

DAY 1 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER ("SOAP")

CONVERSATION STARTER

Have you ever felt you had a clear "sign" from God?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION (5 MINUTES)

That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them. They were terrified, but the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger."

Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God and saying, "Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased."

When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, "Let's go to Bethlehem! Let's see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

They hurried to the village and found Mary and Joseph. And there was the baby, lying in the manger. After seeing him, the shepherds told everyone what had happened and what the angel had said to them about this child. All who heard the shepherds' story were astonished, but Mary kept all these things in her heart and thought about them often. The shepherds went back to their flocks, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. It was just as the angel had told them. **Luke 2:8–20 NLT**

Sermon Insights: Do you believe that you could make an impact 2,000 years from now? EVERYONE matters to God!

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Let's not lose the focus: the angels first said, "Glory to God in highest heaven!" How are you focusing your attention and worship on God and his surprising gift this season?

The shepherds were society's migrant outcasts, ignored and mistrusted. Yet the angels appeared to THEM. And they picked up, went, and worshipped. Are you too busy or important to stop and worship?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Lord, thank you for coming to the earth...despite our sin...and bringing light and life to us!

DAY 2 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER ("SOAP")

CONVERSATION STARTER

If you are a child of God, in what way are you most like your Father?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION (5 MINUTES)

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has become a child of God. And everyone who loves the Father loves his children, too. We know we love God's children if we love God and obey his commandments. Loving God means keeping his commandments, and his commandments are not burdensome. For every child of God defeats this evil world, and we achieve this victory through our faith. And who can win this battle against the world? Only those who believe that Jesus is the Son of God.

And Jesus Christ was revealed as God's Son by his baptism in water and by shedding his blood on the cross—not by water only, but by water and blood. And the Spirit, who is truth, confirms it with his testimony. So we have these three witnesses—the Spirit, the water, and the blood—and all three agree. Since we believe human testimony, surely we can believe the greater testimony that comes from God. And God has testified about his Son. All who believe in the Son of God know in their hearts that this testimony is true. Those who don't believe this are actually calling God a liar because they don't believe what God has testified about his Son. And this is what God has testified: He has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have God's Son does not have life. **1 John 5:1–12 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Does it surprise you that many people call God a "liar"? Are you still holding God and his truth at arm's length in some part of your life?

John says that God's "...commandments are not burdensome." Have you found the joy and freedom that comes from being a child of God? Why or why not?

"For every child of God defeats this evil world, and we achieve this victory through our faith." How does this play out in your life?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Lord, thank you for making me a child of God. Help me slow down and take time to embrace what this really means!

DAY 3 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER ("SOAP")

CONVERSATION STARTER

How would you rate your level of wisdom at this moment in your life (1=low, 10=high)?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION (5 MINUTES)

Wisdom has built her house; she has carved its seven columns. She has prepared a great banquet, mixed the wines, and set the table. She has sent her servants to invite everyone to come. She calls out from the heights overlooking the city. "Come in with me," she urges the simple. To those who lack good judgment, she says, "Come, eat my food, and drink the wine I have mixed. Leave your simple ways behind, and begin to live; learn to use good judgment."

Anyone who rebukes a mocker will get an insult in return. Anyone who corrects the wicked will get hurt. So don't bother correcting mockers; they will only hate you. But correct the wise, and they will love you. Instruct the wise, and they will be even wiser. Teach the righteous, and they will learn even more.

Fear of the LORD is the foundation of wisdom. Knowledge of the Holy One results in good judgment. Wisdom will multiply your days and add years to your life. If you become wise, you will be the one to benefit. If you scorn wisdom, you will be the one to suffer.

The woman named Folly is brash. She is ignorant and doesn't know it. She sits in her doorway on the heights overlooking the city. She calls out to men going by who are minding their own business. "Come in with me," she urges the simple. To those who lack good judgment, she says, "Stolen water is refreshing; food eaten in secret tastes the best!" But little do they know that the dead are there. Her guests are in the depths of the grave. **Proverbs 9:1-18 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Do you fear the Lord?

Insist on becoming wise—for yourself, for the people you love, for those who come after you. How will you declutter your heart, soul, mind, and space to make room for wisdom?

The author of Proverbs consistently gives two choices: embrace wisdom and benefit, reject wisdom and suffer. God does not give you the energy for tomorrow's battle today. He gives you the energy you need for today's battle today. What next step are you going to take...today?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Lord, it is a stunning privilege to be given the opportunity to know and fear you. Help me grow in wisdom and avoid the tragic pitfalls that come from being normal.

DAY 4 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER ("SOAP")

CONVERSATION STARTER

If you could make any impact on the world, what would it be, who would notice, and how?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION (5 MINUTES)

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APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

This week, you've considered the amazing favor the migrant shepherds received. You've considered what it means to be a "child of God." You've asked the question of what you are doing with the wisdom you have been offered. **We need to consider that a spiritual journey takes time.** What does that say about God the Father's enduring level of patience for you...and for ALL who are struggling and causing struggles in the world?

Who are you going to love today that might be impacted in the future because you decided to show kindness?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Lord, you decided that the "sign" the shepherds would be sent to look for was a little baby lovingly wrapped in cloths by his young mother. You chose to enter the world in such a simple way—yet you changed the world one person at a time. Thanks for loving and changing me.

DAY 5 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER ("SOAP")

CONVERSATION STARTER

What sin, struggle, pain or sorrow do you need to share openly with God, yourself, and someone you trust?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION (5 MINUTES)

A psalm of David, regarding the time Nathan the prophet came to him after David had committed adultery with Bathsheba. Have mercy on me, O God, because of your unfailing love. Because of your great compassion, blot out the stain of my sins. Wash me clean from my guilt. Purify me from my sin. For I recognize my rebellion; it haunts me day and night. Against you, and you alone, have I sinned; I have done what is evil in your sight. You will be proved right in what you say, and your judgment against me is just. For I was born a sinner—yes, from the moment my mother conceived me. But you desire honesty from the womb, teaching me wisdom even there.

Purify me from my sins, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. Oh, give me back my joy again; you have broken me—now let me rejoice. Don't keep looking at my sins. Remove the stain of my guilt. Create in me a clean heart, O God. Renew a loyal spirit within me. Do not banish me from your presence, and don't take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and make me willing to obey you. Then I will teach your ways to rebels, and they will return to you. Forgive me for shedding blood, O God who saves; then I will joyfully sing of your forgiveness. Unseal my lips, O Lord, that my mouth may praise you.

You do not desire a sacrifice, or I would offer one. You do not want a burnt offering. The sacrifice you desire is a broken spirit. You will not reject a broken and repentant heart, O God. Look with favor on Zion and help her; rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. Then you will be pleased with sacrifices offered in the right spirit—with burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings. Then bulls will again be sacrificed on your altar. **Psalm 51 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Are you "in a rut"? What is your next step?

David prayed, "The sacrifice you desire is a broken spirit. You will not reject a broken and repentant heart, O God." David knew from experience that confession is met with forgiveness, and opening up to God is the humility from which true freedom grows. Where in your life do you need to be humble so that God can give you freedom?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Lord, I don't deserve your kindness, but I need it. And you are generous and without fault. So I ask: please reveal in me what doesn't fit or give life so that I can turn it over to you and be free!