

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

Do you connect better with God the Father, Jesus the Son, or the Holy Spirit? Why is that?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

Jesus said, “Do not judge others, and you will not be judged. For you will be treated as you treat others. The standard you use in judging is the standard by which you will be judged.

“And why worry about a speck in your friend’s eye when you have a log in your own? How can you think of saying to your friend, ‘Let me help you get rid of that speck in your eye,’ when you can’t see past the log in your own eye? Hypocrite! First get rid of the log in your own eye; then you will see well enough to deal with the speck in your friend’s eye.

“Don’t waste what is holy on people who are unholy. Don’t throw your pearls to pigs! They will trample the pearls, then turn and attack you.

“Keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.

“You parents—if your children ask for a loaf of bread, do you give them a stone instead? Or if they ask for a fish, do you give them a snake? Of course not! So if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask him.

“Do to others whatever you would like them to do to you. This is the essence of all that is taught in the law and the prophets.

“You can enter God’s Kingdom only through the narrow gate. The highway to hell is broad, and its gate is wide for the many who choose that way. But the gateway to life is very narrow and the road is difficult, and only a few ever find it. **Matthew 7:1–14 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

Whose standard are you using to judge?

Whose attitude are you imitating when you judge?

Why is asking God for what you want an act of vulnerability?

“Do to others whatever you would like them to do to you.” Is this proactive or reactive?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, your teachings change my life. Teach me to be humble, vulnerable and obedient so I can be blessed and lifted up by you.

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

Who is your hero? How are you most like this person?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

Jesus said, “Beware of false prophets who come disguised as harmless sheep but are really vicious wolves. You can identify them by their fruit, that is, by the way they act. Can you pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? A good tree produces good fruit, and a bad tree produces bad fruit. A good tree can’t produce bad fruit, and a bad tree can’t produce good fruit. So every tree that does not produce good fruit is chopped down and thrown into the fire. Yes, just as you can identify a tree by its fruit, so you can identify people by their actions.

“Not everyone who calls out to me, ‘Lord! Lord!’ will enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Only those who actually do the will of my Father in heaven will enter. On judgment day many will say to me, ‘Lord! Lord! We prophesied in your name and cast out demons in your name and performed many miracles in your name.’ But I will reply, ‘I never knew you. Get away from me, you who break God’s laws.’

“Anyone who listens to my teaching and follows it is wise, like a person who builds a house on solid rock. Though the rain comes in torrents and the floodwaters rise and the winds beat against that house, it won’t collapse because it is built on bedrock. But anyone who hears my teaching and doesn’t obey it is foolish, like a person who builds a house on sand. When the rains and floods come and the winds beat against that house, it will collapse with a mighty crash.”

When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, for he taught with real authority—quite unlike their teachers of religious law. **Matthew 7:15–29 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

“...just as you can identify a tree by its fruit, so you can identify people by their actions.” Can people see the active love of Jesus in you? How will they see Jesus in you today?

Jesus is very clear: those who “actually do the will of my Father in heaven will enter” Heaven but those who “break God’s laws” will not. God, in his grace, has given you the opportunity to be alive and empowered by his Holy Spirit. The power of sin that leads to death—shame, guilt, isolation, deeper sin and darkness, more shame and guilt—has been BROKEN. You get to live in freedom, light, honesty, and forgiveness. Jesus’ righteousness clothes you if you choose to trust him. How will you live that out of that wealth today?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, you have given me all I need for life and godliness and happiness. Teach me to build my life on you, the solid rock. Help my relationships, attitudes, actions, and passions reflect you!

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

What is an amazing blessing you have...that you have totally forgotten to be thankful for?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

Jesus said, “Don’t let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me. There is more than enough room in my Father’s home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am. And you know the way to where I am going.”

“No, we don’t know, Lord,” Thomas said. “We have no idea where you are going, so how can we know the way?”

Jesus told him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me. If you had really known me, you would know who my Father is. From now on, you do know him and have seen him!”

Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.”

