



Key Text: Matthew 4:1-11

[Leader Note: Share a time when you were prepared for something challenging.]

Some of my clearest memories of college happened during finals week each semester. We barely slept. Copious amounts of coffee were consumed. We spent every moment of the last week of each semester wrapping up final projects or cramming everything from our classes that semester into our brains for tests. Our college understood how finals week went, so they even offered meals in the middle of the night in the cafeteria to help keep us fueled.

Our dorm wing's tradition was that on the very last day of finals, we would all pile into cars and head to Cracker Barrel for a breakfast feast. We were the first guests when they opened the doors on that Friday morning each semester.

My last semester of college was the only exception to finals week. That last semester, I got all my big projects and papers done early. I would handwrite my notes in each class, then come back to the library and type out everything I had learned in class each day. I carried study prep index cards in my backpack. I was in the last 5 months of my undergrad, and I had finally figured out how to stay ahead of the curve in studying and assignments.

The Friday of finals week, my roommate Kelly woke me up at 4:30am. I had been asleep since 8pm, because none of my friends had free time that week and I wasn't stressed a bit. Might as well sleep, right? She was panicked. "Allison, you have to wake up. We've got to go to breakfast, and then you have your biggest final at 8am. Why are you sleeping?!?" I didn't gloat or brag, but I knew I could sleep because I prepared well for that big test.

I still remember that breakfast. I laughed with my friends and wasn't stressed at all, because I was ready for the last test of my college career.

That's a story about me being prepared. If you want, I could tell you thousands of stories about when I messed up, failed to plan, and wasn't ready for what was expected of me. There was the tinge of panic that I felt in sophomore geometry in high school when I didn't do my homework, and couldn't decide whether to tell Mr. Orlando the truth or lie about forgetting it.

When Jesus came to this earth, He was both fully God and fully human. That concept makes my brain hurt a bit. Since Jesus was fully human, He, like us, would have the need to prepare for things or suffer the consequences.

Jesus was thirty years old when He started His ministry on earth. He knew it would be the hardest piece of His life on earth. He wanted to be ready for it.

Let's look at Matthew 4:

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted there by the devil. For forty days and forty nights he fasted and became very hungry.

— Matthew 4:1-2 (NLT)

1. Jesus Gave Us the Example of Preparing for Challenging Seasons.

In the timeline of Jesus' life, this time in the wilderness happened immediately after His baptism. Basically, Jesus publicly got proclaimed as the Messiah; then He was led into the wilderness.

Knowing He was walking into temptation, Jesus chose to fast.

Why do you think a fast was good preparation for Jesus to meet Satan?
[Wait for responses.]

We often do things physically to prepare for coming challenges.
[Leader Note: Share an example of physical preparation or share mine below.]

I have a friend who competes in Ironman triathlons. An Ironman competition consists of a 2.4-mile swim, a 112-mile bicycle ride, and a

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