

DAY 1 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER (“SOAP”)

CONVERSATION STARTER

Where are you respected the most? Where are you respected the least? Why?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

“Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a fishing net that was thrown into the water and caught fish of every kind. When the net was full, they dragged it up onto the shore, sat down, and sorted the good fish into crates, but threw the bad ones away. That is the way it will be at the end of the world. The angels will come and separate the wicked people from the righteous, throwing the wicked into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Do you understand all these things?”

“Yes,” they said, “we do.”

Then he added, “Every teacher of religious law who becomes a disciple in the Kingdom of Heaven is like a homeowner who brings from his storeroom new gems of truth as well as old.”

When Jesus had finished telling these stories and illustrations, he left that part of the country. He returned to Nazareth, his hometown. When he taught there in the synagogue, everyone was amazed and said, “Where does he get this wisdom and the power to do miracles?” Then they scoffed, “He’s just the carpenter’s son, and we know Mary, his mother, and his brothers—James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas. All his sisters live right here among us. Where did he learn all these things?” And they were deeply offended and refused to believe in him.

Then Jesus told them, “A prophet is honored everywhere except in his own hometown and among his own family.” And so he did only a few miracles there because of their unbelief.

Matthew 13:47-58 NLT

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

Every human who has willingly sinned against God is “wicked.” How does someone become righteous? (Hint: for more information, read Romans 8)

Do you judge people differently than you used to?

Whose “judgment” do you use towards yourself and others—your natural attitudes or Jesus’ attitudes?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, thank you for providing the way for me to be brought from death to life, to be changed from wicked to righteous. Thank you for that gift! Teach me your attitudes of patience and kindness towards others so you can share your generous forgiving heart through me.

DAY 2 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER (“SOAP”)

CONVERSATION STARTER

“If it looks too good to be true, it probably is.” What does this bring to mind?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

The serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild animals the LORD God had made. One day he asked the woman, “Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?”

“Of course we may eat fruit from the trees in the garden,” the woman replied. “It’s only the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden that we are not allowed to eat. God said, ‘You must not eat it or even touch it; if you do, you will die.’”

“You won’t die!” the serpent replied to the woman. “God knows that your eyes will be opened as soon as you eat it, and you will be like God, knowing both good and evil.”

The woman was convinced. She saw that the tree was beautiful and its fruit looked delicious, and she wanted the wisdom it would give her. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it, too. At that moment their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves. **Genesis 3:1-7 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

Once Eve’s wisdom was dismissed as illegitimate, her desire fueled her disastrous disobedience. When do you regret setting aside your wisdom and following your desires?

“God is keeping something from you that you deserve.” How has this belief caused you to slip into sin and take something that wasn’t yours or want something that isn’t in your best interest?

What was the “moment” that Adam and Eve’s eyes were opened...and why is that significant?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, we are so easily deceived by Satan, our own desires, and the encouragement of people in our lives to participate. Teach me to humbly fear you and follow your lead so that I can walk in the safety of your path and not be tripped by my desires.

DAY 3 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER (“SOAP”)

CONVERSATION STARTER

Recount a memory of you hiding—where were you, and why were you hiding?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

When the cool evening breezes were blowing, the man and his wife heard the LORD God walking about in the garden. So they hid from the LORD God among the trees. Then the LORD God called to the man, “Where are you?”

He replied, “I heard you walking in the garden, so I hid. I was afraid because I was naked.”

“Who told you that you were naked?” the LORD God asked. “Have you eaten from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat?”

The man replied, “It was the woman you gave me who gave me the fruit, and I ate it.”

Then the LORD God asked the woman, “What have you done?”

“The serpent deceived me,” she replied. “That’s why I ate it.” **Genesis 3:8-13 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

God asked both Adam and Eve questions—not because he did not know the answers, but because they needed a chance to honestly confess what they had done. Why is confession important for healing and restoration?

God’s response was both positive and negative; he would continue to care for and provide for Adam and Eve, but there were bad natural consequences coming as a result of their disobedience. Why do you think Adam and Eve blamed others before admitting “I ate it”?

