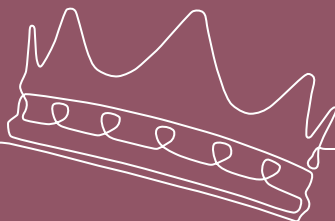


JUNE
2022
DEVOTIONAL
JOURNAL

*And we urge you, brothers, admonish
the idle, encourage the fainthearted,
help the weak, be patient with them all.*



1 THESSALONIANS 5:14



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1 THESSALONIANS 5:14

MEMORY VERSES

2022

From 1 & 2 Thessalonians

♦ January

And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit

– 1 Thessalonians 1:6 (ESV)

♦ February

For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality

– 1 Thessalonians 4:3 (ESV)

♦ March

That each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honour – 1 Thessalonians 4:4 (ESV)

♦ April

For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep.

– 1 Thessalonians 4:14 (ESV)

♦ May

For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. – 1 Thessalonians 5:2 (ESV)

◆ June

And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all.

– 1 Thessalonians 5:14 (ESV)

◆ July

See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone.

– 1 Thessalonians 5:15 (ESV)

◆ August

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

– 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (ESV)

◆ September

To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of His calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by His power.

– 2 Thessalonians 1:11 (ESV)

◆ October

But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.

– 2 Thessalonians 2:13 (ESV)

◆ November

But the Lord is faithful. He will establish you and guard you against the evil one.

– 2 Thessalonians 3:3 (ESV)

◆ December

As for you, brothers, do not grow weary in doing good.

– 2 Thessalonians 3:13 (ESV)

FOREWORD

BY SENIOR PASTORS

PREPARING TO MEET **KING JESUS**

*What do times of crisis and uncertainty
compel us towards? They compel us to
confront our own mortality, scrutinise our
foundations and evaluate our purpose.
Most of all, they compel us
to seek the face of God.*

As we sought the Lord, He
assured us through these verses:

“And I tell you, you are Peter,
and on this rock I will build My
church, and the gates of hell shall
not prevail against it. I will give
you the keys of the kingdom of
heaven, and whatever you bind
on earth shall be bound in heaven,
and whatever you loose on earth
shall be loosed in heaven.”

– Matthew 16:18-19 (ESV)

In these uncertain times, we can
be rested in Jesus because He
has promised that He Himself
will build His Church and the
gates of hell shall not prevail.
The keys of the Kingdom of God

are the preaching of the Gospel
of Jesus Christ – His incarnation,
death, resurrection, ascension
and second coming. And we are
to proclaim it! As the Church, it
is our responsibility and privilege
to do so. When people believe
the Good News, they are able to
enter God’s Kingdom.

We are reminded of the charge
that the Apostle Paul gave to
Timothy as the spiritual leader
of the church at Ephesus:

“I charge you in the presence of
God and of Christ Jesus, who is to
judge the living and the dead, and
by His appearing and His kingdom:
preach the word; be ready in

season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.”
– 2 Timothy 4:1-4 (ESV)

Hence, this year’s spiritual burden is “Preparing to Meet King Jesus” — make ready God’s Kingdom people to prepare the world to meet King Jesus in eternity. The world is in darkness and pain. The task is urgent. We believe that we are now in the final hour. We have to prepare ourselves and others to meet King Jesus. This is really what the Church is all about.

How can we prepare ourselves to meet King Jesus?

A People Prepared for His Coming: Be Watchful!

In Luke 1:17, John the Baptist’s calling was to prepare the people for the first coming of our Lord. Like him, we are called to prepare the people for Christ’s second coming. We are to be watchful and persevere in prayer, so as to be ready for the coming of the Lord.

A People Prepared to Stand Firm and Take Action: Be Fruitful!

In times of great distress, those who know their God will stand firm and take action (Dan 11:32). This pandemic is a time of harvest. Many people everywhere are looking for hope. So let us stand firm in our calling as a church

*We have to
prepare ourselves
and others to
meet King Jesus.
This is really what
the Church is
all about.*

(to be disciples of *A Certain Kind* and return the Church to its disciplemaking roots through Authentic Discipleship and Intentional Disciplemaking) and take action to multiply leaders and disciplemakers for great fruitfulness.

A People Prepared in Personal Holiness: Be Faithful!

1 Thessalonians 4:1-3 remind us to guard our hearts and be faithful, for our own personal sanctification and holiness. Let’s be faithful in our personal integrity and walk with God, aligning our lives back to God in holiness and faithfulness.

This Devotional Journal is designed to help you walk daily with God and experience the transforming power of His Word and Spirit as you reflect, pray and obey the Lord in everything. May you be greatly blessed as you prepare yourselves and many others to meet King Jesus!

In Christ,
Rev Tan Kay Kiong and
Rev Tony Yeo

GUIDE TO USING

THIS DEVOTIONAL JOURNAL

Step 1

PREPARE YOUR HEART IN GOD'S PRESENCE

- ◆ Select a fixed time (preferably in the morning before you begin your day) and a quiet place where you can be alone and undisturbed.
- ◆ Observe a moment of silence as you acknowledge God's presence. Centre down.
- ◆ Begin with a song of worship. Meditate on the lyrics even if you are unfamiliar with the tune. (Refer to the list of worship songs provided.)
- ◆ Ask God to open your heart to hear Him.

NEW IN 2022

You can now type in the PDF copy of the Devotional Journal using your digital device as we have allotted fillable boxes for you to journal your thoughts and prayers without space constraints.



SOMETHING TO PONDER

Examining your life is essential in your faith journey. Your redeemed life as a disciple of Christ deserves careful examining. May you take root and bear fruit in Him!

*The English Standard Version (ESV)
is the default Bible version translation
unless otherwise specified.*

Step 2

ALLOW GOD TO **S.O.A.P.** YOU WITH HIS WORD AND SPIRIT

- ◆ Scripture – Take your time to meditate on the Scripture passage for the day. Pause and mull over words and phrases that stand out to you.
- ◆ Observation – Jot down significant insights and reflections from the passage you have read. You may use the guiding questions provided. The “Deeper Reflection” section is to aid your contemplation of the Scripture. It is not to replace your own observation, for the Holy Spirit illuminates the Scripture to you as you seek Him earnestly.
- ◆ Application – Note down a specific and practical commitment to God’s Word for you. Is there a command to obey, a sin to avoid, an example to follow, or a principle to live out? Where appropriate, share your devotional entry with someone.
- ◆ Prayer – Bring your heartfelt response to God in prayer.



PRAYER POINTERS FOR 2022

We have provided prayer pointers for Pastors and Staff every Tuesday and for one of the 3 Faith Exploits (Disciple the Generations, Singapore and the Nations) every Wednesday. Every Thursday, a prayer pointer is included for Outreach/Missions/New Life Leaders.

On each Friday, there is a prayer pointer for SGI Leaders (e.g. Zone Mentors, CG Leaders and Assistant CG Leaders). A prayer pointer for Church Board Members is included every Saturday. Please pray for each group as well as any specific individuals whom God may bring to your mind.

PRAY FOR **SOUTH ASIA** SRI LANKA & INDIA

“Remember the word that You commanded Your servant Moses, saying, ‘If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the peoples, but if you return to Me and keep My commandments and do them, though your outcasts are in the uttermost parts of heaven, from there I will gather them and bring them to the place that I have chosen, to make My name dwell there.’ They are Your servants and Your people, whom You have redeemed by Your great power and by Your strong hand. O Lord, let Your ear be attentive to the prayer of Your servant, and to the prayer of Your servants who delight to fear Your name...”

NEHEMIAH 1:8-11 (ESV)

WHEN I HEARD ABOUT THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND

political crises in Sri Lanka, I was reminded of Nehemiah's cry and prayer to the Lord. We too ought to come in tears and cry out to Him.

PRAY FOR THE SOUTH ASIAN NATIONS

- Thank the Lord for His everlasting covenant with His servants living there. They are His people whom He has redeemed by His great power and strong hand.
- Thank God for His steadfast love that endures forever. If we, God's people, return to Him and obey His commands, He will gather us and bring us to the place that He has chosen as a dwelling for His Name.
- Confess that we have broken faith with God. For the nations to repent of their wicked acts of disobedience, because God will keep His covenant of love with those who love Him and keep His commandments.

PRAY FOR SRI LANKA

- That God will help and guide the Sri Lankan government, which is seeking financial assistance from the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. The government is viewed as corrupt and blamed for bringing the country into a state of emergency and economic crisis.
- That the voice of the Sri Lankan Church be heard. About 70% of the nation's population are Buddhist and therefore the monks have a big voice in politics and a large role in running the nation. Through the Church, may God's justice and righteousness be seen and His name be held in reverence by the citizens.
- For relief and help for the common people who are suffering badly and have lost faith in the country. They have no cooking gas, milk or fresh vegetables. Their children have stopped going to school due to a national shortage of writing paper.

PRAY FOR INDIA

- That God's will be done as Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his political party, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), once again stand in the national elections (if re-elected, Mr Modi will serve his third term in office). That God will give India a Prime Minister who will lead the nation with justice and righteousness.
- For a separation of religion from politics, because the BJP has a mandate to make Hindutva (Hindu-ness) every Indian's national identity and bring it to every arena, including schools.
- For the churches in India to press on and press in as God's people committed to God's mission. Many states have passed anti-conversion laws. There is steeply rising persecution against Christian leaders and new converts. But the government has chosen to turn a deaf ear to the appeals of the churches for protection and help.

