

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

Who would you help make famous if you could?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God—the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures regarding his Son, who as to his earthly life was a descendant of David, and who through the Spirit of holiness was appointed the Son of God in power by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord. Through him we received grace and apostleship to call all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith for his name’s sake. And you also are among those Gentiles who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.

To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be his holy people: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is being reported all over the world. God, whom I serve in my spirit in preaching the gospel of his Son, is my witness how constantly I remember you in my prayers at all times; and I pray that now at last by God’s will the way may be opened for me to come to you.

I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong—that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other’s faith. I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that I planned many times to come to you (but have been prevented from doing so until now) in order that I might have a harvest among you, just as I have had among the other Gentiles.

I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish. That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are in Rome. **Romans 1:1-15 NIV**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

Can you also call yourself “a servant of Christ Jesus”? Why or why not?

We are called to have faith which leads to obedience so Jesus can be glorified and followed by others too. Are you living this out?

Our task as we read the Bible is observation, then application: to observe a story that was not first about us...and now that the Holy Spirit is present with us as we read, we become a part of God’s “story.” How is God working in your life as a result of reading this passage?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, I am grateful to be included in what you have done in history through Jesus! Increase my faith that leads to obedience so I can be a part of making Jesus famous!

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

What are your favorite pair of shoes? What would someone assume about you by seeing them?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.”

The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.

For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles.

Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.

Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their error. **Romans 1:16-27 NIV**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

“They exchanged the truth about God for a lie...” This primary sin led gifted, intelligent people down a very dark path of worshipping created things (sound familiar?!), so God “gave them over to shameful lusts...” Through the pain that comes from rejecting God and losing his blessings, many have been reconciled to God through Jesus. Though the road is sometimes difficult, it is God’s kindness that leads us to repentance! Does that describe your journey?

Do you believe people were created evil or that we responded badly to a broken environment?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, thank you for giving me life and showing me kindness when I need it most. Thank you for putting my guilt on the cross so I can be free of worshipping people and things and ideas that do not give life.

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

To whom do you reveal your inner thoughts, desires, and motivations?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so God gave them over to a depraved mind, so that they do what ought not to be done. They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy. Although they know God’s righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge another, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things. Now we know that God’s judgment against those who do such things is based on truth. So when you, a mere human being, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God’s judgment? Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, forbearance and patience, not realizing that God’s kindness is intended to lead you to repentance? **Romans 1:28-2:4 NIV**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

“Now we know that God’s judgment against those who do such things is based on truth.” If God’s judgment is based on truth, then it doesn’t change with the winds of culture, politics, celebrity opinions, or your feelings. Remember when you felt like you were 16...at age 4?

What is the purpose...the intended outcome...of God’s kindness? Is it simply to show “tolerance” and tell people, “Hey, you do you”?

Before we jump to the worldly conclusion that God is somehow unfair or lacks compassion (because he doesn’t alter reality to fit my ideas and preferences), we should ask: 1) WHY did God send Jesus to die (he didn’t have to)? 2) Why did God call Paul to explain the good news to us? (Can you imagine if we didn’t have the Bible?) 3) Why does God put up with us long enough to let his kindness lead us to repentance?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, you have made me powerful...you’ve given me a spirit that has endless passions, a mind that thinks limitless thoughts, a body that has endless desires...and I’ve misused all of them. Forgive me. Save me from going down the broken roads that look promising but don’t deliver real life. Draw me to yourself. Help me to draw close to you and have real life!

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

Where were you in the “birth order”? How did being the oldest/middle/youngest affect you?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God’s wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed. God “will repay each person according to what they have done.” To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life. But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger.

There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile; but glory, honor and peace for everyone who does good: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For God does not show favoritism.

All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law. For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God’s sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous.

(Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts sometimes accusing them and at other times even defending them.)

This will take place on the day when God judges people’s secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares. **Romans 2:5-16 NIV**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

Take a moment to self-evaluate—what is the trajectory of your life? *“To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life. But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger.”* Are you allowing Jesus to accomplish the former in your life through your faith and obedience?

How does this Scripture dismantle the idea that there are “innocent” groups of people on the planet? Are you convinced that all groups of people in history were guilty of rejecting God?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, forgive me for judging other people and ignoring my own sin. It is only your judgment based on truth that matters. I know I do not deserve your kindness, but I am so grateful to have been loved and forgiven by you through Jesus. Help me to do my part to help people see Jesus through me!

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

Did you have a favorite lunchbox or memorable dish as a child?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

Now you, if you call yourself a Jew; if you rely on the law and boast in God; if you know his will and approve of what is superior because you are instructed by the law; if you are convinced that you are a guide for the blind, a light for those who are in the dark, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of little children, because you have in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth—you, then, who teach others, do you not teach yourself?

You who preach against stealing, do you steal? You who say that people should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? You who boast in the law, do you dishonor God by breaking the law? As it is written: “God’s name is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.”

Circumcision has value if you observe the law, but if you break the law, you have become as though you had not been circumcised. So then, if those who are not circumcised keep the law’s requirements, will they not be regarded as though they were circumcised? The one who is not circumcised physically and yet obeys the law will condemn you who, even though you have the written code and circumcision, are a lawbreaker.

A person is not a Jew who is one only outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. No, a person is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a person’s praise is not from other people, but from God. **Romans 2:17-29 NIV**

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. **Colossians 2:11-14 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

What makes a person “good”? Is it their intentions? Actions? Attitudes? Can you be “good” apart from dying to yourself and being made into a new creation through Jesus? And if you are, whose “goodness” is it that is filling you and shining through you?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, the Scripture calls me a “jar of clay.” I’m cracked and scuffed, and I leak. Thank you for filling me with light and life. Help me to “overflow” onto others—use my imperfections as portals through which others can see your goodness and glory.