

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

Are you “hurried” in your mind and heart? Are you experiencing the life you want?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

God’s promise of entering his rest still stands, so we ought to tremble with fear that some of you might fail to experience it. For this good news—that God has prepared this rest—has been announced to us just as it was to them. But it did them no good because they didn’t share the faith of those who listened to God. For only we who believe can enter his rest.

As for the others, God said, “In my anger I took an oath: ‘They will never enter my place of rest,’” even though this rest has been ready since he made the world. We know it is ready because of the place in the Scriptures where it mentions the seventh day: “On the seventh day God rested from all his work.” But in the other passage God said, “They will never enter my place of rest.”

So God’s rest is there for people to enter, but those who first heard this good news failed to enter because they disobeyed God. So God set another time for entering his rest, and that time is today. God announced this through David much later in the words already quoted: “Today when you hear his voice, don’t harden your hearts.”

Now if Joshua had succeeded in giving them this rest, God would not have spoken about another day of rest still to come. So there is a special rest still waiting for the people of God. For all who have entered into God’s rest have rested from their labors, just as God did after creating the world. So let us do our best to enter that rest. But if we disobey God, as the people of Israel did, we will fall. For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God. Everything is naked and exposed before his eyes, and he is the one to whom we are accountable. **Hebrews 4:1-13 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

Why did some intelligent, successful, hard-working people fail to enter God’s rest?

Why is humility and childlike faith the strongest and most courageous approach to life?

Be honest—who are you MOST interested in pleasing...God? Your spouse? Your boss?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, you give life, peace, rest, and the strength to be diligent and do hard work. Please help me be humble and childlike so that I can experience your rest. Please help my family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, classmates and yes—even my enemies—embrace real faith so they can experience peace on earth and enter your rest in Heaven.

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

How would you define the difference between knowledge and wisdom?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

Wisdom shouts in the streets. She cries out in the public square. She calls to the crowds along the main street, to those gathered in front of the city gate: “How long, you simpletons, will you insist on being simpleminded? How long will you mockers relish your mocking? How long will you fools hate knowledge? Come and listen to my counsel. I’ll share my heart with you and make you wise.

“I called you so often, but you wouldn’t come. I reached out to you, but you paid no attention. You ignored my advice and rejected the correction I offered. So I will laugh when you are in trouble! I will mock you when disaster overtakes you— when calamity overtakes you like a storm, when disaster engulfs you like a cyclone, and anguish and distress overwhelm you.

“When they cry for help, I will not answer. Though they anxiously search for me, they will not find me. For they hated knowledge and chose not to fear the LORD. They rejected my advice and paid no attention when I corrected them. Therefore, they must eat the bitter fruit of living their own way, choking on their own schemes. For simpletons turn away from me—to death. Fools are destroyed by their own complacency.

“But all who listen to me will live in peace, untroubled by fear of harm.” **Proverbs 1:20–33 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

“Hurry kills wisdom; wisdom is born in the quiet, the slow. Wisdom has its own pace. It makes you wait for it—wait for the inner voice to come to the surface of your tempestuous mind, but not until waters of thought settle and calm. Hurry kills all that we hold dear: spirituality, health, marriage, family, thoughtful work, creativity, generosity...name your value. Hurry is a sociopathic predator loose in our society.” *John Mark Comer in “The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry”*

You’ve read a lot of dangers and pitfalls—ignoring wisdom, crafting evil, complacency, and hurry. What would you say is the chief danger to your soul at this season in your life, and how will you embrace a new and better path today?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, I’m grateful that you made me in your image with so much potential and also made me from the dust so that I have natural limitations. Teach me the balance between being powerful and being humble. Help me to take life at your pace so that I don’t outrun the life and blessings you freely give.

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

Are you walking the pathways God can bless?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

Then Jesus began to denounce the towns where he had done so many of his miracles, because they hadn’t repented of their sins and turned to God.

“What sorrow awaits you, Korazin and Bethsaida! For if the miracles I did in you had been done in wicked Tyre and Sidon, their people would have repented of their sins long ago, clothing themselves in burlap and throwing ashes on their heads to show their remorse. I tell you, Tyre and Sidon will be better off on judgment day than you.

“And you people of Capernaum, will you be honored in heaven? No, you will go down to the place of the dead. For if the miracles I did for you had been done in wicked Sodom, it would still be here today. I tell you, even Sodom will be better off on judgment day than you.”

