

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

Is it easy for you to forgive? Do you have compassion for those who have a more difficult time forgiving?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

“When you pray, don’t babble on and on as the Gentiles do. They think their prayers are answered merely by repeating their words again and again. Don’t be like them, for your Father knows exactly what you need even before you ask him!

Pray like this: “Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy.

May your Kingdom come soon. May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.

Give us today the food we need, and forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us. And don’t let us yield to temptation, but rescue us from the evil one.

“If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins.

“And when you fast, don’t make it obvious, as the hypocrites do, for they try to look miserable and disheveled so people will admire them for their fasting. I tell you the truth, that is the only reward they will ever get. But when you fast, comb your hair and wash your face. Then no one will notice that you are fasting, except your Father, who knows what you do in private. And your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.” **Matthew 6:7–18 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

What’s the difference between God’s forgiveness of someone and my forgiveness of that same person?

Is there anyone you refuse to forgive? Is it possible you are confused on the critical differences between **forgiveness** (canceling the debt someone has towards you), **right judgment** (judging something as right or wrong), **trust** (allowing someone to handle precious things after they have broken them) or **reconciliation** (repairing a relationship so there can be a future)?

Forgiveness is for your healing spiritual protection and does not require you to cancel your judgment, trust untrustworthy people (whom Jesus called “pigs”), or reconcile. To obey God and forgive (to cancel someone’s debt to you) does not erase their guilt before God or obligate you to trust or have a relationship with them in the future. It keeps you free of bitterness so you can clearly focus on YOUR need for God’s forgiveness in your own life.

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, help my heart be pure. Help me forgive others from my heart so I can receive your forgiveness. Help the hurt I feel and fear fade as I focus on your forgiveness.

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

How do you feel about hypocrisy?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

Then Peter came to him and asked, “Lord, how often should I forgive someone who sins against me? Seven times?”

“No, not seven times,” Jesus replied, “but seventy times seven!

“Therefore, the Kingdom of Heaven can be compared to a king who decided to bring his accounts up to date with servants who had borrowed money from him. In the process, one of his debtors was brought in who owed him millions of dollars. He couldn’t pay, so his master ordered that he be sold—along with his wife, his children, and everything he owned—to pay the debt. But the man fell down before his master and begged him, ‘Please, be patient with me, and I will pay it all.’ Then his master was filled with pity for him, and he released him and forgave his debt.

“But when the man left the king, he went to a fellow servant who owed him a few thousand dollars. He grabbed him by the throat and demanded instant payment. His fellow servant fell down before him and begged for a little more time. ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay it,’ he pleaded. But his creditor wouldn’t wait. He had the man arrested and put in prison until the debt could be paid in full.

“When some of the other servants saw this, they were very upset. They went to the king and told him everything that had happened. Then the king called in the man he had forgiven and said, ‘You evil servant! I forgave you that tremendous debt because you pleaded with me. Shouldn’t you have mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you?’ Then the angry king sent the man to prison to be tortured until he had paid his entire debt.

“That’s what my heavenly Father will do to you if you refuse to forgive your brothers and sisters from your heart.” **Matthew 18:21–35 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

How important is it to your heavenly Father that you forgive your brothers and sisters from your heart?

What is a greater motivation—fear or love? How do you prefer for God to motivate you?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, help me focus on the blood of Jesus and recognize the price you paid for me to be free.

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

What have you been forgiven for?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

We know that the law is good if one uses it properly. We also know that the law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, for the sexually immoral, for those practicing homosexuality, for slave traders and liars and perjurers—and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine that conforms to the gospel concerning the glory of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me.

I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me trustworthy, appointing me to his service. Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life. Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen. **1 Timothy 1:8–17 NIV**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

What is your attitude towards sin and towards those who are suffering under the power of sin?

What is your attitude towards God?

Paul was overcome with gratitude at a merciful God who would forgive his sin and allow him to participate in God’s restoration and reconciliation of the world to himself. Has your life followed a similar pattern—bold sin followed by a merciful God who gives you an opportunity to create good things with him?

Have you or someone you know ever felt “unforgivable”? How did Paul dispel this false belief?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, thank you for your mercy and your forgiveness and your attitude of care and love for me. Teach me to imitate your attitudes towards myself so that I can choose love and grace towards myself and extend it to others.

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

Who or what do you consider to be your greatest enemy?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

And now, just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must continue to follow him. Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness.

Don't let anyone capture you with empty philosophies and high-sounding nonsense that come from human thinking and from the spiritual powers of this world, rather than from Christ. For in Christ lives all the fullness of God in a human body. So you also are complete through your union with Christ, who is the head over every ruler and authority.

When you came to Christ, you were “circumcised,” but not by a physical procedure. Christ performed a spiritual circumcision—the cutting away of your sinful nature. For you were buried with Christ when you were baptized. And with him you were raised to new life because you trusted the mighty power of God, who raised Christ from the dead.

You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ, for he forgave all our sins. He canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross. In this way, he disarmed the spiritual rulers and authorities. He shamed them publicly by his victory over them on the cross.

Colossians 2:6–15 NLT

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

How are you going to “let your roots grow down into” Jesus? How are you building your life on Jesus?

What does God, through Paul, promise if you do these things?

Where do “empty philosophies and high-sounding nonsense” come from, and how can you tell between them and truth?

God “canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross.” How can this build your humility and confidence in who Jesus has empowered you to be today?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, thank you for going to battle for my soul before I existed. Thank you for paying my way and paving the way for me to be forgiven, righteous, and powerful to make a difference in the world for you! Thank you for giving me victory through the cross!

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

How do you think of salvation? A life insurance policy? A seed that has been planted?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven, where Christ sits in the place of honor at God’s right hand. Think about the things of heaven, not the things of earth. For you died to this life, and your real life is hidden with Christ in God. And when Christ, who is your life, is revealed to the whole world, you will share in all his glory.

So put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you. Have nothing to do with sexual immorality, impurity, lust, and evil desires. Don’t be greedy, for a greedy person is an idolater, worshiping the things of this world. Because of these sins, the anger of God is coming. You used to do these things when your life was still part of this world. But now is the time to get rid of anger, rage, malicious behavior, slander, and dirty language. Don’t lie to each other, for you have stripped off your old sinful nature and all its wicked deeds. Put on your new nature, and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like him. In this new life, it doesn’t matter if you are a Jew or a Gentile, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbaric, uncivilized, slave, or free. Christ is all that matters, and he lives in all of us.

Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Make allowance for each other’s faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony. And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace. And always be thankful.

Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts. And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father. **Colossians 3:1–17 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

What do you need to take your sights *off* so that you can set your sights *on* the realities of heaven?

If you have given your life to Jesus, you have “died to this life,” and “your real life is hidden with Christ in God.” How does that change your perspective?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, thank you for choosing to allow me to join your family—I happily and whole-heartedly accept your invitation! Clothe me with your goodness so I can spread your love and peace!