

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

Pick a person who represents your attitude towards the world—who is it 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. **Colossians 3:1-9 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

What is your view of the world? Was the world originally created to be good by a God who is good, or is it the outcome of a set of accidents without purpose or meaning? If you pick the first, then you can call deviations from God’s plan “evil.” If you pick the second, and all is purposeless and meaningless, then death and chaos is no different than life and peace—and there is no true distinction between “good” and “evil.” Some ask, “How can a good God exist if there is evil in this world?” A better question is, “How can I know what evil is unless I know good exists—and how can I know good exists apart from being created by a God who is good?” Good and evil are not feelings relative to my circumstances or changing cultural attitudes. Good is what is consistent with the character, creativity, and mind of God. Evil, like rust on a car, is not a competing force but a dismantling or a degradation of what is good. Like a good, powerful mind leveraged to devise evil plans or a loving heart used to unhealthily “fix, manage, and control” others, ground zero of the problem in the world is the human heart. And the solution begins there too, with Jesus offering the opportunity to “die” to the old sinful heart and be given a “new life” accessed through repentance (turning TO God) and being buried and resurrected WITH Jesus through baptism (see Acts 2:38 and Romans 6).

If you are a believer, 1) rest in the promise, and 2) obey the life-giving command:

- 1) “When Christ, who is your life, is revealed to the whole world, you will share in all his glory.”
- 2) “Put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you.”

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, help me rest in your promise and have the strength to follow you today!

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

When something is broken or worn out, do you prefer to throw it away and buy a new one or repair and restore the old one?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

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 1:27 NLT**

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. **Colossians 3:10-15 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

You are called to kindness, allowance, and forgiveness of others on the basis of God's choice to choose you to become one of the holy people he loves. Let's observe two truths:

- 1) God's "choice" does not mean a forced relationship—God, even in his choosing, you have a choice. God gives you the right to refuse and the responsibility to accept his call. God defines himself as "love" (patiently and kindly seeking what is best for someone else), so God makes himself attractive and offers an invitation; he does not coerce or force a relationship—that would not be "love."
- 2) Your call to "treat others as you want to be treated" is based on Jesus' kindness to you, not on the other person's worthiness to receive your kindness. You weren't worthy of Jesus' kindness...so expect the people you love NOT to be worthy of your kindness. Jesus assumes the people he sends you to love will be faulty, offensive, and in need of forgiveness—like you! He deploys you to be kind, love, and forgive. Remember what melted your oppositional heart. Step up and lead the way you were led by Jesus.

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, we are called to love each other as members of one body—YOURS! Flood me with peace and fill me with thankfulness!

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

What determines how you feel about your day—Jesus’ promises? The news? Your family situation? Whether or not you are hungry? How is your focus helping or hurting you?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

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 3:16-4:1 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

Take a moment and think about each action word in the first paragraph of the Scripture.

What is something you need to say and/or do today as a result of reading this passage?

What does it mean to you that Jesus has called you to be one of his personal representatives?

What do you discern about God’s character and heart from the way he is described in this passage?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, thank you that you love me as an individual, that you do not label me the way the world does, and that you empower me to live effectively as your representative in my respective role on earth. Help me to honor you, myself, and the roles I have been given.

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

Think about your life: in what ways do you follow, and in what ways do you lead?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves. The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, so you are not free to carry out your good intentions. But when you are directed by the Spirit, you are not under obligation to the law of Moses.

When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!

Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there. Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives. Let us not become conceited, or provoke one another, or be jealous of one another. **Galatians 5:16–26 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

Some people, eager to “get things done,” avoid the “fruit of the Spirit” that tends to slow them down. Do you? Who has time for love when you need to *get things done*? Who has time for joy when you have to *MOVE MOVE MOVE*? Peace...patience...are you kidding me? If I don't do it, it won't get done...peace and patience can wait! Is it possible that you can avoid “sin” and still be so busy that you are completely ineffective at what Jesus cares about most? *Of course*...didn't Martha get mad at Jesus for letting Mary simply sit and do “nothing”? What do you need to “let go” of so you can “let God” redirect your energy to better and more satisfying endeavors?

Instead of patting yourself on the back for all you DO so you can hurry up and DO MORE, rest assured that sitting at the feet of Jesus first will prepare you to have the life Jesus can bless. Rest before work...that is the Christian's unique journey powered by Jesus himself!

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, thank you for producing “fruit” in my life through the Holy Spirit! Teach me to rest in you so you can work IN and THROUGH me! Thank you for giving me life before expecting me to figure out how to live!

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

How do you feel about the fact that much of the New Testament was written in prison?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

**NOTE:** Today, the Scripture is presented in three excellent translations, NLT, NIV and NASB.

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.

**Colossians 4:2–6 NLT**

Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone. **Colossians 4:2–6 NIV**

Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving; praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned; that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak. Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person. **Colossians 4:2–6 NASB**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

How did reading this passage in multiple translations clarify the thoughts for you?

What should your attitude be towards God?

What should your attitude be towards outsiders/non-believers?

In allowing the Apostle Paul to be in chains, it is clear that Jesus cares about those imprisoned just as much as he does those in power—he wants EVERYONE to hear the Good News!

**NOTE:** *The “You Version App” is a very useful tool for reading the Bible in many translations!*

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, I take this time to pray to you, asking that your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. Help me be alert and grateful. Please open up opportunities for your servants to share the message of hope with outsiders. Help me words to be full of grace so I can connect with everyone. Thank you for allowing me to participate in your message of love and reconciliation!