WORSHIP SONGS

MAY – JUNE

ANCIENT OF DAYS

Verse

Blessing and honour, glory and power
Be unto the Ancient of Days
From every nation all of creation
Bow before the Ancient of Days

Chorus

Every tongue in heaven and earth shall declare Your glory
Every knee shall bow at your throne in worship
You will be exalted, O God
And Your Kingdom shall not pass away
O Ancient of Days

Bridge

Your kingdom shall reign over all the earth
Sing unto the Ancient of Days
For none can compare to Your matchless worth
Sing unto the Ancient of Days

Gary Sadler | Jamie Harvill

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CCLI Song # 798108

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HOPE OF THE NATIONS

Verse

Jesus, hope of the nations
Jesus, comfort for all who mourn
You are the source of heaven's hope on earth
Jesus, light in the darkness
Jesus, truth in each circumstance
You are the source of heaven's light on earth

Pre-Chorus

In history, You lived and died
You broke the chains, You rose to life

Chorus

You are the hope, living in us
You are the Rock, in whom we trust
You are the light, shining for all the world to see
You rose from the dead, conquering fear
Our Prince of Peace, drawing us near
Jesus our hope, living for all who will receive
(Lord we believe)
(Lord we believe)
(Lord we believe)

Ending

Lord we believe
(Jesus hope of the nations)
Lord we believe
(Jesus hope of the nations)
Lord we believe
(Jesus Lord we believe)
Lord we believe

Brian Doerksen

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CCLI Song # 3540703

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A THOUSAND HALLELUJAHS

Verse 1

Who else would rocks cry out to worship?
Whose glory taught the stars to shine?
Perhaps creation longs to have the words to sing
But this joy is mine

Chorus

With a thousand hallelujahs
We magnify Your name
You alone deserve the glory
The honour and the praise
Lord Jesus, this song is forever Yours
A thousand hallelujahs
And a thousand more

Verse 2

Who else would die for our redemption?
Whose resurrection means I'll rise?
There isn't time enough to sing of all You've done
But I have eternity to try

Bridge

Praise to the Lord
To the Lamb
To the King of heaven
Praise for He rose
Now He reigns
We will sing forever

Brooke Ligertwood | Phil Wickham | Scott Ligertwood

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MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Verse

Won't You Lord
Take a look at our hands
Everything we have
Use it for Your plan
Won't You Lord
Take a look at our hearts
Mould it, refine it
As You set us apart

Chorus

We want to run to the altar
And catch the fire
To stand in the gap
Between the living and the dead
Give us a heart of compassion
For a world without vision
We will make a difference
Bringing hope to our land

Bridge

We will answer the call
To build this church without walls
Let Your glory be shown
Bring salvation to the lost
To the lost

Teo Poh Heng, Toh Kok Yew
@cityworshipsg

GREAT ARE YOU LORD

Verse

You give life, You are love
You bring light to the darkness
You give hope, You restore every heart that is broken
And great are You, Lord

Chorus

It's Your breath in our lungs
So we pour out our praise
We pour out our praise
It's Your breath in our lungs
So we pour out our praise to You only

Bridge

And all the earth will shout Your praise
Our hearts will cry, these bones will sing
Great are You, Lord
(Repeat)

David Leonard | Jason Ingram | Leslie Jordan

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O FOR A THOUSAND TONGUES TO SING

Verse 1

O for a thousand tongues to sing
My great Redeemer's praise
The glories of my God and King
The triumphs of His grace

Verse 2

If eloquence I could display
And every language sing
A thousand words could never say
The praise I have for Thee

Chorus 1

Hallelujah hallelujah hallelujah
All praise to our God

Verse 3

Before the throne we'll sing the song
With saints from every age
With thousands times
Ten thousand strong
We'll praise His holy name

Chorus 2

Hallelujah hallelujah hallelujah
All praise to our God
Hallelujah hallelujah hallelujah
All praise to our King

Verse 4

A thousand years will be as one
When face to face I see
The splendid beauty of the Son
The One who died for me

Charles Wesley | Ralph E. Hudson | Thomas Miller

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CCLI Song # 5758366

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HOW GREAT IS OUR GOD

Verse 1

The splendour of the King
Clothed in majesty
Let all the earth rejoice
All the earth rejoice
He wraps Himself in light
And darkness tries to hide
And trembles at His voice
Trembles at His voice

Chorus

How great is our God, sing with me
How great is our God, all will see
How great, how great is our God

Verse 2

Age to age He stands
And time is in His hands
Beginning and the end
Beginning and the end
The Godhead, three in one
Father, Spirit, Son
The Lion and the Lamb
The Lion and the Lamb

Bridge

Name above all names
Worthy of all praise
My heart will sing “How great is our God!”

Chris Tomlin | Ed Cash | Jesse Reeves

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BEAUTIFUL SAVIOUR

Verse 1

Jesus, beautiful Saviour
God of all majesty, risen King

Verse 2

Lamb of God, holy and righteous
Blessed Redeemer, bright morning star

Pre-Chorus

All the heavens shout Your praise
All creation bows to worship You

Chorus

How wonderful, how beautiful
Name above every name, exalted high
How wonderful, how beautiful
Jesus Your name
Name above every name, Jesus

Bridge

I will sing forever
Jesus I love You
Jesus I love You

Ending

Jesus, beautiful Saviour
(Repeat)

Henry Seeley

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IN JESUS' NAME

Verse 1

God is fighting for us
God is on our side
He has overcome
Yes He has overcome
We will not be shaken
We will not be moved
Jesus You are here

Verse 2

Carrying our burdens
Covering our shame
He has overcome
Yes He has overcome
We will not be shaken
We will not be moved
Jesus You are here

Chorus 1

I will live, I will not die
The resurrection power of Christ
Alive in me and I am free
In Jesus' Name

Chorus 2

I will live, I will not die
I will declare and lift You high
Christ revealed and I am healed
In Jesus' Name

Bridge

God is fighting for us
Pushing back the darkness
Lighting up the Kingdom
That cannot be shaken
In the Name of Jesus
Enemy's defeated
And we will shout it out
Shout it out

Ending

In Jesus' Name
In Jesus' Name
In Jesus' Name

Darlene Zschech | Israel Houghton

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THE LION AND THE LAMB

Verse 1

He's coming on the clouds
Kings and kingdoms will bow down
And every chain will break
As broken hearts declare His praise
For who can stop the Lord Almighty?

Chorus

Our God is the Lion
The Lion of Judah
He's roaring with power
And fighting our battles
And every knee will bow before Him
Our God is the Lamb
The Lamb that was slain
For the sins of the world
His blood breaks the chains
And every knee will bow before the Lion and the Lamb
Every knee will bow before Him

Verse 2

So open up the gates
Make way before the King of kings
The God who comes to save
Is here to set the captives free
For who can stop the Lord Almighty?

Bridge

Who can stop the Lord Almighty?
Who can stop the Lord (Almighty)

Brenton Brown | Brian Johnson | Leeland Mooring
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WED
01

The Day of the Lord (1)

SCRIPTURE 1 Thessalonians 5:1-2; Zephaniah 1:1-9, 14-18

OBSERVATION

What is the day of the Lord like according to Zephaniah 1:1-9, 14-18?

APPPLICATION

What is my perspective on the day of the Lord?

PRAYER

Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

Prayer Pointers

- ◆ Give thanks and praise
- ◆ Pray for leaders
- ◆ Pray for significant people
- ◆ Pray for the Nations: To see that God is behind world events
- ◆ Pray for self

DEEPER REFLECTION

THE THESSALONIANS WORRIED ABOUT WHETHER THEY

were ready to stand before Christ at His coming.¹ Paul addresses this anxiety in 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11. Paul had evidently taught the Thessalonians about “the day of the Lord” (v.2) from the Old Testament when he was with them. “The day of the Lord” has its theological background and continuity from the Old Testament.

Zephaniah prophesied during the reign of the righteous king Josiah (Zep 1:1), who brought about the **greatest reform and revival** in the history of Judah (2 Kin 22-23). But yet, God spoke to His people through Zephaniah **a very grave message of divine judgment**: “the great day of the Lord” – “a day of the Lord’s wrath” (Zep 1:15, 18). “The day of the Lord” is “a day of trouble and distress...destruction and desolation...darkness and gloom” against all forms of human and worldly security – “fortified cities” and “high corner towers” (Zep 1:15-16). And “silver” and “gold” are unable to deliver anyone “on the day of the Lord’s wrath” (Zep 1:18).

The 55-year long evil reign of Manasseh, Josiah’s grandfather (2 Chron 33:1-2, 9), had such a profound effect upon Judah that it never recovered except by the purification of divine judgment. God would “not turn from the fierceness of His great wrath” and “would not forgive” His people “because of the sins of Manasseh” (2 Kin 23:26; 24:3-4). Josiah’s reforms were **too little** and **too late** to save Judah from God’s judgment. This points to a very serious reality about God’s holiness and our sin.

¹ John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Thessalonians, The Bible Speaks Today* (IVP, 1991), 107

THU
02

The Day of the Lord (2)

SCRIPTURE Zephaniah 2:1-3; 3:11-20

OBSERVATION

What is the day of the Lord like according to verses 1 to 3 and Zephaniah 3:11-20?

APPPLICATION

How do I live my life in light of the day of the Lord?

PRAYER

Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

Prayer Pointers

- ◆ Give thanks and praise
- ◆ Pray for Outreach/Missions/New Life leaders: To walk in humility in view of the day of the Lord
- ◆ Pray for significant people
- ◆ Pray for those in need
- ◆ Pray for self

DEEPER REFLECTION

IN THE HISTORY OF GOD’S COVENANT RELATIONSHIP WITH

Israel, the day of the Lord came upon Israel at different points of their journey with God. That “day” – “on that day” or “at that time” (Zep 3:16, 19) – is not necessarily a particular moment in time, but a period of time, like Israel’s 70-year exile in Babylon. The day of the Lord is a day of divine retribution and divine redemption. The day of the Lord coming in retribution and redemption has its culmination at the Second Coming of Christ. It will be a day of full retribution – “the great day of their [God and Christ’s] wrath” (Rev 6:15-17), and a day of full redemption – “the day of redemption” (Eph 4:30).

Zephaniah warned Judah: “Near is the great day of the Lord, near and coming very quickly” (Zep 1:14). Similarly for Christ’s Second Coming: “the coming of the Lord is near” (Jas 5:8) and “Yes, I am coming quickly” (Rev 22:20). Oftentimes, God’s grace and mercy go before His severe judgment. God graciously and mercifully called His people to “seek the Lord...seek righteousness, seek humility” “before the day of the Lord’s anger comes upon you”, so that “perhaps you will be hidden in the day of the Lord’s anger” (vv.2-3). In the day of the Lord, God will destroy the “proud, exalting” and “haughty” people in Judah, but He “will leave among you a humble and lowly people” (Zep 3:11-12). It will be divine redemption amidst divine retribution. Let us be found seeking God with humility in the day of the Lord.

FRI
03

The Lord's Sudden Return: Unexpected

SCRIPTURE 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3; Mark 13:32-37

OBSERVATION

How will the day of the Lord be sudden and unexpected?

APPPLICATION

What is my response to the Lord's sudden and unexpected return?

