

GIVE UP SOMETHING FOR LENT, BUT AVOID TEMPTATIONS TOO

We are currently in the season Christians call Lent, when many Christians give up something to remember that Jesus went into the wilderness and had nothing but what he could gather from his surroundings. But why did Jesus go into complete isolation for forty days? Certainly not so that he could give up chocolate. It was a time where he could be in silence, working his way through the commitment he had accepted, looking for guidance from the Spirit that he and many of us to this day believe is available to anyone prepared to stop and seek that guidance.

Whilst in the wilderness Jesus experienced three temptations: to go for power by compromising his principles, go for popularity by giving everyone what they wanted, and go for the spectacular by performing a jump from the roof of the Temple. Many today might not believe in the devil of the Bible who can give you great power just by worshipping him, or that you can turn stones into bread by prayer, or that God will save you if you launch yourself into space. But all of us face the temptations of grabbing power, chasing popularity, and seeking attention. To live by his principles, Jesus realised none of these would enable him to achieve what he was called to achieve. And if we have principles we want to live by, these temptations will not help us either.

So our Lent reflections should be not on what luxury to avoid, but on our misuse of power, popularity and attention seeking. And if Lent is not part of your calendar, power, popularity and attention are still the temptations to avoid. Jimi Hendrix wrote 'When the power of love overcomes the love of power, then the world will find peace'