they were choosing the places of honor at the table. 8 "When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, do not recline at table in the place of honor. A more distinguished guest than you may have been invited by him, 9 and the host who invited both of you may approach you and say, 'Give your place to this man,' and then you would proceed with embarrassment to take the lowest place. 10 Rather, when you are invited, go and take the lowest place so that when the host comes to you he may say, 'My friend, move up to a higher position.' Then you will enjoy the esteem of your companions at the table. 11 For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted."
Self-Righteousness

John 8:1 while Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. But early in the morning he arrived again in the temple area, and all the people started coming to him, and he sat down and taught them. 3 Then the scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery and made her stand in the middle. 4 They said to him, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. 5 Now in the law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?" 6 They said this to test him, so that they could have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and began to write on the ground with his finger. 7 But when they continued asking him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let the one among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." 8 Again he bent down and wrote on the ground. 9 And in response, they went away one by one, beginning with the elders. So he was left alone with the woman before him. 10 Then Jesus straightened up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" 11 She replied, "No one, sir." Then Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go, and from now on do not sin any more."
Recap & Prepare for Week 2

- Reread the scripture for this week (look through the extras).
  - Underline phrases that help you respond to temptation that you face in your life
  - Pick a phrase, one each morning
  - Write it on a slip of paper
  - Find seven times during the day to think about it and pray it, especially when you’re facing temptation.

- Reflection questions:

  What are the temptations I face?

  What is at the root of those temptations?

  How does Jesus invite me to respond?
Individual Option

- Find 20-30 minutes where you won’t be interrupted.
- (10-15 minutes) Follow the prayer format (*Lectio Divina*) in the group exercise below.
- (10-20 minutes) Spend time reflecting on the questions outlined above.

Advice For Participating In Small Christian Communities

- The facilitator’s role is to guide the flow of the meeting. They are not in the group to be experts. Help the facilitators by following their lead.
- During the discussion period, there will be multiple questions or topic for conversation. It is best to take them one at a time (i.e., let everyone share about one before moving to the next).
- Don’t attempt to give the “right answer.” Just share your experience, insights, and perspective.
- Please stay on topic (the questions asked).
- Pay attention to time. Keep your answers on the shorter side. You can always add more later.
- Make sure everyone gets a chance to speak (i.e., give others a chance to speak before sharing a second time).
- It's ok to not share if you don’t feel comfortable, but challenge yourself to share occasionally.
- Give your attention to the person speaking. Please don't start side conversations.
- Avoid asking follow-up questions. Let people share what they want to share. It is always good to affirm others.
- Avoid answering other people’s questions (i.e., taking on the role of expert).
How To Pray The Scripture Using Lectio Divina

● Goal:
  ○ Engage one of the scriptures at a deeper level
  ○ Allow the Spirit to teach our hearts
  ○ Provide fruit to lead into the discussion and sharing

● Steps (Should take 10-15 minutes):
  ● Lectio (Reading, 2-5 minutes)
    ○ A participant reads the scripture passage
    ○ 30-60 seconds of silence
    ○ A participant reads the scripture passage
    ○ As the scripture is being read, the participants are invited to find a word, phrase, image, or idea that resonates with them. We’ll call this the focus.
  ● Meditatio (Meditate, 5-10 minutes)
    ○ Stay with the focus from above.
    ○ There are different ways to do this: Why does it resonate? What does it mean in my life today? Repeat it as a mantra. Imagine it. How is this connected to discipleship?
  ● Oratio (Pray, 1-2 minutes)
    ○ Whatever comes up in meditation, form into a silent prayer offered to God.
  ● Contemplatio (Contemplate, 1-2 minutes)
    ○ After speaking a prayer to God, sit and listen or rest in God's love.
  ● This leads into discussion and sharing.
    ○ Start with insights from the prayer.
    ○ Transition to sharing about discipleship.
  ● Tips
    ○ There is no “right way,” do what works for you
    ○ Embrace the silence
    ○ Let God find you
Small Christian Community Process - First Meeting
(Suggested timing based on a 60/90 minute meeting)

