

Walk in the Light

1 Thessalonians 5

Paul is writing this letter to answer questions and ease the concerns of the believers in Thessalonica. He had covered a lot of information in a very short amount of time during his earlier visit. At the end of Chapter Four, he addressed their concerns about what would happen if a believer died before the Rapture took place. Now he will confirm what they have already been told – the believer need not fear the Day of the Lord.

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11.

1. Record everything this section of Scripture tells us about the Day of the Lord
(vv. 2-3)

Day of the Lord – In general terms, it represents anytime God intervenes in history to fulfill His purpose. Sometimes, it is used in relation to historical judgments. Other times, as it is here in 1 Thessalonians 5, it is used to refer to judgments and events still to come (the Tribulation, the Second Coming of Christ, and the Millennial Reign of Christ)

2. What pronouns does Paul use in verses 1-2? _____
What pronouns does Paul use in verses 3-4? _____

When Paul spoke about the sudden destruction to come, he clarified it with the use of pronouns, indicating that this sudden destruction was not intended for believers.

3. What reason does Paul give as proof that believers in Jesus Christ have nothing to fear? (vv. 4-5)

Praise the Lord! We need not fear, for He will descend from Heaven with a shout, and with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God, and we will be caught up together with Him in the clouds!

Sleep - to yield to sloth and sin, and be indifferent to one's salvation

Watch – to give strict attention to, be cautious, active, lest one fall into sin

Sober – to be calm and collected in spirit; to be temperate, dispassionate, circumspect

4. For the unbeliever, the Rapture of the church and the start of the Tribulation will come as a complete surprise. But, as believers, we know from God's Word exactly what is coming. Being assured of this, what should we be doing? (v. 6, 8)

5. **THINK:** What do you think of when you hear the words *breastplate* and *helmet*? Why do you think Paul chose this imagery when talking about being sober and watching (for the Lord to return). What do you think the relationship is between faith, love, and the breastplate and between the hope of salvation and the helmet?

All the world waits for the Day of the Lord. Some are sober-minded, walking in the light, watching and waiting for the Savior to appear in the clouds, while others stumble around in a state of metaphorical drunkenness, completely unaware of what is headed their way. As children of God, our hearts are saved and preserved through our faith, the breastplate, in Jesus Christ. It is the Holy Spirit who shows us how to love even when some might strike out against us. And it is the hope, the helmet, that comes from our salvation that has the power to overcome all the ramblings of our minds.

6. Record and consider memorizing the beautiful truths found in verse nine.

Jesus took time on the night of His arrest to tell His disciples about the end times. He told them that He spoke these things, so that in Him they might have peace. This truth remains the same today. When we understand what the Bible says about the end times, we can find peace in Him. We rest in knowing He took our punishment on the cross and that we have received His gracious offer of salvation.

7. Take a moment to thank Jesus for all that He has done for you. He is so worthy of our gratitude and our commitment to walk worthy.

8. Knowing that as believers, we have not been appointed to wrath, what should we do with this information? (v. 11)

Edify – to promote growth in Christian wisdom, affection, grace, virtue, holiness, blessedness

9. **THINK:** What do you think the difference is between being ready to go to Heaven and being ready to meet the Lord? Are you ready to meet the Lord?

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13.

10. In 1 Peter 5:1-4, Peter refers to his fellow pastors/elders as shepherds of the flock of God. Summarize the responsibilities of a pastor by considering the duties of a shepherd.

Recognize – to have regard for one, cherish, pay attention to

Admonish – to caution or to reprove gently, to warn

11. How does Paul exhort us to treat our pastors and those whom God has placed in spiritual authority over us? (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13)

12. **THINK:** What do you think it means to “esteem them very highly in love”?

13. How can being at peace among ourselves esteem our pastors in love? (v. 13b)

Order in the church is vital. Imagine if everyone thought it was their place to get up and preach the Sunday message? As church members, we need to recognize and acknowledge those whom God has placed in charge. Our pastors work tirelessly to teach and care for us; we should love them well, both in word and deed, in return. Submitting to God’s order brings peace within the congregation, and this, in turn, brings glory to God.

14. How can you personally recognize, esteem, and love your pastor and spiritual leaders?

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:14-15.

15. What six things should we, as members of God’s family, be sure to do?

As family members, we should be ministering to one another. Our pastors cannot do it all. We each have a role to play in the family of God. Jesus said that His family would be recognized by their love for one another (John 13:35). It is also true that some family members may require a bit more attention than others.

Warn the Unruly

Unruly – the self-willed person who simply demands to hold his own opinion or preference; careless and out of line

16. What are some of the dangers that exist for a believer who insists on his own opinion?

17. **THINK:** What do you think the difference is between warning the unruly and judging the unruly?

