

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

Do you determine your own focus and priorities, or do you allow others to determine these?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

Why, then, was the law [*specifically the Old Testament Law given to Moses*] given? It was given alongside the promise to show people their sins. But the law was designed to last only until the coming of the child who was promised. God gave his law through angels to Moses, who was the mediator between God and the people. Now a mediator is helpful if more than one party must reach an agreement. But God, who is one, did not use a mediator when he gave his promise to Abraham.

Is there a conflict, then, between God’s law and God’s promises? Absolutely not! If the law could give us new life, we could be made right with God by obeying it. But the Scriptures declare that we are all prisoners of sin, so we receive God’s promise of freedom only by believing in Jesus Christ.

Before the way of faith in Christ was available to us, we were placed under guard by the law. We were kept in protective custody, so to speak, until the way of faith was revealed.

Let me put it another way. The law was our guardian until Christ came; it protected us until we could be made right with God through faith. And now that the way of faith has come, we no longer need the law as our guardian.

For you are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. And all who have been united with Christ in baptism have put on Christ, like putting on new clothes. There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus. And now that you belong to Christ, you are the true children of Abraham. You are his heirs, and God’s promise to Abraham belongs to you. **Galatians 3:19–29 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

Why is faith in God through Jesus VERY different than mere religion?

What causes TRUE life transformation?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, thank you for offering so much more than a self-help guide to becoming a better person. Thank you for allowing my sinful self to die with Jesus so that you could make me into a new creation through the power of your Holy Spirit!

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

What role does money play in your life? What would you fear losing most if you didn't have it?

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... **Genesis 3:1–6 NLT**

Sermon Insights:

The problem is that many of us are fighting on our own strength in our own power. Our old thoughts are entrenched, and our old habits keep resurfacing. Many Christians live in a perpetual state of frustration thinking, “Others seem to get it...why can’t I?” But we have to understand the spiral that drags us down:

- 1) Satan begins with temptation.
- 2) Satan makes us feel like “God is holding out on you.”
- 3) Satan appeals to your basic needs.

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

What areas of your life are the most difficult with regard to Satan’s influence tempting you?

Where have you been tempted to believe that God is “holding out on you”?

Satan offers a range of short-term, substitute solutions for legitimate basic needs. What needs do you need to 1) acknowledge, and 2) recover God’s provision and plan to get them met?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, teach me to focus on your provision, protection, and purpose so that I can get my legitimate needs met in your ways. Help me to be patient and trust in your timing and plan.

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

Recount a moment when something looked “too good to be true” – what happened?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

Teach these things, Timothy, and encourage everyone to obey them. Some people may contradict our teaching, but these are the wholesome teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. These teachings promote a godly life.

Anyone who teaches something different is arrogant and lacks understanding. Such a person has an unhealthy desire to quibble over the meaning of words. This stirs up arguments ending in jealousy, division, slander, and evil suspicions. These people always cause trouble. Their minds are corrupt, and they have turned their backs on the truth. To them, a show of godliness is just a way to become wealthy.

Yet true godliness with contentment is itself great wealth. After all, we brought nothing with us when we came into the world, and we can’t take anything with us when we leave it. So if we have enough food and clothing, let us be content.

But people who long to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many foolish and harmful desires that plunge them into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. And some people, craving money, have wandered from the true faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows. **1 Timothy 6:2–10 NLT**

There is a path before each person that seems right, but it ends in death. **Proverbs 14:12 NLT**

Sermon Insights:

The next step in the downward spiral: we sin. Sin has a hook, and it’s barbed.

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

As we consider the “mind games” the Enemy plays on anyone who plays along, what are you learning about the way your mind works and the steps God gives you to succeed in the battle for your mind?

What are some principles that help you guard against the “love of money”?

How can you practice contentment?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, fill me with gratitude and contentment as I use the time, talent, and treasure you have let me borrow to glorify you and meet the needs of others.

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

If “Guilt” were a person, how would you describe your relationship with “Guilt”?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

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 3:6–7 NLT**

Sermon Insights: The next step in the downward spiral: the Enemy shifts to accusation and condemnation and we find ourselves weak, vulnerable, empty and longing!

I have discovered this principle of life—that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong. I love God’s law with all my heart. But there is another power within me that is at war with my mind. This power makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me. Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death? Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord. So you see how it is: In my mind I really want to obey God’s law, but because of my sinful nature I am a slave to sin.

So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. And because you belong to him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death. The law of Moses was unable to save us because of the weakness of our sinful nature. So God did what the law could not do. He sent his own Son in a body like the bodies we sinners have. And in that body God declared an end to sin’s control over us by giving his Son as a sacrifice for our sins. He did this so that the just requirement of the law would be fully satisfied for us, who no longer follow our sinful nature but instead follow the Spirit. **Romans 7:21–8:4 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

Why is humility necessary in following Jesus?

How did God declare an end to sin’s control over you?

“So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus.” Why is this SO important?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, thank you for your gift of life in Jesus. Thank you that you did not prescribe a religion of doing or being better; you have brought me into your family and made me into a new creation!

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

Who knows you better than anyone?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

If you think you are standing strong, be careful not to fall. The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure. **1 Corinthians 10:12–13 NLT**

Well then, should we keep on sinning so that God can show us more and more of his wonderful grace? Of course not! Since we have died to sin, how can we continue to live in it? Or have you forgotten that when we were joined with Christ Jesus in baptism, we joined him in his death? For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives.

Since we have been united with him in his death, we will also be raised to life as he was. We know that our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin. For when we died with Christ we were set free from the power of sin. And since we died with Christ, we know we will also live with him. **Romans 6:1–8 NLT**

Jesus said, “I am the good shepherd; I know my own sheep, and they know me, just as my Father knows me and I know the Father. So I sacrifice my life for the sheep. **John 10:14–15 NLT**

For sin is the sting that results in death, and the law gives sin its power. But thank God! He gives us victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ. So, my dear brothers and sisters, be strong and immovable. Always work enthusiastically for the Lord, for you know that nothing you do for the Lord is ever useless. **1 Corinthians 15:56-58 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

Your temptation is not unique, and God will give you a way out. Are you encouraged?

Grace is opposed to earning, not to effort. What are your thoughts about that idea?

How do you pursue intimacy with God? Would you use another word for “intimacy”?

Jesus proves there is life after tragedy. How has God redeemed situations in your life?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, I stand in awe of your willingness to give life after sin, brokenness, and rebellion. Thank you for giving me life as a gift. Teach me to be a good recipient and a good giver of your love and forgiveness.