

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

Do you believe you personally matter to God, God cares about you and calls you by name?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

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 4:7–18 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

Who are you supposed to encourage today? How does encouraging others benefit you?

Why do you think there were so few Jews among Paul’s co-workers?

Have you considered following Paul’s example of prayer? 1) Pray. 2) Send a letter/email/text to the person you are praying for and tell them what you are praying for!

Why did Paul ask the readers to remember his chains?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, thank you that you know me and call me by name. Use me to encourage others today and to be encouraged personally. Here are the people I want to specifically pray for today...

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

Have you ever joined someone else’s family’s holiday gathering? What was it like?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

**Paul’s final greetings and comments in Romans 16 (part 1 of 2):** I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a deacon in the church in Cenchrea. Welcome her in the Lord as one who is worthy of honor among God’s people. Help her in whatever she needs, for she has been helpful to many, and especially to me.

Give my greetings to Priscilla and Aquila, my co-workers in the ministry of Christ Jesus. In fact, they once risked their lives for me. I am thankful to them, and so are all the Gentile churches. Also give my greetings to the church that meets in their home.

Greet my dear friend Epenetus. He was the first person from the province of Asia to become a follower of Christ. Give my greetings to Mary, who has worked so hard for your benefit. Greet Andronicus and Junia, my fellow Jews, who were in prison with me. They are highly respected among the apostles and became followers of Christ before I did. Greet Ampliatus, my dear friend in the Lord. Greet Urbanus, our co-worker in Christ, and my dear friend Stachys.

Greet Apelles, a good man whom Christ approves. And give my greetings to the believers from the household of Aristobulus. Greet Herodion, my fellow Jew. Greet the Lord’s people from the household of Narcissus. Give my greetings to Tryphena and Tryphosa, the Lord’s workers, and to dear Persis, who has worked so hard for the Lord. Greet Rufus, whom the Lord picked out to be his very own; and also his dear mother, who has been a mother to me.

Give my greetings to Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brothers and sisters who meet with them. Give my greetings to Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, and to Olympas and all the believers who meet with them. Greet each other with a sacred kiss. All the churches of Christ send you their greetings. **Romans 16:1-16 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

If you are in the family of Jesus, these are your brothers and sisters too—God is the God of the living, not the dead. One day, in Heaven, you will get to meet each of the individuals who were faithful to the end. Based on what Paul said, who would you most enjoy talking to?

What does Paul seem to highlight most as he lists his co-workers with gratitude?

Can you imagine the meals and visits Paul must have had with Rufus for Paul to say Rufus’ mother had also been like a mother to Paul?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, make me into someone who brings joy, truth and encouragement to others. Fill my life with godly people who can pray for me and encourage me when I need it most!

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

Are you naturally trusting or naturally skeptical?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

**Paul’s final greetings and comments in Romans 16 (part 2 of 2):** And now I make one more appeal, my dear brothers and sisters. Watch out for people who cause divisions and upset people’s faith by teaching things contrary to what you have been taught. Stay away from them. Such people are not serving Christ our Lord; they are serving their own personal interests. By smooth talk and glowing words they deceive innocent people. But everyone knows that you are obedient to the Lord. This makes me very happy. I want you to be wise in doing right and to stay innocent of any wrong. The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. May the grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

Timothy, my fellow worker, sends you his greetings, as do Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater, my fellow Jews. I, Tertius, the one writing this letter for Paul, send my greetings, too, as one of the Lord’s followers.

Gaius says hello to you. He is my host and also serves as host to the whole church. Erastus, the city treasurer, sends you his greetings, and so does our brother Quartus.

Now all glory to God, who is able to make you strong, just as my Good News says. This message about Jesus Christ has revealed his plan for you Gentiles, a plan kept secret from the beginning of time. But now as the prophets foretold and as the eternal God has commanded, this message is made known to all Gentiles everywhere, so that they too might believe and obey him. All glory to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, forever. **Romans 16:17-27 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

Paul warned us to, “Watch out for people who cause divisions and upset people’s faith by teaching things contrary to what you have been taught.” What do you look for?

Can you think of someone who uses “smooth talk and glowing words” to deceive others?

How is grace the antidote to the effects of people with bad attitudes and extra rules?

