

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

Sometimes people are not as they seem. Are you generally trusting or cautious? Why?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

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 2:16–23 NLT**

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. **Colossians 1:17 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

Jesus teaches us three important truths about judging others: make assessments about others based on the “fruit” of their lives and not their appearance, call yourself and others to God's true standard, and leave ultimate judgment to God—for he alone knows someone's true heart. Thoughts?

Why is it VERY important not to be hog-tied by people with bad attitudes and extra rules?

What is your opinion: do real Christians need MORE or LESS rules?

If you have given your life to Jesus, consider speaking this out loud: I have Christ living IN me, producing life and light and fruit THROUGH me, sharing his glory WITH me...I will NOT be filled with fear!

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, help me live out these truths and be filled with your Holy Spirit in a new way. Fill me with your humility, confidence, and kindness!

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

Does it surprise you that God communicates with humans? Why or why not?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

Long ago God spoke many times and in many ways to our ancestors through the prophets. And now in these final days, he has spoken to us through his Son. God promised everything to the Son as an inheritance, and through the Son he created the universe. The Son radiates God’s own glory and expresses the very character of God, and he sustains everything by the mighty power of his command. When he had cleansed us from our sins, he sat down in the place of honor at the right hand of the majestic God in heaven. This shows that the Son is far greater than the angels, just as the name God gave him is greater than their names.

For God never said to any angel what he said to Jesus: “You are my Son. Today I have become your Father.” God also said, “I will be his Father, and he will be my Son.” And when he brought his supreme Son into the world, God said, “Let all of God’s angels worship him.” Regarding the angels, he says, “He sends his angels like the winds, his servants like flames of fire.”

But to the Son he says, “Your throne, O God, endures forever and ever. You rule with a scepter of justice. You love justice and hate evil. Therefore, O God, your God has anointed you, pouring out the oil of joy on you more than on anyone else.” He also says to the Son, “In the beginning, Lord, you laid the foundation of the earth and made the heavens with your hands. They will perish, but you remain forever. They will wear out like old clothing. You will fold them up like a cloak and discard them like old clothing. But you are always the same; you will live forever.”

And God never said to any of the angels, “Sit in the place of honor at my right hand until I humble your enemies, making them a footstool under your feet.” Therefore, angels are only servants—spirits sent to care for people who will inherit salvation. **Hebrews 1:1–14 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

Pick a truth about Jesus from this passage to share with someone today.

What purpose/role did God give his created angels?

Why is it important that we do not worship angels?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, I love that Jesus walked among us humans in grace and humility and now reigns over all in Heaven, and on earth, and under the earth. Thank you that he will one day “fold up” this broken world and take us home forever to the new heavens and the new earth! Help me to be faithful as I look forward to going home!

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

Why is focusing ON sin not helpful in conquering its power over us? What focus IS helpful?

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

“Since you have been raised to new life with Christ...” what does Paul teach us to focus on? (HINT: it’s NOT focusing on sin!)

“Put on your new nature, and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like him.” How will you do that today?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, help me put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within me. Help me put on my new nature and learn to be more like you!

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

What are your top 2-3 principles for living? Do they match Jesus’?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

One day as he saw the crowds gathering, Jesus went up on the mountainside and sat down. His disciples gathered around him, and he began to teach them.

“God blesses those who are poor and realize their need for him, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.

God blesses those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

God blesses those who are humble, for they will inherit the whole earth.

God blesses those who hunger and thirst for justice, for they will be satisfied.

God blesses those who are merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

God blesses those whose hearts are pure, for they will see God.

God blesses those who work for peace, for they will be called the children of God.

God blesses those who are persecuted for doing right, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.

God blesses you when people mock you and persecute you and lie about you and say all sorts of evil things against you because you are my followers. Be happy about it! Be very glad! For a great reward awaits you in heaven. And remember, the ancient prophets were persecuted in the same way.” **Matthew 5:1–12 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

Go through the list of beatitudes Jesus gives and ask with each, “How would my life be different if I were to experience this?”

Which in the list above most resonates with you? Which resonates least and why?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, I believe you want me to experience each of these on some level. For those that I’m responsible for pursuing, like mercy and humility, I need you to soften my heart and open my mind so that I can fully experience your gifts. For those that are likely to come, like persecution and mocking for following Jesus, help me be strong so that I can respond with your love, forgiveness, and kindness. I believe that your love is more powerful than hate, and your wisdom, which is disregarded by many, is wiser than all the world’s wisdom. Teach me to trust you!

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

If you could prescribe a lifestyle that would lead to genuine happiness, what would it be?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

Joyful are people of integrity, who follow the instructions of the LORD. Joyful are those who obey his laws and search for him with all their hearts. They do not compromise with evil, and they walk only in his paths. You have charged us to keep your commandments carefully. Oh, that my actions would consistently reflect your decrees! Then I will not be ashamed when I compare my life with your commands. As I learn your righteous regulations, I will thank you by living as I should! I will obey your decrees. Please don't give up on me!

How can a young person stay pure? By obeying your word. I have tried hard to find you—don't let me wander from your commands. I have hidden your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you. I praise you, O LORD; teach me your decrees. I have recited aloud all the regulations you have given us. I have rejoiced in your laws as much as in riches. I will study your commandments and reflect on your ways. I will delight in your decrees and not forget your word.

Be good to your servant, that I may live and obey your word. Open my eyes to see the wonderful truths in your instructions. I am only a foreigner in the land. Don't hide your commands from me! I am always overwhelmed with a desire for your regulations. You rebuke the arrogant; those who wander from your commands are cursed. Don't let them scorn and insult me, for I have obeyed your laws. Even princes sit and speak against me, but I will meditate on your decrees. Your laws please me; they give me wise advice. **Psalms 119:1–24**  
**NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

Do you believe God wants you to succeed? When you fail, what is his genuine response?

How is following God's laws different from following man-made rules?

Why is your mindset and heart posture important when approaching the Scriptures? Can you read the Bible without getting the benefits?

How can a young person stay pure?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, thank you for creating me and loving me every day of my life. Thank you for caring for me as a child, walking with me every day as a teenager, and assisting me (even when I did not know or acknowledge you) every moment as an adult. Thank you for taking great care to love and teach me every day! May you be pleased with me even as you empower me to live your way.