PRAYER

Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

Prayer Pointers

- ◆ Give thanks and praise
- ◆ Pray for SGI leaders: To wait for Christ's return with spiritual alertness
- ◆ Pray for significant people
- ◆ Pray for those in need
- ◆ Pray for self

DEEPER REFLECTION

THE THESSALONIANS WRONGLY THOUGHT THAT THEY

“could most easily get ready for Christ’s coming in judgment if they could know when He would arrive”². But Paul’s response to them was: “concerning the times and the seasons” they “have **no need** to have anything written” to them (v.1), because we will never know. For “the day of the Lord will come” in a **sudden and unexpected** way, “like a thief in the night” (v.2). And this we must be “fully aware” (v.2).

In teaching His disciples, Jesus made it crystal clear that we cannot know the timing of His return (Mk 13:32-37). Don’t miss the triple emphasis on this: “of that day and hour **no one knows**” (Mk 13:32) and “you **do not know**” (Mk 13:33, 35). The words of Jesus, particularly pertaining to eschatology here, are absolutely certain and trustworthy (Mk 13:31). However, the timing of their fulfilment has not been revealed and so should not provoke undue speculation. Christians have been attempting this for the last 2,000 years and have failed. But they have not given up. What folly! Not only do we not know, but Jesus says to us: “It is **not for you** to know” (Acts 1:7a). It is none of our business. For not even the incarnate Son knew, but the Father alone, who set the timetable for the future (Acts 1:7b). In the state of “do not know” we have only one business: “Be on the alert!” Mark the fourfold emphasis (Mk 13:33, 34, 35, 37). Be watchful on the inside, not on the outside.

² John R. W. Stott, Thessalonians, 108

SAT
04

The Lord's Sudden Return: Expected

SCRIPTURE 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3; Matthew 24:36-39

OBSERVATION

How will the day of the Lord be like?

APPPLICATION

What is my response to the Lord's sudden but expected return?

PRAYER

Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

Prayer Pointers

- ◆ Give thanks and praise
- ◆ Pray for Church Board: To have spiritual understanding of world events
- ◆ Pray for significant people
- ◆ Pray for those in need
- ◆ Pray for self

DEEPER REFLECTION

THE LORD WILL RETURN “LIKE A THIEF IN THE NIGHT” (v.2)

– suddenly but unexpectedly, just as we don’t normally expect burglary. And that day will come “as labour pains come upon a pregnant woman” (v.3). It will be sudden and expected, just as a pregnant woman expects labour pains to come. We are to wait and watch expectantly daily for the Lord’s return, while we do not know when it will be.

Jesus tells us that “wars and rumours of wars” and “famines and earthquakes” mark “the beginning of birth pangs” that leads to His Second Coming (Mk 13:7-8). But in spite of these troubles and turmoil, humans live their lives as “There is peace and security” (v.3). It is “as those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage” in Noah’s time (Matt 24:38). But for these people, “sudden destruction will come upon them” at the Lord’s return (v.3), just as the people in Noah’s days “**did not understand until** the flood came and took them all away” (Matt 24:39).

But we can have “peace and security” **in the Lord**. Jesus tells us: “In the world you will have tribulation” (Jn 16:33). But as we anchor in the Word of God – “These things that I have spoken to you” – we can “have peace **in Me**”. The “in Me” means that in whatever “tribulation” we may go through, we continue to follow the Lord faithfully, clinging to Him steadfastly. And Jesus “has overcome the world” of “tribulation” and so **in Him** we can “take courage”.

SUN
05

Sunday Journal

SCRIPTURE

OBSERVATION

APPLICATION

PRAYER

THE PAST WEEK

Review

◆ What was my high point and my low point for the week?

◆ What gave me life and what drained me?

◆ How was the Spirit of God at work?

THE PAST WEEK

Reflect

- ◆ What is one key thing that God said to me this week in light of what has happened?

Respond

- ◆ What is one thing I need to do in light of what God is saying?
Commit in prayer.

Family Devotional

Week 1

Make Waves:

What you do today can change
the world around you.

Memory Verse

"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace,
forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,
gentleness and self-control."
- Galatians 5:22-23 (NIV)

* Bottom Line

Love others because God loves you.*

* Bible Story

1 John 4:9-13 - What Is Love?

* Activity

Love Sentences

Get everyone to choose a sentence from A to E. Have everyone complete the sentences.

A. I know God loves me because...
B. God's love is...
C. Because of God's love for me, I can...
D. God loves...
E. I show God's love to others by...

Invite everyone to share their thoughts about the sentences they made.

Say, "God loves us so much that he sent His only Son to die on the cross for our sins. It is free and unconditional so that we can do the same for others. God loves everyone. He does not choose sides. We are wonderfully made and He loves us for who we are."

* Talk About It

- Is it difficult to love others, especially those who are "unlikeable"?
- How do we know God loves us?
- What motivates you to love others?
- What are some ways we can love others as God does?
- How can God's love make a lasting impact on the world?

Parents: Share with your family members about an experience in which you made an effort to help or love someone whom you did not like. How did you feel? What did you do to make things right again? What did you learn from this experience?

* Prayer

Thank God for His love for us. Pray for a big heart to love and accept others who are different from us. Teach us the right way to treat others so that others get to experience God's grace too.

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Adapted by Joshua Wong/CEFC/June2022


BIBLE STORY VIDEO
<https://cefc.ch/22FD06W1>



MON
06

Living in Two Overlapping Ages

SCRIPTURE 1 Thessalonians 5:1-5

OBSERVATION

What is Paul's key emphasis in what he says to the Thessalonians in this text?

APPLICATION

What is my greatest concern with regards to the coming of the day of the Lord?

PRAYER

O Lord, You have said in Your Word that in the last days difficult times will come,³ and through many tribulations, Your people must enter the kingdom of God.⁴ But I hope in the coming of the day of the Lord when You will rule the whole cosmos totally. Now You are my refuge and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble.⁵ Help me to trust in You and not fear.



Prayer Pointers

- ◆ Give thanks and praise
- ◆ Pray for leaders
- ◆ Pray for significant people
- ◆ Pray for those in need
- ◆ Pray for self

DEEPER REFLECTION

THE COMING OF “THE DAY OF THE LORD” SHOULD NOT

“surprise” us “like a thief” (vv.2, 4), unlike the unbelievers, who while thinking that they are living in “peace and security”, “then sudden destruction will come upon them” and “they will not escape” (v.3).

However, if we believers are not watchful and alert, we **can be** caught off guard and be surprised. Jesus has solemnly warned against this with a discipleship challenge: “Who then is the faithful and wise servant...?” (Matt 24:45-51). Are you such a servant? We should not be caught surprised by Christ’s return, because we are “not in darkness” but “children of light”, “not of the night” but “children of the day” (vv.4, 5).

The Bible divides history into two “ages” (*aiōn*): “the present age” and “the age to come” (Matt 12:32; Eph 1:20-21), which are sometimes portrayed as “night” and “darkness”, and “day” and “light” respectively.⁶ The “present age was like a long dark night”⁷. But when Jesus began His messianic mission, “a light has dawned” and “the people dwelling in darkness have seen a great light” (Matt 4:13-16), and Christ “gave Himself for our sins so that He might deliver us from the present evil age” (Gal 1:4).

At present, the two ages overlap in the eschatological already-and-not-yet: “the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining” (1 Jn 2:8). But as “children of light” living in the two overlapping ages, we can easily and subtly “conform to this age”⁸ (Rom 12:2) and be consumed by “the worries of this age”⁹ (Matt 13:22).

³ 2 Timothy 3:1

⁴ Acts 14:22

⁵ Psalm 46:1-3

⁶ John R. W. Stott, *Thessalonians*, 111

⁷ John R. W. Stott, *Thessalonians*, 111

⁸ Greek: *aiōn*

⁹ Greek: *aiōn*

TUE
07

God Is Light in Darkness

SCRIPTURE 1 Thessalonians 5:4-5; 1 John 2:7-11; Isaiah 50:10

OBSERVATION

What significant observations can you make about walking in darkness in these texts?

APPPLICATION

What darkness am I walking in and how will I respond to it?

PRAYER

Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

Prayer Pointers

- ◆ Give thanks and praise
- ◆ Pray for pastors and staff: To see in darkness through the light of God
- ◆ Pray for significant people
- ◆ Pray for those in need
- ◆ Pray for self

DEEPER REFLECTION

WE SHOULD NOT BE CAUGHT SURPRISED BY THE DAY OF

the Lord because we are “children of light” (vv.4-5). Why are believers called “children of light”? “Light throughout the Old and New Testaments represents either an attribute of God (or Christ) or His revealing activity; sometimes the two notions merge.”¹⁰ So, we are “children of light” simply because we are children of God – and “God is light” (1 Jn 1:5), and followers of Jesus, who is “the light of the world” (Jn 8:12) that “shines in the darkness” and “enlightens everyone” (Jn 1:5, 9).

We may be “children of light”, but we can be walking in darkness, like when we fail to walk in love (1 Jn 2:9). When we walk in darkness, we do not know where we are going, because the darkness has blinded our eyes (1 Jn 2:11). A good reality check is to ask ourselves: Do I know where I am going?

In Scripture, darkness can be spiritual and moral darkness as well as adversity darkness. One who “fears the Lord and obeys His voice” can “walk in darkness and has no light” (Isa 50:10). When we are in such a discipleship situation, we are to “trust in the name of the Lord” – in who God is, even His character – and “rely on his God”. What God says represents who God is. To trust in God’s name is to trust in God’s Word. “God is light” and His Word is “a lamp shining in a dark place” “to which we do well to pay attention” (2 Pet 1:19).

¹⁰ G. K. Beale, 1-2 Thessalonians, *The IVP New Testament Commentary Series* (IVP Academic, 2003), 146

WED
08

Walking with “God Is Light” (1)

SCRIPTURE 1 John 1:1-7

OBSERVATION

What characterises walking with “God is light”?

APPPLICATION

What does it mean for me to walk with “God is light”?

PRAYER

Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

Prayer Pointers

- ◆ Give thanks and praise
- ◆ Pray for leaders
- ◆ Pray for significant people
- ◆ Pray for the Nations: That God will shine His light and remove spiritual blindness
- ◆ Pray for self

DEEPER REFLECTION

“GOD IS LIGHT” (v.5), AND SO, GOD’S CHILDREN WALK IN the light. Walking in the light means having “fellowship with God” (v.6) and “fellowship with one another” (v.7). And our fellowship with God and with one another are inseparably intertwined (v.3).