- Welcome & Check In (5/10 minutes)
- Review Format (5/5 minutes)
  - Review the participant’s advice (page 18)
  - Prayer will be about 15 minutes
  - Review the prayer format: *Lectio Divina* (page 19)
  - Discussion will follow based on the prayer and the questions (page 17).
- Prayer (10/15 minutes)
  - Transition Passage: “At once the Spirit drove him out into the desert, and he remained in the desert for forty days, tempted by Satan. He was among wild beasts, and the angels ministered to him.” (Mark 1:12-13)
- Discussion (30/45 minutes)
  - Begin with insights from the prayer experience
  - Discussing the reflection questions (page 17)
- Action/Request (5/10 minutes)
  - The practical exercise is listed on the next page
  - Participants can share thoughts and plans
  - Review date of the next group session
  - Participants can request prayers from the group
What is the greatest temptation in my life? (i.e., the one that gets me the most)

What lesser good does this temptation seem to offer?

What virtue does this temptation give me a chance to practice?

Action: Make a plan for facing your temptation. Pray to God for the grace to face your temptation. Meditate on the virtue and desire it with your whole heart. Receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
Week 4 - Share

Preparing

● Continue to use the scripture phrases you highlighted when you prepared for Week 2:
  ○ Pick a phrase, one each morning
  ○ Write it on a slip of paper
  ○ Find ways to pray it throughout the day

● Week 3 exercise:
  ○ Plan to share something about your Week 3 exercise
  ○ If you were not able to do it, plan to share your barriers.

Individual Option

● Find 20-30 minutes where you won’t be interrupted.
● (10-15 minutes) Follow the prayer format (Lectio Divina) in the group exercise below.
● (10-20 minutes) Journal about the experience of the exercise from Week 3.

Small Christian Community Process - Second Meeting
(Suggested timing based on a 60/90 minute meeting)

● Welcome & Check In (5/10 minutes)
● Review Format (5/5 minutes)
  ○ Review the participant’s advice (page 18)
  ○ Prayer will be about 15 minutes
  ○ Review the prayer format: Lectio Divina (page 19)
  ○ Discussion will follow based on the prayer the Act exercise (page 21)
● Prayer (10/15 minutes)
  ○ Transition Passage: “The one who peers into the perfect law of freedom and perseveres, and is not a hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, such a one shall be blessed in what he does.” (James 1:25)
  ○ Lectio Divina: John 13:1-17 (page 11)
● Discussion (30/45 minutes)
  ○ Begin with insights from the prayer experience
  ○ Discussing insights from the Act exercise
● Action/Request (5/10 minutes)
  ○ Review date of the next Explore session
  ○ Participants can request prayers from the group
Extra: do an act of service.
Three Ways To Get Involved With Intentional Disciples

1. Pick up a booklet, and explore on your own. -or-

2. Attend an “Explore” session to learn about this month’s scripture. Everyone is welcome. - or-

3. Check out a Small Christian Community to join with others to go deeper.

~~~

Upcoming “Explore” Sessions

Sunday, March 2, 10:30-11:30 AM, School Basement

Monday, March 3, 7:30-9 PM, Aquinas Room

Thursday, March 6, 12:00-1:30 PM, Aquinas Room

Young Adults’ Session*, Wed., March 12, 7:30-9 PM, Parish Hall

* The Young Adults group is a community of single and married Catholic adults in our 20s and 30s; to find out more, visit: http://stdominics.org/youngadults

~~~

Connect With a Small Christian Community

Contact Scott Moyer at scott@stdominics.org

We would like to start a Wednesday evening women’s group. If you’re interested, please contact Scott.

Small Christian Community Meeting Dates

Sunday: March 9 & 23

YAG (Sunday): March 16 & 30

Monday: March 10 & 24

Thursday: March 13 & 27