

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

When you assess the brokenness of the world, where you do place the blame? Do you share any of the blame?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

“The Father loves me because I sacrifice my life so I may take it back again. No one can take my life from me. I sacrifice it voluntarily. For I have the authority to lay it down when I want to and also to take it up again. For this is what my Father has commanded.” **John 10:17–18 NLT**

Jesus crossed the Kidron Valley with his disciples and entered a grove of olive trees. Judas, the betrayer, knew this place, because Jesus had often gone there with his disciples. The leading priests and Pharisees had given Judas a contingent of Roman soldiers and Temple guards to accompany him. Now with blazing torches, lanterns, and weapons, they arrived at the olive grove.

Jesus fully realized all that was going to happen to him, so he stepped forward to meet them. “Who are you looking for?” he asked. “Jesus the Nazarene,” they replied. “I AM he,” Jesus said. (Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them.) As Jesus said “I AM he,” they all drew back and fell to the ground! Once more he asked them, “Who are you looking for?” And again they replied, “Jesus the Nazarene.”

“I told you that I AM he,” Jesus said. “And since I am the one you want, let these others go.” He did this to fulfill his own statement: “I did not lose a single one of those you have given me.”

Then Simon Peter drew a sword and slashed off the right ear of Malchus, the high priest’s slave. But Jesus said to Peter, “Put your sword back into its sheath. Shall I not drink from the cup of suffering the Father has given me?” **John 18:1–11 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

What made Judas feel powerful?

What made the priests, Pharisees, soldiers, and temple guards feel powerful?

What made Peter feel powerful?

What made Jesus truly powerful?

Which one are you going to follow—and how do you wield the power God has given you?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, this was such a dark moment that revealed what was truly in the hearts of so many people. My fear, jealousy, and desire to be powerful would have probably caused me to sin in similar ways. Thank you for showing me love when I least deserve it. Help me to love others.

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

Are you easily intimidated?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

So the soldiers, their commanding officer, and the Temple guards arrested Jesus and tied him up. First they took him to Annas, since he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest at that time. Caiaphas was the one who had told the other Jewish leaders, “It’s better that one man should die for the people.”

Simon Peter followed Jesus, as did another of the disciples. That other disciple was acquainted with the high priest, so he was allowed to enter the high priest’s courtyard with Jesus. Peter had to stay outside the gate. Then the disciple who knew the high priest spoke to the woman watching at the gate, and she let Peter in. The woman asked Peter, “You’re not one of that man’s disciples, are you?” “No,” he said, “I am not.”

Because it was cold, the household servants and the guards had made a charcoal fire. They stood around it, warming themselves, and Peter stood with them, warming himself...

...Meanwhile, as Simon Peter was standing by the fire warming himself, they asked him again, “You’re not one of his disciples, are you?” He denied it, saying, “No, I am not.”

But one of the household slaves of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, “Didn’t I see you out there in the olive grove with Jesus?” Again Peter denied it. And immediately a rooster crowed. **John 18:12–18, 25-27 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

Peter was highly conflicted. He wanted to be close to Jesus, but he was afraid of sharing in Jesus’ suffering. He wanted the blessings and the joy and the peace of Jesus, but he did not want the rejection or the criticism or the physical suffering that might come from being identified as Jesus’ follower.

If you were to be bold about your trust and faith in Jesus with others, what would you lose? When it comes to choosing your own safety and comfort or identifying with Jesus, what have you done in the past? What will you do in the future?

Is there ever a time to align with Jesus while not aligning with some of Jesus’ immature followers?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, thank you for not giving up on Peter, but restoring him once you had been resurrected from the dead. Thank you for calling him back, restoring his confidence, and giving him purpose after he deserted you. And thank you for never giving up on me. Help me to speak the truth in love and always align with Jesus at all costs.

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

When something goes wrong, are you quick to blame yourself or others? Why?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

Jesus’ trial before Caiaphas ended in the early hours of the morning. Then he was taken to the headquarters of the Roman governor. His accusers didn’t go inside because it would defile them, and they wouldn’t be allowed to celebrate the Passover. So Pilate, the governor, went out to them and asked, “What is your charge against this man?”

“We wouldn’t have handed him over to you if he weren’t a criminal!” they retorted. “Then take him away and judge him by your own law,” Pilate told them. “Only the Romans are permitted to execute someone,” the Jewish leaders replied. (This fulfilled Jesus’ prediction about the way he would die.) Then Pilate went back into his headquarters and called for Jesus to be brought to him.

“Are you the king of the Jews?” he asked him. Jesus replied, “Is this your own question, or did others tell you about me?” “Am I a Jew?” Pilate retorted. “Your own people and their leading priests brought you to me for trial. Why? What have you done?” Jesus answered, “My Kingdom is not an earthly kingdom. If it were, my followers would fight to keep me from being handed over to the Jewish leaders. But my Kingdom is not of this world.” Pilate said, “So you are a king?”