When we walk in the light there should be **absence of darkness** in us; otherwise incongruence, self-deception, self-contradiction, hypocrisy and defilement mark our lives. But still, when we walk in the light, there can be moments of the **presence of darkness** in us. This is implied in “the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin” as part of walking in the light (v.7). Walking in the light is a redemptive three-steps forward, two-steps back reality. We still fall into sin; but the light exposes our sins, and enables us to be sensitive to see them in us; and then we immediately bring them to God to seek His forgiveness and cleansing.

There is this subtle spiritual danger. What we say we are, is not what we really are in God’s eyes (cf. Prov 16:2). We can “**say** that we have fellowship with God” and “yet **walk** in darkness” (v.6). What we say about ourselves is what we think about ourselves. It is critically necessary that what we think about ourselves is honestly true. Then, we will think carefully before we speak and we consciously know exactly what we are saying. Otherwise, we “lie and do not practice the truth” (v.6). And the scariest thing is that we are unaware of that. We need humble, honest reality checks.

THU
09

Walking with “God Is Light” (2)

SCRIPTURE 1 John 1:5-10

OBSERVATION

What characterises walking with “God is light”?

APPPLICATION

What changes do I need to make in my life to walk with “God is light”?

PRAYER

Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

Prayer Pointers

- ◆ Give thanks and praise
- ◆ Pray for Outreach/Missions/New Life leaders: To be sensitive to sin and deal with it quickly
- ◆ Pray for significant people
- ◆ Pray for those in need
- ◆ Pray for self

DEEPER REFLECTION

WHEN WE WALK IN THE LIGHT, WE DO IN OUR WEAKNESS

stray into darkness. But the light will reveal to us our darkness to restore us to the light: “if we walk in the light...the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin” (v.7). When God **convicts** us of our sins, we feel guilty, but God’s intent is never to **condemn** us. When we feel guilty of our sins, we may feel condemned: it may be us condemning ourselves or “the accuser” (Rev 12:10), or other people condemning us. When God convicts us of our sins, His intent is to **cleanse** us. But when God convicts us of sins, we are not to **conceal** our sins by saying that “we have no sin” (v.8) or “we have not sinned” (v.10), but to **confess** our sins, so that God can forgive and cleanse us of our sins (v.9).

Our confession of sins and God’s forgiveness are anchored in “He is faithful and righteous” (v.9) – that is, “on the grounds of God’s character”¹¹. God is “faithful” to forgive because He has promised to do so, as in the new covenant, “I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more” (Jer 31:31, 34). God is “righteous” to forgive because His Son, as an “atoning sacrifice”, died for our sins (1 Jn 2:2). It means “God would be wrong to withhold forgiveness”¹². When God has forgiven and cleansed our sins, “its defiling effects no longer condemn us in the sight of God”¹³.

¹¹ I. Howard Marshall, *The Epistles of John, The New International Commentary on the new Testament* (Eerdmans, 1978), 113-14

¹² I. Howard Marshall, 114

¹³ I. Howard Marshall, 112

FRI
10

Spiritual Warfare and Christ's Return

SCRIPTURE 1 Thessalonians 5:4-8; Romans 13:11-14

OBSERVATION

What do these two texts tell us about spiritual warfare and Christ's Second Coming?

APPPLICATION

How do I perceive in practical terms spiritual warfare in relation to Christ's Second Coming?

PRAYER

Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

Prayer Pointers

- ◆ Give thanks and praise
- ◆ Pray for SGI leaders: To live life daily with the armour of light
- ◆ Pray for significant people
- ◆ Pray for those in need
- ◆ Pray for self

DEEPER REFLECTION

PAUL POINTS TO THE REALITY OF SPIRITUAL WARFARE IN

relation to Christ's Second Coming. For the Thessalonian believers, it is to "put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation" (v.8). They were "armed with the fundamental Christian virtues"¹⁴: "work of faith and labour of love and steadfastness of hope" (1 Thess 1:3). This is maturing in Christian character. For the Roman believers, it is to "put on the armour of light" (Rom 13:11), which is, "Let your armour be the Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom 13:14, NJB¹⁵). It is not "Christlikeness only that we are to assume, but Christ Himself, laying hold of Him, and living under Him as Lord"¹⁶.

Paul's use of the armour metaphor stems from the armour of the Divine Warrior in Isaiah 59:17. He uses the metaphor in identifying the various virtues that the specific pieces of the armour represent; and he "seems free to alter the metaphor; that is, one piece of armour does not consistently denote one and the same spiritual concept"¹⁷ (cf. Eph 6:13-17).

The end times spiritual battleground is described as "the evil day" (Eph 6:13), when "some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons" (1 Tim 4:1). It will be "difficult times", and the difficulties are not ecological, geopolitical or economic in nature, but spiritual and moral (2 Tim 3:1-9). So, we must be properly armed for this end times spiritual warfare with Christian character that is developed out of a growing relationship and fellowship with God.

¹⁴ Gene L. Green, *The Letters to the Thessalonians, The Pillar New Testament Commentary* (Apollos, 2002), 240

¹⁵ The New Jerusalem Bible

¹⁶ John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Romans, The Bible Speaks Today* (IVP, 1994), 353

¹⁷ Gary S. Shogren, *1 & 2 Thessalonians, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Zondervan, 2012), 209

SAT
11

Spiritually Sleeping and Spiritually Drunk

SCRIPTURE 1 Thessalonians 5:4-8; Ephesians 5:18; Revelation 3:1-2

OBSERVATION

What does it mean to be spiritually sleeping and spiritually drunk?

APPPLICATION

How can I guard against becoming spiritually sleeping and spiritually drunk?

PRAYER

Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

Prayer Pointers

- ◆ Give thanks and praise
- ◆ Pray for Church Board: To be kept from spiritual slumber and drunkenness
- ◆ Pray for significant people
- ◆ Pray for those in need
- ◆ Pray for self

DEEPER REFLECTION

IT IS BY PUTTING ON “THE BREASTPLATE OF FAITH AND

love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation” that we can “be sober” and “keep awake” as “children of light, children of the day” and not be surprised by Christ’s Second Coming (vv.4-8). To be “sober” (*nēphō*) has to do with the mind and behaviour. It means to be “well composed in mind; to be in control of one’s thought processes and thus not be in danger of irrational thinking”¹⁸, and “to behave with restraint and moderation, thus not permitting excess in passion, rashness or confusion”¹⁹. To “keep awake” (*grēgoreō*) means “to remain awake because of the need to continue to be alert and watchful, with eyes open, being able to see what is happening”²⁰.

But we believers can be spiritually drunk. “To be drunk spiritually is to imbibe too much of the world’s way of looking at things and not enough of the way God views reality. To be intoxicated with the world’s wine is to be numbed to feeling any fear in the present of a coming judgment.”²¹ It is “the overall numbing of one’s sensibilities to God”²². Paul elsewhere contrasts drunkenness with being filled with the Holy Spirit (Eph 5:18). When we are filled with the Holy Spirit, with “the Word of Christ dwelling in us richly” (Col 3:16), we will be enlightened to see the way God views reality. We can also be spiritually dead – “spiritually indifferent”²³. The danger in spiritual slumber is “you are alive, but you are dead”; and for this condition, Christ says to us, “Wake up!” (Rev 3:1-2).

¹⁸ Johannes P. Louw & Eugene A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains, Second Edition, Volume 1* (UBS, 1988, 1989), 30:25

¹⁹ Johannes P. Louw & Eugene A. Nida, 88:86

²⁰ Johannes P. Louw & Eugene A. Nida, 23:72

²¹ G. K. Beale, 147

²² Gary S. Shogren, 208

²³ Jeffrey A. D. Weima, 1-2 Thessalonians, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Baker Academic, 2014), 358

SUN
12

Sunday Journal

SCRIPTURE

OBSERVATION

APPLICATION

PRAYER

THE PAST WEEK

Reflect

- ◆ What is one key thing that God said to me this week in light of what has happened?

Respond

- ◆ What is one thing I need to do in light of what God is saying?
Commit in prayer.

THE PAST WEEK

Reflect

- ◆ What is one key thing that God said to me this week in light of what has happened?

Respond

- ◆ What is one thing I need to do in light of what God is saying?
Commit in prayer.

Family Devotional

Week 2

Make Waves:

What you do today can change the world around you.

Memory Verse

"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control."
- Galatians 5:22-23 (NIV)

* Bottom Line

Choose joy no matter what's going on.*

* Bible Story

Acts 5:17-42 - I've Got the Joy

* Activity

Happiness Versus Everlasting Joy

Props: Paper/drawing tools, e.g. crayons, colour pencils, markers

Provide each family member with a piece of paper. Ask everyone to draw a picture of something or an event that makes them happy. Invite everyone to share or describe what they drew.

Discuss: "When we get things that we like, it makes us happy. How long does this happiness last?"

Say, "Most of the time, joy comes from things that we can't 'touch', such as the joy of helping others, the joy we receive when God answers our prayers. They are in our hearts and memories forever. When joy is in our hearts, we can still be happy during bad times. It gives us the courage and confidence to do better. The apostles faced pain and suffering for sharing about Jesus. Yet, they were still joyful and continued to do God's work. God can give us joy."

* Talk About It

- How is joy different from happiness?
- When is it easy or difficult to have joy?
- What are some ways we can shift our focus to joy when we are having a hard time?
- How can our choice to have joy point others to Jesus?

Parents: Share with your family members about an experience in which you chose joy despite being in a difficult situation. What did you do to keep yourself motivated and happy? How did God reveal himself in this incident? What did you learn from this experience?

* Prayer

Thank God for keeping us joyful and resilient during tough times. Ask God to help us focus on Him and choose joy even when it is difficult to do so.

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Adapted by Joshua Wong/CEFC/June2022


BIBLE STORY VIDEO
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MON
13Total Picture of
God's Wrath (1)

SCRIPTURE 1 Thessalonians 5:1-9; Micah 7:18-19

OBSERVATION

What significant observations can you make about the wrath of God?

APPLICATION

How do I respond to the truth and reality of the wrath of God?