At that time Jesus prayed this prayer: “O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, thank you for hiding these things from those who think themselves wise and clever, and for revealing them to the childlike. Yes, Father, it pleased you to do it this way! “My Father has entrusted everything to me. No one truly knows the Son except the Father, and no one truly knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.”

Then 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 11:20-30 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

Do you regard rest as “a temporary irritating stop for those who are weak,” a “right you earn once you work hard enough to earn it,” or a “gift that is to be humbly enjoyed that fuels a healthy life and diligent work”? How does Jesus regard rest?

Who are the healthiest people in your life—body, mind and soul? Take a moment to consider how their mentality and pace of life contributes to their health.

Are you generally someone who hurries other people (and yourself) or someone who is hurried by others?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

“O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, thank you for hiding these things from those who think themselves wise and clever, and for revealing them to the childlike.” Help me be childlike so that I can live a life you can bless!

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

Fill in the blank: “If I slow down...”

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

Jesus said, “Beware! Guard against every kind of greed. Life is not measured by how much you own.” Then he told them a story: “A rich man had a fertile farm that produced fine crops. He said to himself, ‘What should I do? I don’t have room for all my crops.’ Then he said, ‘I know! I’ll tear down my barns and build bigger ones. Then I’ll have room enough to store all my wheat and other goods. And I’ll sit back and say to myself, “My friend, you have enough stored away for years to come. Now take it easy! Eat, drink, and be merry!”

“But God said to him, ‘You fool! You will die this very night. Then who will get everything you worked for?’ Yes, a person is a fool to store up earthly wealth but not have a rich relationship with God.”

Then, turning to his disciples, Jesus said, “That is why I tell you not to worry about everyday life—whether you have enough food to eat or enough clothes to wear. For life is more than food, and your body more than clothing. Look at the ravens. They don’t plant or harvest or store food in barns, for God feeds them. And you are far more valuable to him than any birds! Can all your worries add a single moment to your life? And if worry can’t accomplish a little thing like that, what’s the use of worrying over bigger things?”

“So don’t be afraid, little flock. For it gives your Father great happiness to give you the Kingdom. “Sell your possessions and give to those in need. This will store up treasure for you in heaven! And the purses of heaven never get old or develop holes. Your treasure will be safe; no thief can steal it and no moth can destroy it. Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be. Luke **12:15-26, 32-24 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

Your heart and passion **FOLLOWS** your choice of what to treasure, not the other way around. What you choose to treasure is what you will eventually love dearly. Be honest: are you choosing to serve God or money? Not sure? Do this self-inventory:

- What do I worry about most?
- What do I want most in life—and how will I get it?
- If I was forced to give up God or money, which one would I give up?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, protect me from every kind of greed so that I can have real life. Help me not worry about tomorrow but trust you for provision each day. Thank you for giving me real life!

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

Would you rather be safe on a stable shore with the crowd or in the boat with Jesus fighting for your life in the middle of a storm?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

I will exalt you, LORD, for you rescued me. You refused to let my enemies triumph over me. O LORD my God, I cried to you for help, and you restored my health. You brought me up from the grave, O LORD. You kept me from falling into the pit of death.

Sing to the LORD, all you godly ones! Praise his holy name. For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime! Weeping may last through the night, but joy comes with the morning.

When I was prosperous, I said, “Nothing can stop me now!” Your favor, O LORD, made me as secure as a mountain. Then you turned away from me, and I was shattered. I cried out to you, O LORD. I begged the Lord for mercy, saying, “What will you gain if I die, if I sink into the grave? Can my dust praise you? Can it tell of your faithfulness? Hear me, LORD, and have mercy on me. Help me, O LORD.”

You have turned my mourning into joyful dancing. You have taken away my clothes of mourning and clothed me with joy, that I might sing praises to you and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give you thanks forever!” **Psalm 30:1-12 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

Joy doesn’t occur in a vacuum; joy often comes as a result of drawing close to God in the middle of painful circumstances and disquieting uncertainty. Life without God is hopeless. Life with God is hopeful, and joy increases as we look to God for strength. What have you gone through—did you lean on God? What are you going through—are you choosing to trust? What might you go through—are you building healthy relationships and spiritual disciplines now so you have rhythms of peace and rest when the storms come?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

“Hear me, LORD, and have mercy on me. Help me, O LORD.”

“I will exalt you, LORD, for you rescued me.”

“You have turned my mourning into joyful dancing. You have taken away my clothes of mourning and clothed me with joy, that I might sing praises to you and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give you thanks forever!”