

Hope for All Eternity

May 17, 2020



Daily Devotions

SOAP Introduction

As an individual or as a family, use this SOAP study to connect with Jesus each day this week. SOAP stands for Scripture, Observation, Application, and Prayer. When we do a SOAP study, we want to root ourselves in the Scriptures, observing what they have for us, applying them to our lives, and then communing with God in prayer both before and after our time in the Bible.

Each day there will be multiple Scriptures for you to ask questions about, sit with, hear from God, and be invited to respond in action to.

If you're doing this individually, be sure to prayerfully consider each day's truth, each day's passages, and each of the questions. If you are doing this as a family, don't be afraid to have each person in your family read one of the verses or to "popcorn read" if it's a longer passage (meaning, don't be afraid to have one person read a verse or two and then another read a couple verses and then another a couple verses).

Parents, if you are going through this with your children, be sure to ask questions that will help your children engage with the daily Scriptures by asking good, concrete questions.

Day One // Life is temporary

“Man in his pomp will not remain; he is like the beasts that perish.”

We may not like to hear it, but we are finite, limited, mortal, and we will one day die. It is not often we ever consider our own deaths (unless of course one is elderly and goes about setting their house in order). But in many ways, our culture’s endless distractions detract our attention spans from contemplating the fact that, “man in his pomp will not remain.”

It doesn’t matter how much money we have or what accomplishments we obtained, at the end of the day everyone, rich and poor, will die. The question for us is this: How does the reality of our dying influence our living?

Scripture: **Read Psalm 49; James 4:14**

Observation: *What do I see in this passage?*

- What words or phrases resonate inside of you as you read and re-read these verses?
- To whom is the Psalmist addressing in these verses? What does he want his readers to know? Why do you feel like he wants them to know this?
- Do you think that our mortality is something our culture leans into or shies away from? Why?
- How does the reality of the fact that life is temporary make you feel? How does this change your perspective on your past? What about your present? How about your future?

Application: *What do I do with what I’ve read?*

- What tangible action steps do you feel like God is inviting you into as a result of your reflection today?

Prayer: *Lord, your word says that, “Man in his pomp will not remain; he is like the beasts that perish.” Father, if I am too haughty, humble me. I know my days are numbered. You have ordered them since before I was born. When I die, I will carry nothing with me. Help me to live for what truly matters. Amen.*

Day Two // Our light and momentary afflictions

In Tom's sermon this past weekend, he noted Paul's words to the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians 4:17-18 that our present troubles are light and momentary. Look at how The Message translation renders those verses:

So we're not giving up. How could we! Even though on the outside it often looks like things are falling apart on us, on the inside, where God is making new life, not a day goes by without his unfolding grace. These hard times are small potatoes compared to the coming good times, the lavish celebration prepared for us. There's far more here than meets the eye. The things we see now are here today, gone tomorrow. But the things we can't see now will last forever.

Hard words to hear in the moment when our lives are full of hurt and heartache now, but Paul is trying to give us a heavenly perspective...not to sweep our current circumstances under the rug, but to help us change our outlook on life.

Scripture: **2 Corinthians 4:17-18**

Observation: *What do I see in this passage?*

- Read and re-read this passage slowly. Which passage stands out to you the most? Why?
- What are all of the troubles and afflictions you are facing in your life right now? Think internally, relationally, vocationally, etc.
- What might bringing those to God look like for you? What would it look like for you to see them in light of the coming good times?
- Does having a "light at the end of the tunnel" provide you comfort? Why or why not?

Application: *What do I do with what I've read?*

- Which specific trouble or affliction in your life is God inviting you to change your perspective on?

Prayer: Spend time talking with God about what feelings you have regarding your troubles. Be honest with him, but also reverent. Ask him to give you his perspective on what's going on in your life.

Day Three // The hope of judgment

That's probably a weird title, right? The hope...of judgment? How could judgment be something that brings hope???

One thing that is probably a little different for those in our culture is how much the biblical writers look to God's judgment as something to be longed for. The reason for that was that they knew that with God's judgment, all evil, injustice, wrongdoing, and heartache would be finally and rightfully dealt with.

In our world, there is so much pain and disaster, sickness and decay. Jesus returning brings hope because with his return, he will right all wrongs. He will do away with everything not good in our world.

Scripture: **Read Psalm 72; 2 Corinthians 5:10**

Observation: *What do I see in these passages?*

- What words or phrases resonate inside of you as you read and re-read these passages? Why do you think those passages stood out to you?
- How similar or dissimilar are you when it comes to longing for God's justice and judgment with the Psalmist? In what ways might your viewpoint of the judgment of God need to change?
- How, in your mind, is God's judgment a good thing? How does knowing God will judge the earth bring you hope?
- How would you describe your longing for God's judgment/Christ's return to come?

Application: *What do I do with what I've read?*

- How do you feel like God is inviting you into action as a result of your reflection today?

Prayer: Write a prayer to God based off of Psalm 72 incorporating some of the same elements you find in this poetry.

Day Four // Until then...what now? Part 1

You may have heard or read this verse before. It's one of the more popular ones. Paul, in **2 Corinthians 5:7** says, "For we live by faith, not by sight." And by saying this, Paul wants his audience to know that if you are a Christian, you are one characterized as one who lives differently than the world. When Paul tells us to live by faith and not by sight, he is talking about living in such a way that our day to day patterns, decisions, and attitudes are consistent with the faith statement that we say we hold to!

That's why Paul continues by saying in **2 Corinthians 5:9** that, "We make it our goal to please him..."

I wonder what that might look like for us in light of COVID-19, our stay at home orders, and how we can live by faith as things begin to reopen?

Scripture: **Read 2 Corinthians 5:7-10.**

Observation: *What do I see in this passage?*

- Read and re-read this passage slowly. What words or phrases resonates with you from these verses?
- If Paul asked you, "Do you live by faith or sight?" How would you respond? Why?
- Describe a time in which you lived by faith in your life. What was that like for you? What did it teach you about God?

Application: *What do I do with what I've read?*

- What one way might living by faith change how you would go about living differently tomorrow?

Prayer: *Lord, I don't want to go my own way. Teach me to live by faith and not by sight. My time on Earth is not long compared with eternity. Help me make the most of it.*

Day Five // Until then...what now? Part 2

If our lives are temporary, our afflictions light, and we know that God will ultimately deal with all the evil and pain in our world, how does that change how we go through life now? While many people find themselves complaining, and bemoaning their situations, Paul encourages us to change our perspective, and go on mission. He calls us ambassadors for Christ. God is actually making his appeal to a broken and hurting world *through us*. God tells us that he loves them, that he wants a relationship with them, that he is good, that he cares, and that he will bring justice to bear on the sin in our world.

Scripture: **Read 2 Corinthians 5:7-21.**

Observation: *What do I see in this passage?*

- Read and re-read this passage slowly. What words or phrases resonates with you from these verses?
- How does **2 Corinthians 5:7, 9** correspond to what Paul goes on to say in **2 Corinthians 5:11-21**?
- If life is temporary, and eternity is forever, what do you feel like should change in your life to actually spend your time here on earth well? Are you living for the right things? Explain.
- How have you been an ambassador for the Lord in your life? What was that like?

Application: *What do I do with what I've read?*

- Where do you feel like the Spirit is prompting you to join God in living by faith as social distancing rules begin to lessen?
- In what one tangible way is God inviting you to be an ambassador this week?

Prayer: Talk with God and ask him to help you make a list of the ways in which you feel God inviting you to re-allocate your time, money, and resources based on the reality that life is momentary, but eternity is forever.