PRAYER

Indeed, O God, when the day of Your great wrath comes, who can stand?²⁴ But I give You thanks for the immeasurable riches of Your grace that You have lavished on me in Christ, that through His death I have redemption and forgiveness of my sins;²⁵ and thus, You have saved from Your own wrath. Help me not to come short of Your grace.²⁶

Prayer Pointers

- ◆ Give thanks and praise
- ◆ Pray for leaders
- ◆ Pray for significant people
- ◆ Pray for those in need
- ◆ Pray for self

DEEPER REFLECTION

SOME OF THE THESSALONIANS WERE “AFRAID” OF CHRIST’S

Second Coming, “because to them it spelled judgment; how could they be confident that it would bring them salvation instead?”²⁷ Paul addresses this fear. We need not fear when we are awake, alert, self-controlled and well-armed based on who we are – “children of light, children of the day” (vv.4-8). And of particular importance with regards to the Thessalonians’ fear is “the hope of salvation” (v.8). And the first truth that Paul underscores in “the hope of salvation” is “God has not destined us to wrath” (v.9).

What is the wrath of God? The wrath of God is “almost totally different from human anger. It does not mean that God loses His temper, flies into a rage, or is ever malicious, spiteful or vindictive”, but it is God “reacting in revulsion against sin. It is His deeply personal abhorrence of evil”²⁸. It is “His holy hostility to evil, His refusal to condone it or come to terms with it, His just judgment upon it.”²⁹

But it is of great importance that we understand and appreciate the heart of this God of wrath. We see much of God’s wrath in the Old Testament, especially the Prophets – mainly because of Israel’s persistent covenant unfaithfulness to God that called for it. God’s “anger is but **for a moment**, His favour is **for a lifetime**” (Psa 30:5). God “**does not retain** His anger **forever**, because He delights in unchanging love” and He “will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea” (Mic 7:18-19). God’s grace is greater than even His fiercest anger.

²⁴ Revelation 6:17

²⁵ Ephesians 1:7-8a

²⁶ Hebrews 12:15

²⁷ John R. W. Stott, Thessalonians, 113

²⁸ John R. W. Stott, Romans, 72

²⁹ John R. W. Stott, Romans, 72

TUE
14

Total Picture of God's Wrath (2)

SCRIPTURE 1 Thessalonians 5:9; Romans 3:21-25a; 5:8-9

OBSERVATION

How is humankind to be delivered from the wrath of God?

APPPLICATION

How do I respond to God's deliverance of me from His wrath?

PRAYER

Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

Prayer Pointers

- ◆ Give thanks and praise
- ◆ Pray for pastors and staff: To offer acceptable service to God who is a consuming fire³⁰
- ◆ Pray for significant people
- ◆ Pray for those in need
- ◆ Pray for self

DEEPER REFLECTION

IT IS NOT ARBITRARILY AS HE PLEASES THAT GOD “DOES not retain His anger forever” (Mic 7:18). It is the cross that makes this divine act possible.

God requires nothing short of total and perfect obedience from man whom He created. Thus, when Adam and Eve sinned just once, God’s judgment fell on them, which was death – separation from God (Gen 2:16-17). And all of humanity become sinners through Adam’s sin (Rom 5:17-19). Then God gave **the Law**, the Ten Commandments (Exo 20:1-17; cf. Rom 13:8-9), and God will judge humankind – both Jews and Gentiles – by the Law (Rom 2:11-16). God requires humankind to keep the Law totally and perfectly (cf. Jas 2:10-11), in order to get right with God – that is, **having the righteousness of God** – which is impossible. And “Cursed is everyone who does not abide by **all things** written in **the book of the Law**, to perform them” (Gal 3:10). Being under the divine curse is being under the wrath of God (Rom 1:18).

But God “made Him who knew no sin **to be sin** on our behalf, so that we might **become the righteousness of God in Him**” (2 Cor 5:21). And “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having **become a curse** for us” (Gal 3:13-14). The result is, “But now **apart from the Law** the righteousness of God has been manifested...**through faith in Jesus Christ** for all who believe” (Rom 3:21-25a), and “having been justified³¹ by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him” (Rom 5:8-9). This is the Gospel (Rom 1:16-18).

³⁰ Hebrews 12:28-29

³¹ Being “justified” (*dikaioō*) is theologically synonymous with “become the righteousness (*dikaïosunē*) of God in Him” (2 Cor 5:21).

WED
15

A Full Picture of Salvation (1)

SCRIPTURE 1 Thessalonians 5:8-9; 1 Peter 1:10-12

OBSERVATION

What significant observations can you make about salvation in these texts?

APPPLICATION

What do I understand and appreciate about my salvation in Christ that bears significance on my discipleship journey?

PRAYER

Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

Prayer Pointers

- ◆ Give thanks and praise
- ◆ Pray for leaders
- ◆ Pray for significant people
- ◆ Pray for the Nations: That God will visit the nations with His salvation
- ◆ Pray for self

DEEPER REFLECTION

IN ROMANS, PAUL PUTS AS ANTITHESIS “THE WRATH OF God is revealed” against fallen humankind (Rom 1:18) and “**the righteousness of God is revealed**” in “the gospel...the power of God for salvation” to everyone who believes in Christ (Rom 1:16-17). We **must** get right with God, because there is no escape from “the wrath of God”. But we **cannot** get right with God, because to get right with God, we must have “the righteousness of God”, which is an impossibility. However, we **can** get right with God through “the gospel” – “the **power of God** for salvation”, “the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ” (Rom 3:22-24a). The “salvation” through Christ that Paul speaks to the Thessalonians about is the eschatological salvation – “salvation” that remains as “hope” at the present (vv.8-9).

1 Peter 1:3-12 and 2:1-3 give us in broad outline a full picture of our salvation in Jesus Christ. Like Paul, Peter’s understanding of salvation is eschatological. The word “salvation” (*sōtēria*) occurs four times with significance in 1 Peter (1:5, 9, 10; 2:2). Peter looks at salvation from three points of salvation history: past, present and future.

The Past in Salvation History: The “prophets” in the Old Testament “prophesied” of “this salvation” (1 Pet 1:10). It is noteworthy that the pre-incarnate Christ was directive in this. It was “the Spirit of Christ within” the prophets who “predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow” (1 Pet 1:11). What followed was Christ disregarded “His equality with God” and “emptied Himself” downward to “death on a cross” (Phil 2:6-8). What glory of divine grace!

THU
16A Full Picture
of Salvation (2)

SCRIPTURE 1 Peter 1:3-12; 2:1-3

OBSERVATION

What significant observations can you make about salvation in these texts?

APPLICATION

What do I understand and appreciate about my salvation in Christ that bears significance on my discipleship journey?

PRAYER

Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

Prayer Pointers

- ◆ Give thanks and praise
- ◆ Pray for Outreach/Missions/New Life leaders: To grow into the full experience of salvation
- ◆ Pray for significant people
- ◆ Pray for those in need
- ◆ Pray for self

DEEPER REFLECTION

PETER LOOKS AT SALVATION FROM THREE POINTS OF

salvation history: past, present and future.

The Present in Salvation History: The “sufferings of Christ”

“predicted” by “the Spirit of Christ” points to our redemption through “the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot” (v.11, 1 Pet 1:18-19). Having been redeemed, what do we do from here? We are to “**grow up** in your salvation” (1 Pet 2:2, NIV) – to “grow into a full experience of salvation” (NLT). How are we to grow up in salvation? By the Word of God – “the pure milk of the word” (1 Pet 2:2, NASB). And for this we must have the appetite of “newborn babies”, and the attitude of “crave pure spiritual milk...Cry out for this nourishment” (1 Pet 2:2, NLT).

The Future in Salvation History: Twice in his doxology – praising God for His saving works (vv.3-12) – Peter speaks of “salvation” eschatologically: “for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (v.5) and “receive the outcome of your faith, your final salvation”³² (v.9). “In this” already-and-not-yet eschatological salvation, we will be “**distressed by various trials**” for the testing of our “faith” (vv.6-7). We are to view the duration of our “various trials” eschatologically – however long it may be: It is “for a little while” (v.6; 1 Pet 5:10). These eschatological trials are according to divine necessity: It is always “if necessary” (v.6). And our eschatological vision is: “to result in praise and glory and honour at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (v.7).

³² J. Ramsey Michaels, 1 Peter, *Word Biblical Commentary* (Word, 1988), 25

FRI
17

He Died, and We Live

SCRIPTURE 1 Thessalonians 5:9-10

OBSERVATION

What significant observations can you make about death and life in this text?

APPPLICATION

What does living with Christ mean for me?

PRAYER

Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

Prayer Pointers

- ◆ Give thanks and praise
- ◆ Pray for SGI leaders: To know experientially what it means to live with Christ
- ◆ Pray for significant people
- ◆ Pray for those in need
- ◆ Pray for self

DEEPER REFLECTION

GOD “HAS DESTINED” BELIEVERS “TO OBTAIN SALVATION through our Lord Jesus Christ” (v.9). Note the idea of **death** and **life** in this “salvation”: “Jesus Christ who **died** for us” – “on our behalf and for our benefit”³³ – “so that we might **live** with Him” (v.10). Christ’s death and our life are “deliberately contrasted and inseparably connected”³⁴. Christ **died** that we may **live**. Our life is “due entirely to Christ’s death”³⁵. If Christ did not die, we cannot live. So, Christ must die in order that we may live – as in “when we were **dead** in our trespasses” God “**made** us **alive** together with Christ” (Eph 2:5).

Christ died for us that “we might live **with** (*sun*) **Him**” (v.10). The preposition *sun* is “a marker of an associative relation, often involving joint participation in some activity”³⁶. “**With** (*sun*) **Christ**” is a grand hallmark in Paul’s theology and spirituality. He shows this in his favourite **Christological sun-** compound verbs used in his writing. Some examples: “I have been **crucified-with** (*su-stauroō*³⁷) Christ” (Gal 2:20); “we have been **buried-with** (*sun-thaptō*) Him through baptism” (Rom 6:4); “we have died with (*sun*) Christ...we shall also **live-with** (*su-zaō*³⁸) Christ” (Rom 6:8); “we **suffer-with** (*sum-paschō*) Him...we may also be **glorified-with** (*sun-doxazō*) Him” (Rom 8:17). This **sun Christ** theological reality is very deep in Paul’s discipleship.

The “we might live with Him” (v.10) will happen in our final salvation at Christ’s Second Coming. It means that the fullness of Christ’s life will be ours.³⁹ Are we now living **with Him**, or by ourselves and for ourselves, apart from Him (cf. Jn 15:5)?

