

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

When do you remember being the most hungry?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted there by the devil. For forty days and forty nights he fasted and became very hungry. During that time the devil came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become loaves of bread.”

But Jesus told him, “No! The Scriptures say, ‘People do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”

Then the devil took him to the holy city, Jerusalem, to the highest point of the Temple, and said, “If you are the Son of God, jump off! For the Scriptures say, ‘He will order his angels to protect you. And they will hold you up with their hands so you won’t even hurt your foot on a stone.’”

Jesus responded, “The Scriptures also say, ‘You must not test the LORD your God.’”

Next the devil took him to the peak of a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. “I will give it all to you,” he said, “if you will kneel down and worship me.”

“Get out of here, Satan,” Jesus told him. “For the Scriptures say, ‘You must worship the LORD your God and serve only him.’” Then the devil went away, and angels came and took care of Jesus. **Matthew 4:1–11 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

Jesus indicated that while our bodies need food, true life requires God’s Word. Are you regularly “consuming” God’s Word? What effect is it having on your life and relationships?

Why do you think God taught us not to “test” him? Do you ever struggle with having a critical or judgmental attitude towards God?

What temporary and tempting pleasures are you giving up so that you can follow Jesus?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, lead me not into temptation, but deliver me from the evil one.

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

Who has protected you in your life? If they are still alive, have you shown appreciation recently?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

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.

So then, since we have a great High Priest who has entered heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to what we believe. This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin. So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most. **Hebrews 4:12-16 NLT**

While Jesus was here on earth, he offered prayers and pleadings, with a loud cry and tears, to the one who could rescue him from death. And God heard his prayers because of his deep reverence for God. Even though Jesus was God’s Son, he learned obedience from the things he suffered. In this way, God qualified him as a perfect High Priest, and he became the source of eternal salvation for all those who obey him. **Hebrews 5:7-10 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

Why is the Word of God an essential tool in combating temptation?

Why is reading/memorizing/studying God’s Word not enough to give you victory over temptation and sin? What else is needed once you know the information?

Jesus, our High Priest, understands our weaknesses. He was tempted in the same ways we are tempted. How does this encourage you to go “boldly to the throne of our gracious God”? What will you find when you do?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, thank you for walking the difficult path before me. Thank you for experiencing temptation and pain in this world so that you would receive me, in my broken and sinful state, with mercy and forgiveness instead of condemnation, which I rightly deserve. Teach me to approach your throne of grace with boldness as an act of trust in you.

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

Who are five people you should add to your prayer list today?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

With the Lord’s authority I say this: Live no longer as the Gentiles do, for they are hopelessly confused. Their minds are full of darkness; they wander far from the life God gives because they have closed their minds and hardened their hearts against him. They have no sense of shame. They live for lustful pleasure and eagerly practice every kind of impurity.

But that isn’t what you learned about Christ. Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him, throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy. **Ephesians 4:17–24 NLT**

A final word: Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on all of God’s armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.

Therefore, put on every piece of God’s armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm. Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth and the body armor of God’s righteousness. For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that you will be fully prepared. In addition to all of these, hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil. Put on salvation as your helmet, and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere. **Ephesians 6:10–18 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

How can you hear God’s voice or discern his will if you close your mind and harden your heart? Does it mean God no longer cares or communicates just because someone can’t hear or see?

Among the strategies of the enemy, the two most popular are deception and distraction. How are you actively combatting these dangers in your life?

Who in your life helps you see truth and focus on real priorities?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, help me have an open mind, a soft heart, and a teachable spirit. Renew my thoughts and attitudes through your Spirit.

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

What is the best gift you have ever received?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.

If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking. But when you ask him, be sure that your faith is in God alone. Do not waver, for a person with divided loyalty is as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is blown and tossed by the wind. Such people should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. Their loyalty is divided between God and the world, and they are unstable in everything they do.

Believers who are poor have something to boast about, for God has honored them. And those who are rich should boast that God has humbled them. They will fade away like a little flower in the field. The hot sun rises and the grass withers; the little flower droops and falls, and its beauty fades away. In the same way, the rich will fade away with all of their achievements.

God blesses those who patiently endure testing and temptation. Afterward they will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him. And remember, when you are being tempted, do not say, “God is tempting me.” God is never tempted to do wrong, and he never tempts anyone else. Temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away. These desires give birth to sinful actions. And when sin is allowed to grow, it gives birth to death.

So don’t be misled, my dear brothers and sisters. Whatever is good and perfect is a gift coming down to us from God our Father, who created all the lights in the heavens. He never changes or casts a shifting shadow. He chose to give birth to us by giving us his true word. And we, out of all creation, became his prized possession. **James 1:2-18 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

What is your current goal in life: comfort or endurance?

What do you need to ask God wisdom for *right now*?

What temptation is presenting the most danger to you now? How does this Scripture help?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, all in my life that is good and perfect has been given to me as a gift from you. You created all the lights in the heavens. You never change or cast a shifting shadow. You gave birth spiritually to me, your “prized possession,” by giving me your true word. Thank you!

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

What is more difficult for you to navigate: physical or mental/emotional temptations?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

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.

If you claim to be religious but don't control your tongue, you are fooling yourself, and your religion is worthless. Pure and genuine religion in the sight of God the Father means caring for orphans and widows in their distress and refusing to let the world corrupt you. **James 1:19–27**
NLT

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

What does it mean that the word God “planted” in your heart has the power to save your soul?

Why is only listening to God's word and not obeying so dangerous?

How are you going to gain God's blessing today for obeying his word?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, teach me to be humble so that I can accept the word you have planted in my heart. I want your truth and love to grow in my life and take over every part of my being—my mind, my heart, my soul, my strength and my relationships. You are so good—do your will in me!