Jesus responded, “You say I am a king. Actually, I was born and came into the world to testify to the truth. All who love the truth recognize that what I say is true.” “What is truth?” Pilate asked. Then he went out again to the people and told them, “He is not guilty of any crime. But you have a custom of asking me to release one prisoner each year at Passover. Would you like me to release this ‘King of the Jews’?” But they shouted back, “No! Not this man. We want Barabbas!” (Barabbas was a revolutionary.) **John 18:28–40 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

When Pilate asked Jesus, “What is truth?” what do you think he was actually asking about? Some think Pilate was saying “What good is truth?” or “Why would you care about a silly thing like truth?” Others think Pilate respected truth and was genuinely asking Jesus what was true. What do you think?

Why is “being a king” on earth so much less than what Jesus actually came to do and be?

In a time of oppression and misery, can you appreciate why everyone was hoping Jesus would just be another powerful ruler like Moses or David? Jesus didn’t meet their expectations of what he would bring into their lives, so they rejected and killed him. How did God use their misunderstandings to facilitate meeting their real need?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, we worship in true surrender and awe...sad about our sin and grateful for your sacrifice.

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

Who is your king, the ultimate authority in your life?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

Then Pilate had Jesus flogged with a lead-tipped whip. The soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they put a purple robe on him. “Hail! King of the Jews!” they mocked, as they slapped him across the face. Pilate went outside again and said to the people, “I am going to bring him out to you now, but understand clearly that I find him not guilty.”

Then Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And Pilate said, “Look, here is the man!” When they saw him, the leading priests and Temple guards began shouting, “Crucify him! Crucify him!” “Take him yourselves and crucify him,” Pilate said. “I find him not guilty.”

The Jewish leaders replied, “By our law he ought to die because he called himself the Son of God.” When Pilate heard this, he was more frightened than ever. He took Jesus back into the headquarters again and asked him, “Where are you from?” But Jesus gave no answer. “Why don’t you talk to me?” Pilate demanded. “Don’t you realize that I have the power to release you or crucify you?” Then Jesus said, “You would have no power over me at all unless it were given to you from above. So the one who handed me over to you has the greater sin.”

Then Pilate tried to release him, but the Jewish leaders shouted, “If you release this man, you are no ‘friend of Caesar.’ Anyone who declares himself a king is a rebel against Caesar.” When they said this, Pilate brought Jesus out to them again. Then Pilate sat down on the judgment seat on the platform that is called the Stone Pavement (in Hebrew, Gabbatha).

It was now about noon on the day of preparation for the Passover. And Pilate said to the people, “Look, here is your king!” “Away with him,” they yelled. “Away with him! Crucify him!” “What? Crucify your king?” Pilate asked. “We have no king but Caesar,” the leading priests shouted back. Then Pilate turned Jesus over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus away.

John 19:1–16 NLT

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

Does it surprise you that Pilate had more fear of God than the Jewish religious leaders?

Do you marvel at God’s patience with the spiritually blind Jewish religious leaders?

The difference between sorrow for your sin and shame for your sin: sorrow means you align your heart with God but you are **STILL LOVED**. Shame means you don’t deserve to be loved because of your sin. Which reveals the relationship King Jesus wants you to have with him?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Consider thanking King Jesus for his choice to include you in his salvation—forgiving your sin and giving you the gift of his Holy Spirit living in you!

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

If you have been baptized, what is the most meaningful part of your baptism to you?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

Jesus’ Death: Carrying the cross by himself, he went to the place called Place of the Skull (in Hebrew, Golgotha). There they nailed him to the cross. Two others were crucified with him, one on either side, with Jesus between them. And Pilate posted a sign on the cross that read, “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.”

The place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and the sign was written in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek, so that many people could read it. Then the leading priests objected and said to Pilate, “Change it from ‘The King of the Jews’ to ‘He said, I am King of the Jews.’” Pilate replied, “No, what I have written, I have written.” **John 19:17-22 NLT**

Standing near the cross were Jesus’ mother, and his mother’s sister, Mary (the wife of Clopas), and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother standing there beside the disciple he loved, he said to her, “Dear woman, here is your son.” And he said to this disciple, “Here is your mother.” And from then on this disciple took her into his home.

Jesus knew that his mission was now finished, and to fulfill Scripture he said, “I am thirsty.” A jar of sour wine was sitting there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put it on a hyssop branch, and held it up to his lips. When Jesus had tasted it, he said, “It is finished!” Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. **John 19:25-30 NLT**

After Jesus’ Resurrection: One of the twelve disciples, Thomas (nicknamed the Twin), was not with the others when Jesus came. They told him, “We have seen the Lord!” But he replied, “I won’t believe it unless I see the nail wounds in his hands, put my fingers into them, and place my hand into the wound in his side.”

Eight days later the disciples were together again, and this time Thomas was with them. The doors were locked; but suddenly, as before, Jesus was standing among them. “Peace be with you,” he said. Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here, and look at my hands. Put your hand into the wound in my side. Don’t be faithless any longer. Believe!” “My Lord and my God!” Thomas exclaimed. Then Jesus told him, “You believe because you have seen me. Blessed are those who believe without seeing me.” **John 20:24–29 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

Do you marvel at Jesus’ willingness to obey the Father?

Do you resonate with Thomas’ “I have to see the evidence” attitude before he would believe?

Do you believe even though you haven’t seen Jesus? Based on what?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, your death means I am forgiven. Your resurrection means I have life! YOU are my king!!!