³³ John R. W. Stott, Thessalonians, 113

³⁴ John R. W. Stott, Thessalonians, 113

³⁵ John R. W. Stott, Thessalonians, 113

³⁶ Johannes P. Louw & Eugene A. Nida, 89.107

³⁷ *su-stauroō* is *sun* + *stauroō*

³⁸ *su-zaō* is *sun* + *zaō*

³⁹ John R. W. Stott, Thessalonians, 114

SAT
18

Christian Fellowship in Eschatological Discipleship

SCRIPTURE 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

OBSERVATION

How do you understand verse 11 in the context of verses 1 to 11?

APPPLICATION

How do I relate theology and discipleship?

PRAYER

Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

Prayer Pointers

- ◆ Give thanks and praise
- ◆ Pray for Church Board: To grow in understanding and living out theology in discipleship
- ◆ Pray for significant people
- ◆ Pray for those in need
- ◆ Pray for self

DEEPER REFLECTION

FELLOWSHIP AMONG CHRISTIANS HAS BEEN FREQUENTLY

and unconsciously perceived and practised as a social entity. The test of true Christian fellowship is: Is it marked by one being encouraged and edified, and having encouraged and edified others?

Twice in 1 Thessalonians, Paul concludes his teaching on Christ's Second Coming with a call to action: "encourage one another" (1 Thess 4:18) and "encourage one another and build one another up" (v.11). Two important principles on theology are surfaced here. Proper understanding of theology is necessary, and theology is intended to be applied personally and in the Christian community – to benefit and enhance the spiritual life of one another.

We encourage one another "either by verbal or non-verbal means."⁴⁰ *Oikodomeo* – "build up" or "edify" – means "to increase the potential of someone or something, with focus upon the process involved – to strengthen, to make more able and to build up"⁴¹.

Encouraging and building up one another is to be a key aim and activity in Christian fellowship. It is critical to helping one another to "keep awake and be sober" and not fall into spiritual slumber and spiritual drunkenness, but walk and grow in "faith", "love" and "hope" (vv.6-8). The last days are "difficult times" (2 Tim 3:1) fraught with spiritual dangers, like being led astray by false teaching, falling away from the faith, increase in lawlessness and "the love of many will grow cold", that demand "endurance to the end" (Matt 24:10-13). So, the Word of God calls us to "encourage one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near" (Heb 10:25).

⁴⁰ Johannes P. Louw & Eugene A. Nida, 25:150

⁴¹ Johannes P. Louw & Eugene A. Nida, 74:15

SUN
19

Sunday Journal

SCRIPTURE

OBSERVATION

APPLICATION

PRAYER

THE PAST WEEK

Review

◆ What was my high point and my low point for the week?

◆ What gave me life and what drained me?

◆ How was the Spirit of God at work?

THE PAST WEEK

Reflect

- ◆ What is one key thing that God said to me this week in light of what has happened?

Respond

- ◆ What is one thing I need to do in light of what God is saying?
Commit in prayer.

Family Devotional

Week 3

Make Waves:

What you do today can change the world around you.

Memory Verse

"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control."
- Galatians 5:22-23 (NIV)

* Bottom Line

You can help others make peace.*

* Bible Story

1 Samuel 25:1-35 – Why Can't We Be Friends?

* Activity

Self-Control

Props: Six disposable cups, rubber bands and strings

Get your family members to sit in a circle. Ask everyone to take a cup each and loop a rubber band around it, then attach a string securely to the rubber band. While holding on to only the string, they should stack their cups on top of each other's, one at a time, to create a structure, for example, a pyramid or tower.


BIBLE STORY VIDEO
<https://cefc.ch/22FD06W3>



Say, "The game requires us to exercise self-control to build a structure. Peace can't be achieved alone, but it begins with us. When everyone chooses peace, we achieve more. To prevent a conflict from happening, Abigail brought David a gift before a tragedy happened just because of a misunderstanding. God wants us to be wise. We can ask God to give us the wisdom to act in the right way during a difficult situation."

* Talk About It

- Were you involved in a conflict?
- Was it a challenge to make peace with others? Why or why not?
- What are some ways we can take control of our reactions when there is a conflict?
- How does choosing peace help to tell or show others about our Christian faith?

Parents: Share with your family members about a conflict that you were involved in. Did you lose control? How did your reactions affect the people around you? What did you learn from this incident?

* Prayer

Thank God for His constant teaching and guidance. Pray for wisdom to handle every conflict with care and love.

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MON
20

The Work of Spiritual Leaders (1)

SCRIPTURE 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13; Colossians 1:28-29

OBSERVATION

What significant observations can you make about the idea of labouring or working hard in these two texts?

APPLICATION

What does it mean for me to labour in my service to God?

PRAYER

Lord, I thank You that it is only by Your grace that I can have the privilege of serving You, my God and King. Teach me to understand what it means to be Your servant doing the will of the Master. Help me to recognise that my ministry is the work of God, lest I seek empty self-glory. Help me to be faithful, steadfast and immovable in the Lord in my ministry.

Prayer Pointers

- ◆ Give thanks and praise
- ◆ Pray for leaders
- ◆ Pray for significant people
- ◆ Pray for those in need
- ◆ Pray for self

DEEPER REFLECTION

PAUL EXHORTS THE THESSALONIANS TO RELATE RIGHTLY

and properly with their church leaders (vv.12-13). Luke mentions two leaders from Thessalonica in Acts: Aristarchus and Secundus, who were Paul's travel companions (Acts 20:4). Aristarchus was with Paul in Ephesus (Acts 19:29) and on the dangerous sea journey to Rome (Acts 27:2), and as "Aristarchus my fellow prisoner" in Rome (Col 4:10). This shows that the Thessalonian church "had responsible leaders"⁴². We are not told, and so we do not know, why Paul gives the particular exhortation. "Probably some church members had been disrespectful towards their leaders", or "some leaders may have provoked this reaction by their heavy-handed or autocratic behaviour"⁴³.

One fundamental mark of spiritual leaders is, they "labour" or "work hard" (*kapiaō*) among God's people (v.12). (Side note: When you are discipling a younger believer, you are a spiritual leader and a shepherd doing pastoral work). True pastoral work is hard work. *Kapiaō* "normally refers to manual occupations", and means to "toil, strive, struggle and to grow weary in doing so"⁴⁴. It is "to engage in hard work, implying difficulties and troubles"⁴⁵. It "conjures up pictures of rippling muscles and pouring sweat"⁴⁶.

Scripture talks about spiritual leaders "who labour (*kapiaō*) in preaching and teaching" the Word of God (1 Tim 5:17). This presupposes labouring in studying the Scriptures, not just merely for ministry, but personal growth (cf. Ezr 7:10), so that God's Word is ministered out of a running stream. Christian ministry that aims to grow people to maturity in Christ requires "toiling (*kapiaō*) and struggling" with God's "power mightily working within me" (Col 1:28-29).

⁴² John R. W. Stott, Thessalonians, 119

⁴³ John R. W. Stott, Thessalonians, 119

⁴⁴ John R. W. Stott, Thessalonians, 119

⁴⁵ Johannes P. Louw & Eugene A. Nida, 42.47

⁴⁶ John R. W. Stott, Thessalonians, 119

TUE
21

The Work of Spiritual Leaders (2)

SCRIPTURE 1 Thessalonians 5:12

OBSERVATION

What significant observations can you make about the work of spiritual leaders in this text?

APPPLICATION

What changes do I need to make as a leader at home, in my workplace or ministry?

PRAYER

Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

Prayer Pointers

- ◆ Give thanks and praise
- ◆ Pray for pastors and staff: To work hard by God's all-sufficient grace in leadership
- ◆ Pray for significant people
- ◆ Pray for those in need
- ◆ Pray for self

DEEPER REFLECTION

CONCERNING SPIRITUAL LEADERS, JESUS HAS MADE IT

absolutely plain that “the **very first thing** which needs to be said about Christian ministers of all kinds” is that they are “**‘under’** people (as their servants) rather than **‘over’** them (as their leaders, let alone their lords)”⁴⁷ (Mk 10:42-45). They are to be servant-leaders. In God's kingdom, the first are last, leaders are servants and chiefs are slaves. Jesus insists that the chief characteristic of Christian leaders is “humility, not authority, and gentleness, not power”⁴⁸ – as He says about Himself, “I am gentle and humble in heart” (Matt 11:29). Nevertheless, biblically, authentic servant-leadership still carries an element of authority: Spiritual leaders are **“over”** (*proistēmi*) the people of God (v.12).

Proistēmi means “to so influence others as to cause them to follow a recommended course of action – to guide, to direct and to lead”⁴⁹.

Leadership is influence. *Proistēmi* was applied to superintendents, village heads, landlords and guardians of children, with the notions of “leading” and “caring” combined together.⁵⁰ Paul had set the example. While having the God-given apostolic authority, he was a servant to the Thessalonians by working to earn his own living instead of burdening them, and he was like a gentle nursing mother and caring father to them (1 Thess 2:6-9, 11-12).

Christian leaders are to “admonish” (*noutheteō*) their sheep (v.12). *Noutheteō* means “to warn against bad behaviour and its consequences,”⁵¹ with the aim of “both enlightening and warning the ignorant about potential problems ahead and rebuking those already entangled in wrongdoing”⁵². However, admonishing “does not connote a harsh ministry”⁵³.

⁴⁷ John R. W. Stott, Thessalonians, 120 – **emphasis mine**

⁴⁸ John R. W. Stott, Thessalonians, 120

⁴⁹ Johannes P. Louw & Eugene A. Nida, 36.1

⁵⁰ John R. W. Stott, Thessalonians, 120

⁵¹ John R. W. Stott, Thessalonians, 120

⁵² G. K. Beale, 161

⁵³ John R. W. Stott, Thessalonians, 121

WED
22

The Marks of Spiritual Followership

SCRIPTURE 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13; Hebrews 13:7

OBSERVATION

What significant observations can you make about leaders and followers in these two texts?

APPPLICATION

How do I relate with my church leaders?

PRAYER

Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

Prayer Pointers

- ◆ Give thanks and praise
- ◆ Pray for leaders
- ◆ Pray for significant people
- ◆ Pray for the Nations: That God will mercifully deliver nations from self-serving government
- ◆ Pray for self

DEEPER REFLECTION

A CHRISTIAN LEADER MAY LEAD AT TWO LEVELS. HE OR SHE

leads by **influence**. Influence is the capacity to have a developmental effect on people to bring about change in their belief, opinion, behaviour or character. In Scripture, such leaders “speak the Word of God” and live their lives in Christ such that God’s people “consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith” (Heb 13:7). A leader may lead through **infrastructure** – being appointed to a leadership position. In leadership, influence is greater than infrastructure. There can be influence without leading through an infrastructure, but leading through an infrastructure may not have influence. A critical test of leadership is: Is there **followership**?