The Jews were created to be a blessing to everyone, a conduit of God’s mercy to the nations (“Gentiles”). When they chose to harden their hearts and reject Jesus’ Kingdom, God’s will prevailed anyway—and the church was created through the Holy Spirit using Jews AND all the other nations. Why is it so significant that God’s chief plan, the mystery that was kept secret from the beginning of time, was to bring all nations together through Jesus?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, thank you for having a heart for ALL the nations and for extending mercy to sinners.

Thank you for sending Jesus and the Holy Spirit so we can choose to believe and obey.

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

Are you easily intimidated?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

**Paul’s final greetings and comments to the Corinthians (part 1 of 2):** Now regarding your question about the money being collected for God’s people in Jerusalem. You should follow the same procedure I gave to the churches in Galatia. On the first day of each week, you should each put aside a portion of the money you have earned. Don’t wait until I get there and then try to collect it all at once. When I come, I will write letters of recommendation for the messengers you choose to deliver your gift to Jerusalem. And if it seems appropriate for me to go along, they can travel with me.

I am coming to visit you after I have been to Macedonia, for I am planning to travel through Macedonia. Perhaps I will stay awhile with you, possibly all winter, and then you can send me on my way to my next destination. This time I don’t want to make just a short visit and then go right on. I want to come and stay awhile, if the Lord will let me. In the meantime, I will be staying here at Ephesus until the Festival of Pentecost. There is a wide-open door for a great work here, although many oppose me.

When Timothy comes, don’t intimidate him. He is doing the Lord’s work, just as I am. Don’t let anyone treat him with contempt. Send him on his way with your blessing when he returns to me. I expect him to come with the other believers. **1 Corinthians 16:1-11 NLT**

**Note what Paul wrote to Timothy:** I remember your genuine faith, for you share the faith that first filled your grandmother Lois and your mother, Eunice. And I know that same faith continues strong in you. This is why I remind you to fan into flames the spiritual gift God gave you when I laid my hands on you. For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline. So never be ashamed to tell others about our Lord. And don’t be ashamed of me, either, even though I’m in prison for him. With the strength God gives you, be ready to suffer with me for the sake of the Good News. **2 Timothy 1:5-8 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

Why do you think Paul specifically instructed the Corinthians to refrain from intimidating Timothy? What do you think Timothy was like, that he needed these specific encouragements?

Paul looked for “wide-open doors” of ministry and did not hold back even when many opposed him. Paul was NOT easily intimidated. How can God use a range of leaders, and what encouragement do YOU need to lead well?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, you know the strengths and weaknesses I have. Give me what I need to be bold and faithful for you, useful in leading people into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ!

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

Do you feel closer to God the Father, Jesus the Son, or the Holy Spirit? Do you feel disconnected from any of them?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

**Paul’s final greetings and comments to the Corinthians (part 2 of 2):** Now about our brother Apollos—I urged him to visit you with the other believers, but he was not willing to go right now. He will see you later when he has the opportunity.

Be on guard. Stand firm in the faith. Be courageous. Be strong. And do everything with love.

You know that Stephanas and his household were the first of the harvest of believers in Greece, and they are spending their lives in service to God’s people. I urge you, dear brothers and sisters, to submit to them and others like them who serve with such devotion. I am very glad that Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus have come here. They have been providing the help you weren’t here to give me. They have been a wonderful encouragement to me, as they have been to you. You must show your appreciation to all who serve so well.

The churches here in the province of Asia send greetings in the Lord, as do Aquila and Priscilla and all the others who gather in their home for church meetings. All the brothers and sisters here send greetings to you. Greet each other with a sacred kiss.

HERE IS MY GREETING IN MY OWN HANDWRITING—PAUL. If anyone does not love the Lord, that person is cursed. Our Lord, come! May the grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. My love to all of you in Christ Jesus. **1 Corinthians 16:12-24 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

“Be on guard. Stand firm in the faith. Be courageous. Be strong. And do everything with love.” Wow—what an encouraging set of focal points! Consider praying about each and asking God to show you how to grow in them.

“If anyone does not love the Lord, that person is cursed.” How does this inspire you to help people be reconciled to God through the blood of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, help me be on guard against false teachings, temptations, and my own improper desires. Help me not to work without first resting in you. Help me stand firm in the faith—recognizing that action cannot wait until I have certainty. Help me be courageous against the things that uniquely make me fearful instead of faithful. Help me be strong and do everything with love, relying on the example of Jesus and the power of your Holy Spirit!