Jesus replied, “Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and yet you still don’t know who I am? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father! So why are you asking me to show him to you? Don’t you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words I speak are not my own, but my Father who lives in me does his work through me. Just believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me. Or at least believe because of the work you have seen me do.

“I tell you the truth, anyone who believes in me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works, because I am going to be with the Father. You can ask for anything in my name, and I will do it, so that the Son can bring glory to the Father. Yes, ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it! **John 14:1–14 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

If you are a Christian, do you often look forward to your real home—with Jesus in Heaven?

The heart of our Heavenly Father is shown clearly through the attitudes, actions, and words of Jesus. How does this challenge your view of God?

How can you do “greater works” than what Jesus was accomplishing through the power of the Holy Spirit in your life? How does God want to use you to be a light in your world to glorify Him? In this way, what are you asking for in Jesus’ name?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, can there be anything more enriching and fulfilling than to humbly let you shine your light and life through me to the world around me? Thank you for inviting me to participate in your holy work!

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

Where do you go for lasting peace?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

Jesus continued, “If you love me, obey my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive him, because it isn’t looking for him and doesn’t recognize him. But you know him, because he lives with you now and later will be in you. No, I will not abandon you as orphans—I will come to you. Soon the world will no longer see me, but you will see me. Since I live, you also will live. When I am raised to life again, you will know that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. Those who accept my commandments and obey them are the ones who love me. And because they love me, my Father will love them. And I will love them and reveal myself to each of them.”

Judas (not Judas Iscariot, but the other disciple with that name) said to him, “Lord, why are you going to reveal yourself only to us and not to the world at large?”

Jesus replied, “All who love me will do what I say. My Father will love them, and we will come and make our home with each of them. Anyone who doesn’t love me will not obey me. And remember, my words are not my own. What I am telling you is from the Father who sent me. I am telling you these things now while I am still with you. But when the Father sends the Advocate as my representative—that is, the Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you.

“I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don’t be troubled or afraid. Remember what I told you: I am going away, but I will come back to you again. If you really loved me, you would be happy that I am going to the Father, who is greater than I am. I have told you these things before they happen so that when they do happen, you will believe.” **John 14:15–29 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

If you are a Christian, Jesus promised the Holy Spirit *will never leave you* but will *lead you into all truth*.

What is required by Jesus for you to love Jesus?

What is the most surprising description of the Holy Spirit to you in this passage?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, thank you for the power of your presence and the gift of the Holy Spirit! I cannot imagine how scared and frustrated the disciples felt when Jesus said he was leaving; but what a relief when you sent your Holy Spirit! Thank you for giving us life and truth to light our way!

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

Who considers you a great friend? How long have you been friends?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

“I am the true grapevine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch of mine that doesn’t produce fruit, and he prunes the branches that do bear fruit so they will produce even more. You have already been pruned and purified by the message I have given you. Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me.

“Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing. Anyone who does not remain in me is thrown away like a useless branch and withers. Such branches are gathered into a pile to be burned. But if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted! When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father.

“I have loved you even as the Father has loved me. Remain in my love. When you obey my commandments, you remain in my love, just as I obey my Father’s commandments and remain in his love. I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow! This is my commandment: Love each other in the same way I have loved you. There is no greater love than to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.

“You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you slaves, because a master doesn’t confide in his slaves. Now you are my friends, since I have told you everything the Father told me. You didn’t choose me. I chose you. I appointed you to go and produce lasting fruit, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask for, using my name. This is my command: Love each other. **John 15:1–17 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

On a grapevine, the branch is a necessary conduit between the vine and the fruit. Are you staying connected to the “vine” (Jesus) so you can produce fruit?

What fruit do you long to bring into the world—from Jesus, and for Jesus?

Do you treasure the opportunity to be Jesus’ friend?

In view of God’s will and the fruit he can produce through you, what are you asking God for in Jesus’ name?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, thank you for connecting me to the source of life itself. Use me to produce great love and service for others through the power of Jesus! May your name be known and honored!