

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

How do you use rest to honor God and embrace God’s plan for your body, mind, and soul?

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

There was a record of charges against us. God nailed the record to the cross and disarmed the accusations of the spiritual rulers and authorities, the chief among them Satan, whose name means “accuser.” Using guilt and shame to modify our behavior is a typical response to failure. How does Jesus treat us more kindly than our actions deserve?

How are you learning to REST in Jesus?

Do you work feverishly to earn desperately needed rest, or do you work diligently without being rushed out of your rested and healed state?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Jesus said, “Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light.”  
**Matthew 11:28–30 NLT** Lord, help me to focus on YOUR teaching today and be blessed to be a blessing to others!

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

Do you follow the “news”? Why or why not?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

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.

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. **Colossians 2:20-3:11 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

“You have died with Christ...” What does this mean for YOU?

The “spiritual” rules requiring strong devotion, pious self-denial, and severe bodily discipline provide no help in conquering a person’s evil desires. What are your thoughts?

What do you need to “put to death” from that list?

How are you growing to know and become more like your Creator?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, help me put on my new nature and be renewed so I can learn to know you and become like you. Thank you for being full of truth and grace so I can follow you!

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

Do you forgive as an undeserved act of generosity or a forced response of justice?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

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.

Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting for those who belong to the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and never treat them harshly. Children, always obey your parents, for this pleases the Lord. Fathers, do not aggravate your children, or they will become discouraged.

Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything you do. Try to please them all the time, not just when they are watching you. Serve them sincerely because of your reverent fear of the Lord.

Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. Remember that the Lord will give you an inheritance as your reward, and that the Master you are serving is Christ. But if you do what is wrong, you will be paid back for the wrong you have done. For God has no favorites. Masters, be just and fair to your slaves. Remember that you also have a Master—in heaven. **Colossians 3:12–4:1 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

Do you love and forgive (not just “tolerate” or ignore) people past their faults?

Why does Paul use the imagery of putting on clothes to describe how we “put on” spiritual attitudes and actions?

Did Paul describe a role in this passage that applies to you in some way? What is God calling you to do *today*?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, thank you for the forgiveness you paid an immeasurable price (the blood of your Son) to provide for us. I am in debt to you forever, and I am grateful that rather than calling me to guilt and fear, you have called me to joy-filled gratitude and faith!

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

Who do you enjoy visiting with most?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

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.

Tychicus will give you a full report about how I am getting along. He is a beloved brother and faithful helper who serves with me in the Lord’s work. I have sent him to you for this very purpose—to let you know how we are doing and to encourage you. I am also sending Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, one of your own people. He and Tychicus will tell you everything that’s happening here.

Aristarchus, who is in prison with me, sends you his greetings, and so does Mark, Barnabas’s cousin. As you were instructed before, make Mark welcome if he comes your way. Jesus (the one we call Justus) also sends his greetings. These are the only Jewish believers among my co-workers; they are working with me here for the Kingdom of God. And what a comfort they have been! Epaphras, a member of your own fellowship and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends you his greetings. He always prays earnestly for you, asking God to make you strong and perfect, fully confident that you are following the whole will of God. I can assure you that he prays hard for you and also for the believers in Laodicea and Hierapolis.

Luke, the beloved doctor, sends his greetings, and so does Demas. Please give my greetings to our brothers and sisters at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church that meets in her house. After you have read this letter, pass it on to the church at Laodicea so they can read it, too. And you should read the letter I wrote to them. And say to Archippus, “Be sure to carry out the ministry the Lord gave you.” HERE IS MY GREETING IN MY OWN HANDWRITING—PAUL. Remember my chains. May God’s grace be with you. **Colossians 4:2–18 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

Why do you think Archippus got personal encouragement from Paul? Do you need a personal encouragement? What would you want to hear, and who would you want to hear it from?

If Paul were to list your name in this letter, what would he thank God for in your life and service?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, help me build impacting friendships, keep an alert mind and cultivate a thankful heart!

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

What is something you used to believe that has proven to be ridiculously untrue and unhelpful?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

When I left for Macedonia, I urged you to stay there in Ephesus and stop those whose teaching is contrary to the truth. Don't let them waste their time in endless discussion of myths and spiritual pedigrees. These things only lead to meaningless speculations, which don't help people live a life of faith in God.

The purpose of my instruction is that all believers would be filled with love that comes from a pure heart, a clear conscience, and genuine faith. But some people have missed this whole point. They have turned away from these things and spend their time in meaningless discussions. They want to be known as teachers of the law of Moses, but they don't know what they are talking about, even though they speak so confidently.

We know that the law is good when used correctly. For the law was not intended for people who do what is right. It is for people who are lawless and rebellious, who are ungodly and sinful, who consider nothing sacred and defile what is holy, who kill their father or mother or commit other murders. The law is for people who are sexually immoral, or who practice homosexuality, or are slave traders, liars, promise breakers, or who do anything else that contradicts the wholesome teaching that comes from the glorious Good News entrusted to me by our blessed God.

I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength to do his work. He considered me trustworthy and appointed me to serve him, even though I used to blaspheme the name of Christ. In my insolence, I persecuted his people. But God had mercy on me because I did it in ignorance and unbelief. Oh, how generous and gracious our Lord was! He filled me with the faith and love that come from Christ Jesus. **1 Timothy 1:3–14 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

Are you careful not to waste your time in “endless discussions” (about useless things) and “meaningless speculations”? Why is it important not to get stuck in these ruts?

Are YOU “filled with love that comes from a pure heart, a clear conscience, and genuine faith”?

How has God shown you mercy? Who needs you to show them God's mercy?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, thank you for showing me completely undeserved grace and mercy. Use me to spread your love to those who need it most, as I did and do!