

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

When you read a Scripture again and gain new insights, is it because the truth of Scripture changed or because you changed?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

This letter is from Paul, chosen by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and from our brother Timothy. We are writing to God’s holy people in the city of Colosse, who are faithful brothers and sisters in Christ. May God our Father give you grace and peace.

We always pray for you, and we give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. For we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and your love for all of God’s people, which come from your confident hope of what God has reserved for you in heaven. You have had this expectation ever since you first heard the truth of the Good News.

This same Good News that came to you is going out all over the world. It is bearing fruit everywhere by changing lives, just as it changed your lives from the day you first heard and understood the truth about God’s wonderful grace.

You learned about the Good News from Epaphras, our beloved co-worker. He is Christ’s faithful servant, and he is helping us on your behalf. He has told us about the love for others that the Holy Spirit has given you.

So we have not stopped praying for you since we first heard about you. We ask God to give you complete knowledge of his will and to give you spiritual wisdom and understanding. Then the way you live will always honor and please the Lord, and your lives will produce every kind of good fruit. All the while, you will grow as you learn to know God better and better.

We also pray that you will be strengthened with all his glorious power so you will have all the endurance and patience you need. May you be filled with joy, always thanking the Father. He has enabled you to share in the inheritance that belongs to his people, who live in the light. For he has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of his dear Son, who purchased our freedom and forgave our sins. **Colossians 1:1-14 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

Paul often prayed for believers to have “grace and peace.” Why is this valuable both to receive and to give?

“For we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and your love for all of God’s people, which come from your confident hope of what God has reserved for you in heaven.” Who has heard of YOUR faith?

“We ask God to give you complete knowledge of his will and to give you spiritual wisdom and understanding.” Are you asking and receiving this? What is the result?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, I pray that my church would be strengthened with all your glorious power so we will have all the endurance and patience we need. May we be filled with joy, always thanking the Father. You have enabled us to share in the inheritance that belongs to your people, who live in the light. Thank you for rescuing us!

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

How can you know something exists if you are unable to experience it with your physical senses?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation, for through him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can't see—such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world. Everything was created through him and for him. He existed before anything else, and he holds all creation together.

Christ is also the head of the church, which is his body. He is the beginning, supreme over all who rise from the dead. So he is first in everything. For God in all his fullness was pleased to live in Christ, and through him God reconciled everything to himself. He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth by means of Christ's blood on the cross.

This includes you who were once far away from God. You were his enemies, separated from him by your evil thoughts and actions. Yet now he has reconciled you to himself through the death of Christ in his physical body. As a result, he has brought you into his own presence, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before him without a single fault.

But you must continue to believe this truth and stand firmly in it. Don't drift away from the assurance you received when you heard the Good News. The Good News has been preached all over the world, and I, Paul, have been appointed as God's servant to proclaim it. **Colossians 1:15-23 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

Everything was created through Jesus and for Jesus. Thoughts?

What does it mean that the church is Jesus' body on earth? What does that mean for you personally?

God looked past your actions, sin, rebellion, and guilt and chose to forgive you. Why?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, I've got a lot to learn about who you are and what you are like. Thanks for allowing me to understand you more by learning about Jesus. I am so sorry for my choices when I was your enemy. Thank you for forgiving my sin and bringing me into your own presence. Help me NOT to drift from the assurance that you have declared me holy, blameless, and without a single fault. What a gift!!!

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

What is so precious to you that you are willing to make great sacrifices for?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

I am glad when I suffer for you in my body, for I am participating in the sufferings of Christ that continue for his body, the church. God has given me the responsibility of serving his church by proclaiming his entire message to you. This message was kept secret for centuries and generations past, but now it has been revealed to God’s people. For God wanted them to know that the riches and glory of Christ are for you Gentiles, too. And this is the secret: Christ lives in you. This gives you assurance of sharing his glory.

So we tell others about Christ, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all the wisdom God has given us. We want to present them to God, perfect in their relationship to Christ. That’s why I work and struggle so hard, depending on Christ’s mighty power that works within me.

I want you to know how much I have agonized for you and for the church at Laodicea, and for many other believers who have never met me personally. I want them to be encouraged and knit together by strong ties of love. I want them to have complete confidence that they understand God’s mysterious plan, which is Christ himself. In him lie hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

I am telling you this so no one will deceive you with well-crafted arguments. For though I am far away from you, my heart is with you. And I rejoice that you are living as you should and that your faith in Christ is strong. 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. **Colossians 1:24–2:10 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

Are you so excited about the Good News that you are willing to participate in the sufferings that continue for his body, the church?

What sacrifices (big and small) are you being asked to make for Jesus? What are you being called to risk to make Jesus famous (relationships, reputation, resources, rights)?

There was much false teaching and deception that threatened the early church all the way to our day. How can you know what is true and false? How do you navigate that?

The “fullness” of God lived in Jesus’ human body. Your hope of glory is Christ living in you! Thoughts?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, help my mind and heart be pure...help me keep my conscience clean...so that I can embrace the truth, stay in the light, combat the lies, and grow in my faith!

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

If you knew beyond the shadow of any doubt that your sins are forgiven (past, present, and future), what would that change for you?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

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.

So don’t let anyone condemn you for what you eat or drink, or for not celebrating certain holy days or new moon ceremonies or Sabbaths. For these rules are only shadows of the reality yet to come. And Christ himself is that reality. Don’t let anyone condemn you by insisting on pious self-denial or the worship of angels, saying they have had visions about these things. Their sinful minds have made them proud, and they are not connected to Christ, the head of the body. For he holds the whole body together with its joints and ligaments, and it grows as God nourishes it.

You have died with Christ, and he has set you free from the spiritual powers of this world. So why do you keep on following the rules of the world, such as, “Don’t handle! Don’t taste! Don’t touch!”? Such rules are mere human teachings about things that deteriorate as we use them. These rules may seem wise because they require strong devotion, pious self-denial, and severe bodily discipline. But they provide no help in conquering a person’s evil desires. **Colossians 2:11-23 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

Why do you think repentance and baptism are linked?

You cannot be accused of sin if God “canceled the record of the charges against us.” God “disarmed” the accusations of the spiritual rules and authorities so that you can be free to live forgiven. Have you accepted this forgiveness, and are you “living forgiven”?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, teach me to keep my eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of my faith. Thank you for cancelling the charges against me so I can be free and live forgiven!

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

What is your favorite time of day and why?

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

Are you thinking about the things of heaven and not the things of earth?

What captures your mind and heart most: Jesus’ Kingdom or the nightly (and negative) news?

What is healthy, God-given inclusivity? What isn’t?

Pick one to ask God to develop in you today: tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience!

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, thank you for choosing me to be a part of the holy people you love. Help me to be clothed with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience! Help me make allowance for the faults of others, and help me forgive anyone who has offended me. Thank you for forgiving me; help me to forgive others. And may your peace RULE my heart!