

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

What is the best group of people you’ve ever connected with? How about the worst?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

**The Apostle Paul writes:** But in the following instructions, I cannot praise you. For it sounds as if more harm than good is done when you meet together. First, I hear that there are divisions among you when you meet as a church, and to some extent I believe it. But, of course, there must be divisions among you so that you who have God’s approval will be recognized!

When you meet together, you are not really interested in the Lord’s Supper. For some of you hurry to eat your own meal without sharing with others. As a result, some go hungry while others get drunk. What? Don’t you have your own homes for eating and drinking? Or do you really want to disgrace God’s church and shame the poor? What am I supposed to say? Do you want me to praise you? Well, I certainly will not praise you for this! **1 Corinthians 11:17–22 NLT**

**Sermon Insights:**

Our tendency is to avoid quiet and self-examination.

Blaise Pascal said, “The only thing that consoles us for our miseries is diversion. And yet it is the greatest of our miseries. For it is that above all which prevents us thinking about ourselves and leads us imperceptibly to destruction.”

Jesus is not saying, “Pack your bags, we’re going on a guilt trip.”

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

Does it surprise you that one of the greatest and earliest churches had plenty of unhealthy drama?

What do you think about God’s plan to invite everyone, regardless of their past or financial status or people group, into his family? How is this different from every other family on the planet?

What is one way you can examine yourself healthily rather than be distracted by diversions today?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, it is an extreme privilege to be invited and included in your family. Thank you for judging me according to my forgiven status bought by Jesus at the cross, not by my past or financial situation or people group. Help me be secure in your love for me so I can examine myself clearly, not for the sake of increasing a guilty conscience but for the sake of embracing your power in me to live a new life!

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

Who is the most grateful person you know? Did it come easily to them?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

*The Apostle Paul continues:* For I pass on to you what I received from the Lord himself. On the night when he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took some bread and gave thanks to God for it. Then he broke it in pieces and said, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way, he took the cup of wine after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant between God and his people—an agreement confirmed with my blood. Do this in remembrance of me as often as you drink it.” For every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are announcing the Lord’s death until he comes again.

So anyone who eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord unworthily is guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. That is why you should examine yourself before eating the bread and drinking the cup. For if you eat the bread or drink the cup without honoring the body of Christ, you are eating and drinking God’s judgment upon yourself. That is why many of you are weak and sick and some have even died.

But if we would examine ourselves, we would not be judged by God in this way. Yet when we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned along with the world.

So, my dear brothers and sisters, when you gather for the Lord’s Supper, wait for each other. If you are really hungry, eat at home so you won’t bring judgment upon yourselves when you meet together. I’ll give you instructions about the other matters after I arrive. **1 Corinthians 11:23–34 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

What do you marvel at about Jesus’ attitudes, words, and actions?

In Scripture, the “body of Christ” refers to both the physical body of Jesus that was crucified and later to the church, the group of people who make up the “body of Christ.” Which do you typically honor when you participate in communion?

Communion is a gift that has a private and a public element to it—you are examining YOUR heart and yet participating with the family of Jesus. Why are both important?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, as David wrote, your thoughts about me are wonderful and too amazing for me to understand. May you shine light on my path so I can see clearly, and help me be humble enough to follow your lead even when the path is uncertain.

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

If you could make sure the people you really love know just ONE THING before you die, what would it be and why?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

*We make an ANNOUNCEMENT at communion.*

For every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are announcing the Lord’s death until he comes again. **1 Corinthians 11:26 NLT**

Jesus came and told his disciples, “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” **Matthew 28:18–20 NLT**

Devote yourselves to prayer with an alert mind and a thankful heart. Pray for us, too, that God will give us many opportunities to speak about his mysterious plan concerning Christ. That is why I am here in chains. Pray that I will proclaim this message as clearly as I should.

Live wisely among those who are not believers, and make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be gracious and attractive so that you will have the right response for everyone. **Colossians 4:2–6 NLT**

So when we preach that Christ was crucified, the Jews are offended and the Gentiles say it’s all nonsense. But to those called by God to salvation, both Jews and Gentiles, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God. **1 Corinthians 1:23-24 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

Why do you think “announcing the Lord’s death” is such a priority for the church?

Is it easier for you (like the Jews) to be “offended” at the idea of God suffering or to just brush it off as “nonsense” (like the Gentiles)? Why is it so important to those who are being saved?

If someone could be a “good person,” would there be any need for Jesus? (HINT: this is why Jesus’ sacrifice was offensive to the “good” Jews!)

Why is focusing on Jesus’ purity (his gift to those who receive it) more important than focusing on your performance (good OR bad)?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, teach me to receive your purity as a gift so that I may be clothed in YOUR righteousness! Help me to humbly announce your death as I long for you to return to make all things new!

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

Do you embrace God’s gift of a guilt-free conscience?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

*I look IN at myself at communion.*

So anyone who eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord unworthily is guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. That is why you should examine yourself before eating the bread and drinking the cup. **1 Corinthians 11:27–28 NLT**

Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. Human anger does not produce the righteousness God desires. So get rid of all the filth and evil in your lives, and humbly accept the word God has planted in your hearts, for it has the power to save your souls.

But don’t just listen to God’s word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. For if you listen to the word and don’t obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror. You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like. But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don’t forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it. **James 1:19–25 NLT**

This is the message we heard from Jesus and now declare to you: God is light, and there is no darkness in him at all. So we are lying if we say we have fellowship with God but go on living in spiritual darkness; we are not practicing the truth. But if we are living in the light, as God is in the light, then we have fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from all sin.

If we claim we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and not living in the truth. But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness. If we claim we have not sinned, we are calling God a liar and showing that his word has no place in our hearts. **1 John 1:5–10 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

How does God’s grace and love help you feel secure so that you can confess your sin without fear of punishment?

Do you believe God 1) has your best in mind, and 2) cares for you better than you care for yourself?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, help me to be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry so that I can enjoy becoming like you—generous, wise, and patient through life’s ups and downs.

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

Being a part of the spiritual world and the physical world, which are you typically most aware of?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

*We look UP at Jesus in communion.*

For if you eat the bread or drink the cup without honoring the body of Christ, you are eating and drinking God’s judgment upon yourself. **1 Corinthians 11:29 NLT**

Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation, for through him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can’t see— such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world. Everything was created through him and for him. He existed before anything else, and he holds all creation together.

Christ is also the head of the church, which is his body. He is the beginning, supreme over all who rise from the dead. So he is first in everything. For God in all his fullness was pleased to live in Christ, and through him God reconciled everything to himself. He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth by means of Christ’s blood on the cross.

This includes you who were once far away from God. You were his enemies, separated from him by your evil thoughts and actions. Yet now he has reconciled you to himself through the death of Christ in his physical body. As a result, he has brought you into his own presence, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before him without a single fault.

But you must continue to believe this truth and stand firmly in it. Don’t drift away from the assurance you received when you heard the Good News. The Good News has been preached all over the world, and I, Paul, have been appointed as God’s servant to proclaim it. **Colossians 1:15–23 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

“God has reconciled you to himself through the death of Christ in his physical body.” God takes sin seriously. God takes his love for you seriously. In what way do you feel you should take communion (sharing Jesus with the church) seriously?

If you could create a special way to express your love for Jesus, what would it be?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, teach me to look UP at you as the source of my life, love, and power to live a holy life. Forgive me for my many sins, soften my heart, open my eyes, and use me to help your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven!