

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

Do you long for change?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

How lovely is your dwelling place, O LORD of Heaven’s Armies. I long, yes, I faint with longing to enter the courts of the LORD. With my whole being, body and soul, I will shout joyfully to the living God. Even the sparrow finds a home, and the swallow builds her nest and raises her young at a place near your altar, O LORD of Heaven’s Armies, my King and my God! What joy for those who can live in your house, always singing your praises. **Psalm 84:1–4 NLT**

One day as he saw the crowds gathering, Jesus went up on the mountainside and sat down. His disciples gathered around him, and he began to teach them. “God blesses those who are poor and realize their need for him, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.

God blesses those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

God blesses those who are humble, for they will inherit the whole earth. **Matthew 5:1–5 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

Someone once said that Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people. God’s people under the Old Covenant/Testament before Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection longed to see God’s temple on earth. Jesus has promised to build us a more lasting home in Heaven away from death, destruction, and pain. Do you long to “enter the courts of the Lord”?

Do you believe God wants you to be happy? If we set our sights on temporary pleasure, the world is full of disappointment, and God does not alleviate much of it. Look again at the first three promises Jesus made about WHO God makes happy, HOW and WHERE.

What is the value of being poor and realizing your need for God, mourning, and humility?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Consider using the Scripture above, Psalm 84, as your prayer for today!

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

What causes you to genuinely weep, mourn, or cry?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

Jesus continued,

God blesses those who hunger and thirst for justice, for they will be satisfied.

God blesses those who are merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

God blesses those whose hearts are pure, for they will see God.” **Matthew 5:6-8 NLT**

What joy for those whose strength comes from the LORD, who have set their minds on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. When they walk through the Valley of Weeping, it will become a place of refreshing springs. The autumn rains will clothe it with blessings. They will continue to grow stronger, and each of them will appear before God in Jerusalem. O LORD God of Heaven’s Armies, hear my prayer. Listen, O God of Jacob. **Psalms 84:5-8 NLT**

But you must not forget this one thing, dear friends: A day is like a thousand years to the Lord, and a thousand years is like a day. The Lord isn’t really being slow about his promise, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent.

But the day of the Lord will come as unexpectedly as a thief. Then the heavens will pass away with a terrible noise, and the very elements themselves will disappear in fire, and the earth and everything on it will be found to deserve judgment. Since everything around us is going to be destroyed like this, what holy and godly lives you should live, looking forward to the day of God and hurrying it along. On that day, he will set the heavens on fire, and the elements will melt away in the flames. But we are looking forward to the new heavens and new earth he has promised, a world filled with God’s righteousness. **2 Peter 3:8-13 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

True justice comes from upholding God’s standard. Do you hunger and thirst for justice?

Are you merciful, so that you will be shown mercy?

How can you have both burning in your heart – justice and mercy? Is it not becoming like your Father in heaven—having a pure heart? God wants all to repent and come to good.

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, fill me with a hunger and thirst for justice! Teach me to be merciful! Make my heart pure like yours! Thank you for showing great mercy as you give people time to turn to you. Thank you for not letting sin go on forever and promising true justice in the end.

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

Where your treasure is, there your heart WILL be also. Where is your treasure and your heart?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

Jesus continued, “God blesses those who work for peace, for they will be called the children of God. God blesses those who are persecuted for doing right, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs. God blesses you when people mock you and persecute you and lie about you and say all sorts of evil things against you because you are my followers. Be happy about it! Be very glad! For a great reward awaits you in heaven. And remember, the ancient prophets were persecuted in the same way.” **Matthew 5:9-12 NLT**

O God, look with favor upon the king, our shield! Show favor to the one you have anointed. A single day in your courts is better than a thousand anywhere else! I would rather be a gatekeeper in the house of my God than live the good life in the homes of the wicked. For the LORD God is our sun and our shield. He gives us grace and glory. The LORD will withhold no good thing from those who do what is right. O LORD of Heaven’s Armies, what joy for those who trust in you. **Psalms 84:9–12 NLT**

What is causing the quarrels and fights among you? Don’t they come from the evil desires at war within you? You want what you don’t have, so you scheme and kill to get it. You are jealous of what others have, but you can’t get it, so you fight and wage war to take it away from them. Yet you don’t have what you want because you don’t ask God for it. And even when you ask, you don’t get it because your motives are all wrong—you want only what will give you pleasure. You adulterers! Don’t you realize that friendship with the world makes you an enemy of God? I say it again: If you want to be a friend of the world, you make yourself an enemy of God. **James 4:1–4 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

Throughout the Bible we are urged to make a choice between allegiance to the world’s system that glorifies man and allegiance to God, which glorifies the Creator and surrenders to his ways and will. The line between good and evil resides not in national borders, races, or even between families or churches...the line between good and evil resides in every human heart. Have you made the choice to honor God as Lord of your life? Have you chosen to look to God for your provision, your protection, and your purpose? What has it cost you so far?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, thank you for giving us the unfathomable gift of your Word so that we can know your will and your ways. Help me to ask you for good things, with pure motives and a humble heart.

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

What is the most interesting conversation you have participated in recently?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

Jesus continued, “You are the salt of the earth. But what good is salt if it has lost its flavor? Can you make it salty again? It will be thrown out and trampled underfoot as worthless. “You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father. **Matthew 5:13–16 NLT**

Masters, be just and fair to your slaves. Remember that you also have a Master—in heaven. 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 4:1–6 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

“Make the most of every opportunity” – what opportunities do you have today to “live wisely among those who are not believers”?

How can you make your conversation gracious and attractive so that you will have the right response for everyone?

Why is it important to stay humble AND “let your good deeds shine out for all to see”? How do you do that?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, bring opportunities into my path so that I can live out what I’m being challenged to do. Help me to have the strength to do what my faith prompts me to do today!

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

How does “rest” fit into your daily, weekly, and seasonal routines?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

God’s promise of entering his rest still stands, so we ought to tremble with fear that some of you might fail to experience it. For this good news—that God has prepared this rest—has been announced to us just as it was to them. But it did them no good because they didn’t share the faith of those who listened to God. For only we who believe can enter his rest. As for the others, God said,

“In my anger I took an oath: ‘They will never enter my place of rest,’”

even though this rest has been ready since he made the world. We know it is ready because of the place in the Scriptures where it mentions the seventh day: “On the seventh day God rested from all his work.” But in the other passage God said, “They will never enter my place of rest.” So God’s rest is there for people to enter, but those who first heard this good news failed to enter because they disobeyed God. So God set another time for entering his rest, and that time is today. God announced this through David much later in the words already quoted:

“Today when you hear his voice, don’t harden your hearts.”

Now if Joshua had succeeded in giving them this rest, God would not have spoken about another day of rest still to come. So there is a special rest still waiting for the people of God. For all who have entered into God’s rest have rested from their labors, just as God did after creating the world. So let us do our best to enter that rest. But if we disobey God, as the people of Israel did, we will fall.

For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God. Everything is naked and exposed before his eyes, and he is the one to whom we are accountable. **Hebrews 4:1–13 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

Have you surrendered to Jesus so that you can be assured of entering God’s rest when you die?

Do you find it compelling that God invites you into the very rest he entered after he created the world? “Sabbath” is the seventh day of the week, and it was intended by God as a gift for his people to remember and experience weekly rest on the way to the “Promised Land.” Many chose a different path. God will sustain you if you choose to walk his path, but it is your choice. That’s the nature of love.

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, I trust totally in you. Keep my eyes focused on Jesus, the author/initiator and perfecter/completer of my faith!