

DAY 1 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER ("SOAP")

CONVERSATION STARTER

Who is someone you highly respect and admire? Are you personally connected to this person?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION (5 MINUTES)

Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God. Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love. Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace.

For there is one body and one Spirit, just as you have been called to one glorious hope for the future. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, in all, and living through all.

However, he has given each one of us a special gift through the generosity of Christ. That is why the Scriptures say,

"When he ascended to the heights, he led a crowd of captives and gave gifts to his people."

Notice that it says "he ascended." This clearly means that Christ also descended to our lowly world. And the same one who descended is the one who ascended higher than all the heavens, so that he might fill the entire universe with himself. **Ephesians 4:1-10 NLT**

Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. **Colossians 1:15 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Have you noticed that Jesus and his true followers 1) set an extraordinary example of giving, and 2) invite you to follow along and participate? How is this vastly different from political power-plays (at home, school, work, community, and government)?

Who shows you sincere love—when you least deserve it?

Who needs you to look past their "faults" and show sincere humble and gentle love?

How is your appreciation for the Father God influenced by what you see in Jesus?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Lord, thank you for approaching me with generosity and humility. Thank you for giving me the gift of life through your Holy Spirit. Thank you for transforming me day by day, slowly, as I become more and more like Jesus. Please continue your generous and powerful work both **IN** and **THROUGH** me.

DAY 2 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER ("SOAP")

CONVERSATION STARTER

Do the people closest to you believe you are living out your full potential?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION (5 MINUTES)

Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.

Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love. **Ephesians 4:11-16 NLT**

Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation, for through him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can't see— such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world. Everything was created through him and for him. **Colossians 1:15-16 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Jesus remains incredibly sincere and consistent. When he was on earth, he sacrificed his body so others could see God and have life. Now the church, as Jesus' "body," continues the same work for the same purpose—that the world may see God and have life!

Notice Jesus' strategy: he gave the "gift" of servant-leaders ("apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers") so that the church could be built up and do God's work. How do you "fit" into God's incredible plan?

Do you "speak the truth in love" like Jesus?

What is your "special work"? If you are unsure, ask a trusted friend—they may be able to affirm what God has given you to share with others!

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Lord, your plan is creative, strategic, and generous. Help me see my part and embrace my role!

DAY 3 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER ("SOAP")

CONVERSATION STARTER

Do you believe anyone has an excuse for not knowing and obeying God? Why or why not?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION (5 MINUTES)

With the Lord's authority I say this: Live no longer as the Gentiles ["godless nations"] do, for they are hopelessly confused. Their minds are full of darkness; they wander far from the life God gives because they have closed their minds and hardened their hearts against him. They have no sense of shame. They live for lustful pleasure and eagerly practice every kind of impurity.

But that isn't what you learned about Christ. Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him, throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy. **Ephesians 4:17-24 NLT**

But God shows his anger from heaven against all sinful, wicked people who suppress the truth by their wickedness. They know the truth about God because he has made it obvious to them. For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God. **Romans 1:20-24 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

If you look far enough back in history, every nation descends from people who originally knew God. But the responsibility does not lie with our ancestors—it lies with us. The book of Romans teaches us that God has made the truth about himself obvious to every aware human, no matter where you live. The problem is not lack of religious information. The problem is the personal rejection of God that every aware human chooses—and the resulting darkness (for more information, continue reading Romans 1).

Have you escaped the darkness from having a closed mind and a hard heart against God?

How are you practicing putting on your "new nature, created to be like God"?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Lord, help me continue to renew my thoughts and attitudes as I put on my new nature to become like you.

DAY 4 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER ("SOAP")

CONVERSATION STARTER

Who do you need to forgive?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION (5 MINUTES)

So stop telling lies. Let us tell our neighbors the truth, for we are all parts of the same body. And "don't sin by letting anger control you." Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, for anger gives a foothold to the devil.

If you are a thief, quit stealing. Instead, use your hands for good hard work, and then give generously to others in need. Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them. And do not bring sorrow to God's Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, he has identified you as his own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption.

Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you. **Ephesians 4:25-32 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Are you trustworthy in your words and actions?

Are you using your hands to benefit others?

Are you being careful not to bring sorrow to God's Holy Spirit by the way you live?

What choices are you making about your attitudes and behavior?

If you have given your life to Jesus, this promise is yours: "Remember, he has identified you as his own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption." Take a moment and reflect on the power and certainty of that promise.

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Lord, thank you for giving me the desire and power to do your will. Thank you for helping me understanding the attitudes and actions that you built me to pursue. Thank you most of all for guaranteeing through your Holy Spirit that I am yours and will be saved on the day of redemption—WOW!!! In a world of great difficulty, your promises bring life. Thanks for working IN me and THROUGH me to bless my little corner of the world.

DAY 5 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER ("SOAP")

CONVERSATION STARTER

Who is the wisest person you have ever known personally—and what do you remember learning from him or her?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION (5 MINUTES)

Don't do as the wicked do, and don't follow the path of evildoers. Don't even think about it; don't go that way. Turn away and keep moving.

For evil people can't sleep until they've done their evil deed for the day. They can't rest until they've caused someone to stumble. They eat the food of wickedness and drink the wine of violence!

The way of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, which shines ever brighter until the full light of day. But the way of the wicked is like total darkness. They have no idea what they are stumbling over.

My child, pay attention to what I say. Listen carefully to my words. Don't lose sight of them. Let them penetrate deep into your heart, for they bring life to those who find them, and healing to their whole body.

Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life. Avoid all perverse talk; stay away from corrupt speech. Look straight ahead, and fix your eyes on what lies before you. Mark out a straight path for your feet; stay on the safe path. Don't get sidetracked; keep your feet from following evil. **Proverbs 4:14-27 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

After reading this Scripture, what "path" do you know you should follow?

A theme in this Scripture is that wisdom grows and gains momentum if pursued. How are you pursuing wisdom...and how do you anticipate it developing in your life?

"Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life." How are you doing this?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Lord, I know I don't deserve your kindness or wisdom, because I have rejected and disregarded your gifts in the past. I thank you for this new day that you have shined a light on your wise, life-giving path. Help me to guard my heart, carefully control my words, and keep moving down the safe path. I owe you everything, and I am truly grateful.