

LIGHTHOUSE GROUP CURRICULUM

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

LEADER'S STUDY

Living in the Sonlight

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

What is happening?

Paul wraps up his first letter to the church at Thessalonica with a reminder of Christ's return, which will come at a time when we least expect it. In the meantime, while we wait, Jesus expects His people to continue His work and reflect His character. Paul compares it to walking in the daylight as opposed to the night. During the day, people work and act openly. At night, people are either sleeping—or else getting into mischief—except for those who must work during those hours. In Paul's analogy, that should be us! As representatives of Jesus, the Light of the World, our “night shift” job is to shine His light in the darkness. That means living as if it were already light and bringing the light of Christ's truth to those who are living in darkness. We're to watch for His coming while doing the work He's commissioned us to do.

Where is the gospel?

Paul reminds us of what it's all about in vv. 9-10: we “obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us so that... we might live with him.” Because He has paid the penalty for our sin with His own righteous blood, we don't have to fear God's judgment, but can look forward to spending eternity with Him. We will never be condemned (Romans 8:1); we need not fear death (Romans 8:2); and we can never be separated from Him (Romans 8:31-39). When we are in Christ, we're free to walk with Him in His unconditional love, His unshakeable peace, His generous mercy, and His abiding joy—not only in the here and now, but better yet, throughout eternity.

But what if you don't know this freedom? Don't despair! Jesus will welcome *anyone* who comes to Him in repentance and faith. We shouldn't even consider trying to be good enough to please Him, because there's no way anyone can. All we need to do is throw ourselves upon His mercy, trusting Him to redeem us from the death sentence our sin has earned for us, and say “Yes” to Him forever after. He will never call us to do anything He doesn't also enable and empower us to do (Matthew 11:28-30).

As you prepare for this week, ask yourself questions like these: If I'm already secure in Christ and don't have to fear condemnation, does it really matter how I live? Is it ever too late for anyone to come to Christ in repentance? How can I comfort others with this truth? How is God calling me to think and to live differently? How does this change my perspective today? How is God calling me to respond based on this scripture?

Spend some time reading and meditating on these truths as you prepare for your meeting. Be willing to share this with your group and invite them to join you in sharing how God is asking them to respond to His word. Be willing to share areas that He is calling you to “follow Him” and make clear “I” statements about how you are going to align with Him.

Some helpful scriptures: Mark 13:32-37; Luke 21:33-36; Romans 13:11-14; 14:7-12; 1 Peter 1:13-16; 1 John 2:8-11.. What other places in scripture speak this same truth?

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INTENTIONAL BIBLE READING

READ 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11
and meditate on it.

Read in the ESV or similar word-for-word
translation.

Read it again in the NLT to get a thought-
for-thought perspective. (The New Living
Translation is particularly helpful with this
passage)

Try to summarize the passage in your
own words.

**Every verse of scripture points to the
gospel. Look for how this passage
points to Jesus and what He has done.**

POTENTIAL STUDY QUESTIONS

These are just questions you might ask to help your
group discussion. Don't feel like you need to answer
all of these as a group

**What is significant, surprising or
confusing from these verses?**

**What seems to be the main point of
this letter?**

**How does this portion of scripture
point to Jesus and the gospel?**

**What parts of this passage are
challenging to your current way of
thinking?**

**What did you discover or learn about
God and His character from this
passage?**

**What parts of this passage can you
relate to?**

**Look at one or two key words and
define them really clearly, then look at
them in context with that definition.
Does this change your understanding?**

**Why did God bring me to this scripture
today?**

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

**How is God calling you to obey, based
on this passage?**

or

What is your "I will" statement?

(Encourage everyone to steer clear of
"we" or "us" or "Christians" statements)

**With whom are you going to share
what you have learned?**

(This is a critical part of growth that is
often overlooked. If we can share it with
someone else it means we really
understand it, it cements it in our own
minds, it makes us accountable to the
truth and it blesses the one who hears it.
Rom 10:17)

**Based on this passage, what can we
pray about and how should we pray?**