A leader has the God-given responsibility to lead and people who are under their leaders have their God-given responsibility to follow. It can be challenging to follow a leader who is difficult to follow. Probably this was happening in the Thessalonian church.⁵⁴ We are to “esteem” (to think of, to consider⁵⁵) our leaders “most exceedingly” (v.13) – to “hold them in the highest regard” (NIV). But this ought not to be done to flatter or praise a leader too much and give him or her a lot of attention that is not sincere, but for personal gain. The key lies in “love”: The “highest regard” is given and received “in love”. Love restrains and removes wrong motives and negative attitudes. Leaders are humans who can stumble (cf. Jas 3:1-2), but we can still think positively of them with affirmation, appreciation, encouragement and prayer support for “their work”. Good leader-follower relationships help a great deal in this.

⁵⁴ John R. W. Stott, *Thessalonians*, 119

⁵⁵ Gene L. Green, 250

THU
23Helping One Another
to Grow (1)

SCRIPTURE 1 Thessalonians 5:12-14

OBSERVATION

What observations can you make about admonishing in verse 12 and verse 14?

APPLICATION

When and how should I go about admonishing a fellow believer?

PRAYER

Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

Prayer Pointers

- ◆ Give thanks and praise
- ◆ Pray for Outreach/Missions/New Life leaders: To admonish spiritual sluggards lovingly with humble boldness
- ◆ Pray for significant people
- ◆ Pray for those in need
- ◆ Pray for self

DEEPER REFLECTION

AT ALL TIMES IN THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST – UNTIL

Christ “appears and we shall be like Him” (1 Jn 3:2) – there will be all kinds of people, who are at different points in their own faith journey and stations in life, with different levels of commitment to God, uncommitted or not as committed as they should be, and at different levels of spiritual maturity.

The Thessalonian church was a growing and glowing church marked by active faith, laborious love and steadfast hope, imitating the Lord in suffering, and making regional impact with the Gospel (1 Thess 1:3-8). Paul was proud of this church with constant thanksgiving to God (1 Thess 1:2; 2:13, 19). But Paul was not so drawn to and caught up with this church’s “gospel-success” that he failed to be sensitive and aware of “the idle”, “the fainthearted” and “the weak” (v.14) in this church. And he exhorts the church to give particular attention to these people – people who can be easily overlooked, ignored and neglected. There are broken wings in the church. Some are crisis broken wings, who are just temporarily grounded by adverse circumstances, but will soon be able to fly again. Others are chronic broken wings with deep issues in their lives that require more time and effort to help.

Those who are “idle” – who are unwilling and not unable to work (2 Thess 3:10) – must be admonished.⁵⁶ We can apply by extension this idleness to spiritual idleness. A vineyard with the potential of producing grapes can become “all overgrown with thorns” because of idleness (Prov 24:30-31).

⁵⁶ See 21 June Deeper Reflection for comments on “admonish”.

FRI
24

Helping One Another to Grow (2)

SCRIPTURE 1 Thessalonians 5:12-14

OBSERVATION

What should characterise a church according to Paul?

APPPLICATION

How do I relate with problematic members in the Christian community?

PRAYER

Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

Prayer Pointers

- ◆ Give thanks and praise
- ◆ Pray for SGI leaders: To sensitively and wisely help the weak believers
- ◆ Pray for significant people
- ◆ Pray for those in need
- ◆ Pray for self

DEEPER REFLECTION

ONE OF THE CHURCH LEADERS' RESPONSIBILITIES IS TO

“admonish” their erring sheep (v.12). But the rank-and-file members of the church are also to “admonish” fellow believers when it is needed, which in the case of the Thessalonians were the “idle” or “unruly” – the delinquent, disorderly and disruptive people⁵⁷ (v.14). It is clear here that pastoral responsibility does not belong to church leaders alone, but that church members are to share a mutual responsibility to help one another for building up in the faith (cf. Eph 4:16). This shared mutual pastoral responsibility is best fulfilled in a small group setting, where members know and understand one another better.

In building up one another to mature in Christ, we need to wisely discern and lovingly give the type of help that corresponds to the particular needs of each person: “admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted and help the weak” (v.14). Observing carefully and listening attentively to one another is essential, so that we may give wisely “an apt answer” and “a timely word” (Prov 15:23). But let us not find ourselves admonishing the weak and fainthearted, and encouraging and helping the undisciplined.

The “fainthearted” (*oligopsychos* – literally, “the small of soul”⁵⁸) are those who in suffering adversity (see 1 Thess 1:6; 2:14-15; 3:2-4) are discouraged with “a lack of patience, endurance or confidence”⁵⁹, and in danger of losing heart and giving up.⁶⁰ The “weak” – which could be synonymous with the “fainthearted” – includes “the morally, psychologically or spiritually weak”⁶¹. Many in the church are going through pain in diverse ways and intensity. Thus, mutual encouragement is of great help.

⁵⁷ G. K. Beale, 164

⁵⁸ G. K. Beale, 165

⁵⁹ G. K. Beale, 165

⁶⁰ Gene L. Green, 253

⁶¹ G. K. Beale, 165

SAT
25The “Peace and
Patience” Frame

SCRIPTURE 1 Thessalonians 5:13c-14

OBSERVATION

What is the significance of Paul framing his exhortation with “be at peace” and “be patient”?

APPPLICATION

What does it mean for me to be at peace and be patient with people in the Christian community?

PRAYER

Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

Prayer Pointers

- ◆ Give thanks and praise
- ◆ Pray for Church Board: To lead the church together in peace and with patience
- ◆ Pray for significant people
- ◆ Pray for those in need
- ◆ Pray for self

DEEPER REFLECTION

PAUL IS SPEAKING TO BELIEVERS IN HIS EXHORTATION,

See that no one repays anyone evil for evil” (1 Thess 5:15). These words point to a hard reality and a great temptation in the Christian community. The hard reality is, Christians do hurt one another, intentionally or unintentionally, by words, acts or attitudes. The great temptation is when we are offended and badly hurt, we hold a grudge until we are able to pay back the one who hurt us. Thus, Paul is particularly emphatic: “See that” – “Make sure that this does not happen!”

We prevent the negative by practising the positive: “always seek to do good to one another and to everyone” (1 Thess 5:15). The action called for in “do good” is **“seek”**. “Seek” speaks of conscious intentionality, proactiveness and effort. It takes a **good heart** to have this “seek to do good”. It is a matter of the heart: “The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good” (Lk 6:45). And this seeking to do good is **“always”** there in the good heart. Along with this is the readiness to forgive those who hurt us. The foundation and starting point of forgiveness is “as God in Christ forgave you” (Eph 4:32).

“Be at **peace** among yourselves” and “be **patient** with them all” frame the constructive actions toward the “idle”, “weak” and “fainthearted”, and those who hurt us (vv.13c-14). “We have no excuse for becoming impatient” with such problematic people “on the grounds that they are difficult, demanding, disappointing, argumentative or rude”⁶². “Love is patient” (1 Cor 13:4). And peace and patience go hand in hand.

⁶² John R. W. Stott, Thessalonians, 122

SUN
26

Sunday Journal

SCRIPTURE

OBSERVATION

APPLICATION

PRAYER

THE PAST WEEK

Review

◆ What was my high point and my low point for the week?

◆ What gave me life and what drained me?

◆ How was the Spirit of God at work?

THE PAST WEEK

Reflect

- ◆ What is one key thing that God said to me this week in light of what has happened?

Respond

- ◆ What is one thing I need to do in light of what God is saying?
Commit in prayer.

Family Devotional

Week 4

Make Waves:

What you do today can change
the world around you.

Memory Verse

"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace,
forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,
gentleness and self-control."
- Galatians 5:22-23 (NIV)

❖ Bottom Line

Be patient with each other.*

❖ Bible Story

Proverbs 15:18 - Let It Go

❖ Activity

What Does Patience Look Like?

Props: Scenario Cards

BIBLE STORY VIDEO
<https://cefc.ch/22FD06W4>



Get each family member to pick a card (the cards can be duplicated). Ask everyone to share what they would do to show patience in these scenarios.

Card 1	Card 2	Card 3	Card 4
A teacher asked you to guide a friend in his maths work. Despite you explaining, he still could not do it.	During a project discussion, a friend refused to cooperate and things were not done.	You went to buy food. The staff took a long time to prepare it and you were in a hurry.	You have been praying to God but there is no answer.

Say, "Patience is not the ability to wait, but the ability to keep a good attitude while waiting. We can choose to get angry, but how does that help us and others? Often, we do things that make it worse and cause others to fall when we lose our patience. God wants us to practise patience because it brings goodness to us and others.

❖ Talk About It

- What situations make you lose your patience?
- Who do you have the least patience with? Why?
- Why is it important to be patient with each other?
- How can we prevent ourselves from getting impatient?

Parents: Share with your family members about a time when you lost your patience. How did it make you or others feel? What did you do? What happened in the end?

❖ Prayer

Thank God for being patient with us even when we do not deserve it. Pray that He will help us show the same patience towards others, so that more people will experience God's love.



MON
27

The God of Our Work

SCRIPTURE Genesis 2:1-15

OBSERVATION

How did work originate?

APPLICATION

In what ways does my work take reference from God the Creator?

PRAYER

Dear God, I praise You for Your work in creation. There is order and beauty in what You have created, and You intended it for the blessing of humankind. You let us be Your co-workers and intended work to be meaningful and enjoyable for us. Thank You for Your goodness and love towards us. O Lord, please help me to worship You through my work and bring You glory. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Prayer Pointers

- ◆ Give thanks and praise
- ◆ Pray for leaders
- ◆ Pray for significant people
- ◆ Pray for those in need
- ◆ Pray for self

DEEPER REFLECTION

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE CHRIST-FOLLOWERS IN THE

marketplace? What does marketplace discipleship look like? Over these two weeks, we will be reflecting on these questions and asking the Holy Spirit to empower us to be faithful worshippers of God wherever we may work, from Mondays to Saturdays.