Are you in a pattern of blaming someone else for your choices and consequences?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

As you pray today, listen carefully for the question(s) that God is asking you. Realize that while there may be some difficult steps to take (honesty, awareness, personal responsibility, restoration), God’s heart is always for your good.

DAY 4 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER (“SOAP”)

CONVERSATION STARTER

What is the purpose of pain?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

Then the LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all animals, domestic and wild. You will crawl on your belly, groveling in the dust as long as you live. And I will cause hostility between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring. He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel.”

Then he said to the woman, “I will sharpen the pain of your pregnancy, and in pain you will give birth. And you will desire to control your husband, but he will rule over you.”

And to the man he said, “Since you listened to your wife and ate from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat, the ground is cursed because of you. All your life you will struggle to scratch a living from it. It will grow thorns and thistles for you, though you will eat of its grains. By the sweat of your brow will you have food to eat until you return to the ground from which you were made. For you were made from dust, and to dust you will return.”

Then the man—Adam—named his wife Eve, because she would be the mother of all who live. And the LORD God made clothing from animal skins for Adam and his wife.

Then the LORD God said, “Look, the human beings have become like us, knowing both good and evil. What if they reach out, take fruit from the tree of life, and eat it? Then they will live forever!” So the LORD God banished them from the Garden of Eden, and he sent Adam out to cultivate the ground from which he had been made. After sending them out, the LORD God stationed mighty cherubim to the east of the Garden of Eden. And he placed a flaming sword that flashed back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life. **Genesis 3:14-24 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

Pain...labor...banishment...relational struggle...death...these were not God’s original plan. Yet, they are not permanent punishments, but eye-opening tools assisting us in recognizing the severity of the path of sin so we can WILLINGLY turn to God and be saved by his GRACE. The temptation is to think God is callously putting us through needless difficulty, but the fact that Jesus participated in our pain, labor, banishment, relational struggle, and death should open our eyes to a God who loves us enough to walk with us on the path to restoration.

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, as Romans 8:3 says, thank you for sending your own Son in a body like the bodies we sinners have, declaring an end to sin’s control over us by giving your Son as a sacrifice for our sins. We are deeply grateful!

DAY 5 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER (“SOAP”)

CONVERSATION STARTER

Do you like or dislike conflict, and why?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

And now I make one more appeal, my dear brothers and sisters. Watch out for people who cause divisions and upset people’s faith by teaching things contrary to what you have been taught. Stay away from them. Such people are not serving Christ our Lord; they are serving their own personal interests. By smooth talk and glowing words they deceive innocent people.

But everyone knows that you are obedient to the Lord. This makes me very happy. I want you to be wise in doing right and to stay innocent of any wrong. The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. May the grace of our Lord Jesus be with you. Timothy, my fellow worker, sends you his greetings, as do Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater, my fellow Jews. I, Tertius, the one writing this letter for Paul, send my greetings, too, as one of the Lord’s followers.

Gaius says hello to you. He is my host and also serves as host to the whole church. Erastus, the city treasurer, sends you his greetings, and so does our brother Quartus.

Now all glory to God, who is able to make you strong, just as my Good News says. This message about Jesus Christ has revealed his plan for you Gentiles, a plan kept secret from the beginning of time. But now as the prophets foretold and as the eternal God has commanded, this message is made known to all Gentiles everywhere, so that they too might believe and obey him. All glory to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, forever. Amen. **Romans 16:17-27 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

God’s truth is the Christian’s secure foundation. Truth is, by definition, “what is.” It is not “what you wish” or “what you think” or “what you feel.” How can you tell when someone is not aligning with the truth, and how does Paul teach us to respond?

This Scripture is the end of the Apostle Paul’s letter to the Romans. Why is it significant that so many personal names were used?

Who does God want to have this good news? (HINT: “Gentile” simply means “nations”!)

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, thank you for being so gracious and kind. Thank you for reaching past our sin and brokenness and failure to give us light and life through Jesus. Thank you for including us in your plan!