The heart is the key between warning a fellow believer and judging them. We do well to stop and pray before we approach the unruly. This is the time for some serious self-reflection. Do you have similar sins in your life? Do you have a relationship with the unruly person that will support this conversation? What is your motive? Would you be open to this same exhortation if it came your way? Are you acting out of love for this person? All these things should be carefully considered.

18. Read the following verses and record what you learn about warning others.

Galatians 6:1-2	
James 5:20	

Comfort the Fainthearted

Fainthearted – those who, literally, are small-souled by nature or experience, they tend to be timid and lack courage; a quitter

Comfort – comes from two Greek words “para” meaning *near*, “muthos” meaning *speech*; to speak to, address one, whether by way of admonition and incentive, or to calm and console; hence, equivalent to encourage

19. How could you encourage someone who is timid in their faith and feels like giving up?

Instead of scolding the fainthearted from a distance, we must get close to them and speak tenderly. We must teach the “little-souled” that the trials of life will help to enlarge them and make them stronger in the faith.

- Warren W. Wiersbe

Uphold the Weak

Uphold – to keep one’s self directly opposite to any one, hold to him firmly, cleave to, paying heed to him

Weak – lacking in decision about things lawful and unlawful

20. Read Romans 14 and summarize how you can uphold the weak in your church family.

Patience – to be patient in bearing the offenses and injuries of others; to be mild and slow in avenging; to be long-suffering, slow to anger, slow to punish, to defer anger

21. We need patience when it comes to dealing with the unruly, the fainthearted, and the weak. Think about your personal encounters with these types of people. How would patience help you in your dealings with each?

The unruly: _____

The fainthearted: _____

The weak: _____

See That No One Renders Evil for Evil

Evil – wrongs inflicted

It is easy to become frustrated when you do everything you can to help someone, but they show no appreciation whatsoever. In fact, they may even reject or resent your efforts. You may be tempted to set the record straight or retaliate in some way, but Paul tells us to pursue what is good for everyone (v. 15).

22. What do you think it looks like to pursue good (upright, honorable, acceptable to God) for everyone when faced with these kinds of situations?

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:16-28.

Paul continues with his description of God’s family. We respect our leadership, help our weaker members, bring glory to God, and allow ourselves to be prepared for ministry through our worship of God.

23. In this chapter alone, Paul has outlined fifteen behaviors that are markers of God’s family members. What additional eight behaviors should be part of our worship?

24. **THINK:** How do you think proper worship prepares the family of God for effective ministry? How do you think the lack of proper worship strips the effectiveness of ministry? (Consider Revelation 2:2-5)

Worship reminds us of why we do the things we do. When we simply check the boxes, we fail to bring God the glory He deserves and the glory that will draw others to Him. True worship extends beyond just singing before the message is preached. It involves our praise, prayer, and the spoken Word of God.

25. **THINK:** How do you think each of the eight behaviors contributes to effective worship?

26. Paul has given us much to think about and much “to do.” What truth can we rest upon as we cooperate with the Holy Spirit in our lives? (v. 23-24)

A Closer Look at the Will of God

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

For a believer to pursue the will of God is the mark of a growing Christian; it is to deny oneself, choose obedience to God’s Word, and see the goodness in His ways.

Therefore, do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

- Ephesians 5:17

Jesus taught His disciples to pray, *Your will be done* (Matthew 6:10). This prayer should be a daily surrender for everyone who believes.

“What is God’s will for my life?” can be a looming question in many circumstances. Most importantly, we must remain in the Word, be willing to wait, and seek to know God’s character.

God’s will can be clear in some cases. In others, it is hard to discern. Let’s begin by looking at Scripture that speaks clearly of God’s will.

27. What do the following verses say about God’s will?

Micah 6:8

Matthew 6:33

Matthew 22:36-39

28. Read Romans 12:1-2. Carefully note the sequence of events that lead to understanding the will of God.

29. There are many things we can do to help us know and seek God’s will. What do the following verses teach you about practical ways you can better understand God and His ways?

Psalms 37:4

Proverbs 3:5-6

Proverbs 11:5

30. Read 1 John 2:15. What is **not** the will of God?

As you seek the will of God, remember if the Bible forbids it, it is not God's will. Always ask: "Will this bring glory to God?" "Will this hinder my relationship with Him?" Oftentimes, you only need to take the next step while waiting for Him to reveal His plan for you through His Word.

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. - Psalm 119:105
The tiny oil lamps in ancient Israel gave enough light for one step. His word is all you need to light the way for the next step.

31. Read 1 John 2:17. What is the promise for those who do the will of God?

32. Are you seeking God's will for something in particular? If so, write it on the line below.

Consider what you wrote down in light of 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18. How can you apply these verses to seeking God's will?

Rejoice always: _____

Pray without ceasing:

In everything give thanks: _____

33. Reflect on what you have learned about seeking the will of God and record your thoughts.