Today we see from verses 1 to 15 that God is the first worker. He created the heavens and the earth. Then He rested from His work in creation. Creation needs to be cared for, just like a garden needs to be tended. God created man and gave him the privilege and dignity to be a worker like Him. Thus, humankind became God's co-worker – indeed, a co-ruler of God's creation,⁶³ under God's authority. All this was prior to the Fall of Man (Gen 3) and the effects of man's sin of rebellion and disobedience on the work that he was to do. After the Fall, the responsibility of work did not cease for humankind, but the quality of their work experience deteriorated badly. Notwithstanding all that, the theological principle remains. God is the originator of work. He has given us the responsibility of work. Work is a privilege and confers dignity on the worker. And the more our work aligns with God's purposes in creation and redemption (post-Fall), the more we will find joy and fulfilment in our work in this present life. As God's people, Christians are to offer our work as worship to God, in that through our work we seek always to please Him, delight His heart and glorify His name. Is that how you view your work?

⁶³ Genesis 1:26-28.

TUE
28

The Lord Is Our Ultimate Boss

SCRIPTURE Colossians 3:22-24

OBSERVATION

What do these verses teach us about the Christian perspective on our workplace relationships with our earthly bosses?

APPPLICATION

What does it mean for me in my particular vocation to “work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men” (v.23)?

PRAYER

Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

Prayer Pointers

- ◆ Give thanks and praise
- ◆ Pray for pastors and staff: To do their work with all their hearts as the Lord's servants who work for Him, not for men
- ◆ Pray for significant people
- ◆ Pray for those in need
- ◆ Pray for self

DEEPER REFLECTION

FOR CHRISTIAN WORKERS, OUR DAILY WORK – IN ALL

their varied forms (“**whatever you do**”, v.23) – is the main way by which we worship God during the workweek. The Apostle Paul commands Christians to “**work heartily⁶⁴, as for the Lord and not for men**” (v.23). By our attitudes and conduct in the workplace, we are to evidence the Lordship of Christ over our lives and reflect the greatness and goodness of God in our lives.⁶⁵ Do you work with all your heart as for the Lord? Are you joyful and rested at work amid hectic schedules and heavy workloads? Does your behaviour show that your life is in God's sovereign and loving hands and that He is fully in control? Do you do your best and leave the rest to God, trusting Him to provide, guide and watch over you? Are you honest, responsible and excellent in your work, thereby bringing glory to God?

Christian workers are to obey their earthly bosses out of a reverent awe of God (“**fearing the Lord**”, v.22). So long as our bosses' requirements or instructions do not contravene God's laws, we should do the work to the best of our abilities, yet with due regard to our human limitations⁶⁶. We must not be working overtime all the time; proper boundaries must be drawn.⁶⁷ We want to worship God through our work, and not to worship our work as a false god (idolatry). **We serve the Lord Jesus Christ, our ultimate Boss** (v.24). To Him we must one day give a full account of our work and all our choices made regarding it.

⁶⁴ NIV: “with all your heart”. Literally in Greek, “work from the soul”.

⁶⁵ “And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him (Col 3:17).”

⁶⁶ Let us remember that we are not machines and need adequate rest in order to exercise faithful stewardship of our bodies, and that apart from our work we also have responsibilities to family and friends.

⁶⁷ God Himself rested on the seventh day (Gen 2:2) and gave us the Sabbath pattern and principle for our benefit (Mk 2:27).

WED
29

We Are the Lord's Servants

SCRIPTURE Luke 1:26-38; Acts 5:12-29

OBSERVATION

What are the implications of being the Lord's servant?

APPLICATION

How will I respond if and when God tells me to do something that entails risking my desired future or personal freedom?

PRAYER

Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

Prayer Pointers

- ◆ Give thanks and praise
- ◆ Pray for leaders
- ◆ Pray for significant people
- ◆ Pray for the Nations: That the nations will worship the Lord alone and rejoice in Him always
- ◆ Pray for self

DEEPER REFLECTION

YOUNG MARY IS SUCH AN INSPIRATION AND EXAMPLE TO

all Christians. Even though she did not fully understand what was happening and could not clearly see what will happen, she submitted to the Lord's will. Even though her dreams could be shattered and her desired future lost, she submitted to the Lord's will. Even though she would probably face people's contempt and social rejection, she obeyed the Lord's will for her life. "Behold, **I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word**" (v.38). That is what it means for us to be the Lord's servants.

As the Lord's servants in the marketplace, we will certainly face situations where our Christian beliefs and values come into direct conflict with human philosophies and worldly values. Like Peter and the apostles, we are to take a firm stand and say, "**We must obey God rather than men**" (Acts 5:29). Many contemporary disciples of Christ have testified that though they suffered setbacks for taking a Christian stand on issues of morality and ethics in the workplace, God has been faithful to supply them His peace, support and provision. Often, the Lord also subsequently made clear His vindication of the disciple's choice to honour God and His Word. But even though we may well lose out in the present whatever earthly rewards that are denied, withheld or taken from us, it is really alright ultimately. Because we will one day certainly receive from our Lord Jesus Christ the promised inheritance of the children of God, which will be a reward far beyond all earthly comparison.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ Colossians 3:24.

THU
30To Glorify God in the
Marketplace

SCRIPTURE John 8:12-29; 17:1-8

OBSERVATION

What did Jesus mean when He said, "I always do the things that are pleasing to Him" (v.29)?

APPLICATION

What must I do now so that at the end of my present life I can also say (like Jesus) to the Father, "I glorified You on earth, having accomplished the work that You gave me to do" (Jn 17:4)?

PRAYER

Write a prayer to God as your response from your meditation on and application of the Scriptures.

Prayer Pointers

- ◆ Give thanks and praise
- ◆ Pray for Outreach/Missions/New Life leaders: To always seek to please and glorify God in their life and ministry
- ◆ Pray for significant people
- ◆ Pray for those in need
- ◆ Pray for self

DEEPER REFLECTION

THE LORD JESUS HAD A CLEAR PURPOSE IN HIS LIFE AND

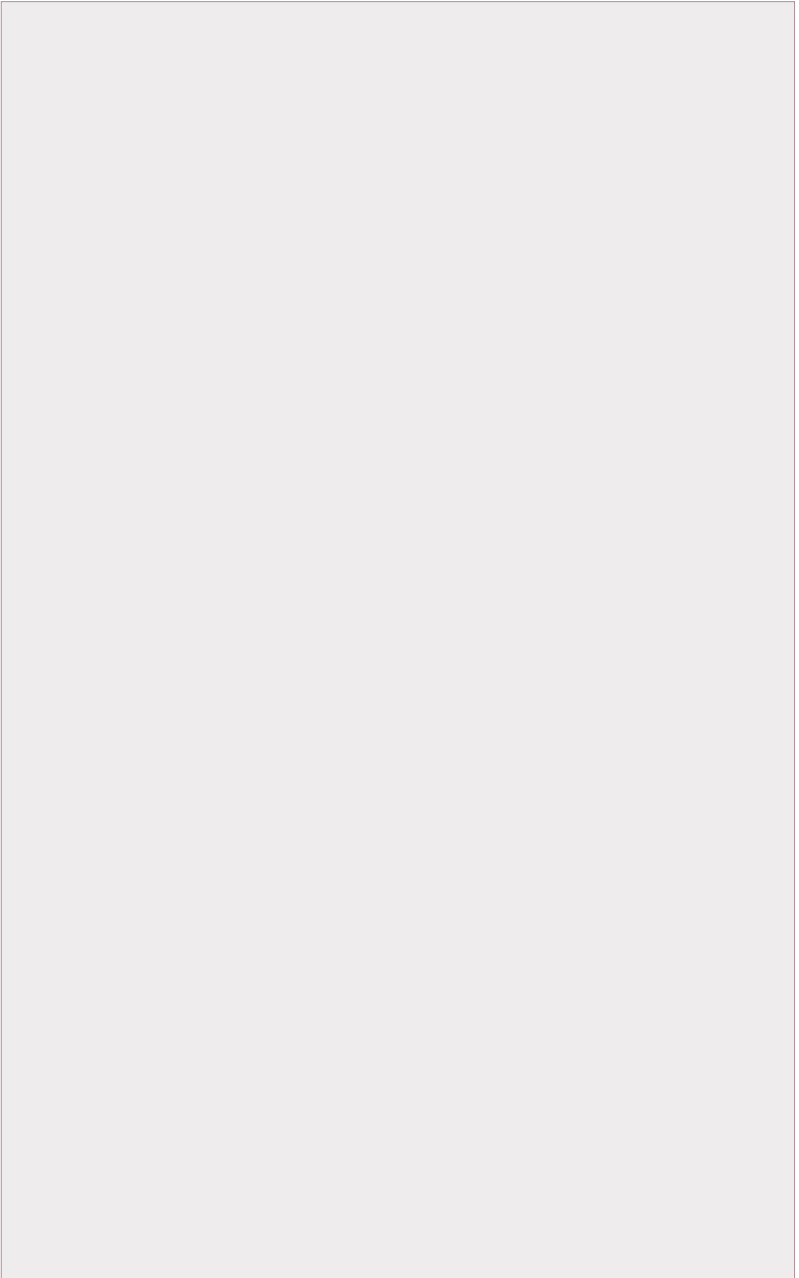
ministry while on earth. It was to do the Father's will and accomplish the mission that the Father had given Him. Jesus had a singular focus on, and an unwavering commitment to, His mission. Jesus told people that He was the light of the world – the only way to salvation and eternal life (vv.12, 23-24). He revealed the Father to the people (v.19). He spoke what the Father wanted Him to tell the people (vv.26-28). By keeping mission clear, mission focused and mission true, Jesus brought glory to His Father (Jn 17:1-4). How can we do likewise in our life and ministry as disciples of Jesus Christ?

The word “ministry” comes from the Greek word *diakonia*⁶⁹, which can also be translated as “service”. Our work in the marketplace is our service to God and to the people whom our work touches. Our work and the interactions with people that it entails are therefore rightly to be considered our marketplace ministry. Christians are during the workweek primarily marketplace ministers, or God's servants in the marketplace. In all that we do and say, we represent God and serve God. In our interactions with people, we are to (just like Jesus) tell them the Father's plan of salvation in the Son, reveal the Father and speak the words that the Father wants us to tell them. If we do none of these in the marketplace, we are not mission clear, mission focused and mission true. For Jesus sent His disciples to continue His mission until He returns (Jn 20:21).

⁶⁹ For example, Ephesians 4:12.

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