



# Life Guide

applying God's Word to life

**December 1, 2025: First Sunday of Advent**  
**Preparing for a Real Christmas:**  
**Prepared to Stand without Fear before the Son**

*Luke 21:25-26*

<sup>25</sup>“There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. <sup>26</sup>People will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken. <sup>27</sup>At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. <sup>28</sup>When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”

<sup>29</sup>He told them this parable: “Look at the fig tree and all the trees. <sup>30</sup>When they sprout leaves, you can see for yourselves and know that summer is near. <sup>31</sup>Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that the kingdom of God is near.

<sup>32</sup>“Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. <sup>33</sup>Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

<sup>34</sup>“Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you suddenly like a trap. <sup>35</sup>For it will come on all those who live on the face of the whole earth. <sup>36</sup>Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man.”

1. Can you remember a time where you were fearing and fretting about the consequences of your actions? What prompted your fear? How did it turn out?

2. The fear of judgment and being held accountable is part of the natural knowledge of God that everyone has. How does this present an opportunity for you to witness in your relationships?
3. Jesus says that Judgment Day can come at any moment like a thief in the night. Why is it so easy to think we have plenty of time to repent before we die or face Judgment Day? How does this text inspire urgency?
4. How do sins like drunkenness or getting fixated on the anxieties of life make us even more prone to not being ready when the trap springs?
5. How can we make confession and absolution a more regular and meaningful part of our lives?
6. Jesus tells his disciples not to bend in fear but to stand and lift up their heads when Judgment Day comes. What preparation needs to have happened to be able to do that without fear?
7. The “Great Exchange” is one of the simplest outlines for a law/gospel conversation with someone. Use 2 Corinthians 5:21, “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” to articulate the exchange that makes us confident for Judgment Day.
8. When Jesus returns, he is bringing redemption and salvation for believers. How does this change our living now?



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1. Can you remember a time where you were fearing and fretting about the consequences of your actions? What prompted your fear? How did it turn out?

I shared the story of the broken lamp in the sermon, agonizing for when my Dad was going to get home. But that one is sort of trivial in the grand scheme of life. Getting called to the principal's office, calling my parents to tell them about speeding tickets, confessing sins to a spouse. The guilt of our sins is what fills us with fear. There will be consequences we can't avoid. Hopefully we have also experienced forgiveness in those situations.

2. The fear of judgment and being held accountable is part of the natural knowledge of God that everyone has. How does this present an opportunity for you to witness in your relationships?

No matter how much people may appear to be happy or carefree or unconcerned about judgment/punishment, the Bible tells us about an unescapable reality that our conscience bears witness against us in the form of guilt. A person's conscience can be dulled and silenced, but hardly even can a person silence their nagging guilt completely. Many people may be longing to talk about this fear with a trusted friend. Christian friend, you have answers that they need!

3. Jesus says that Judgment Day can come at any moment like a thief in the night. Why is it so easy to think we have plenty of time to repent before we die or face Judgment Day? How does this text inspire urgency?

Because Judgement Day seems to be long in coming, about 2000 years since Jesus' words, we can easily be lulled into thinking that it's not going to come during our lifetime. We can think, "I've got my whole life to repent." But death or Judgment Day can happen at any moment, especially when we see some of the signs taking place—wars, disasters, the love of most growing cold, etc. Right now is your time of grace, and you have no guarantee of anymore time than this instant.

4. How do sins like drunkenness or getting fixated on the anxieties of life make us even more prone to not being ready when the trap springs?

Staying out late partying and getting drunk obviously has ill effects on us the next day- a hangover, headaches and tiredness. To live our life like that puts us into a stupor that makes us likely to be asleep and unaware spiritually when the day of Judgement springs like a trap. The worries and pleasures of life can also distract us. "I've got to make enough money for all my house, car etc. payments, and church becomes an afterthought.

5. How can we make confession and absolution a more regular and meaningful part of our lives?

In worship, confession and absolution is a weekly thing where we confess all of our sins before God. This time can become mindless rote and ritual, or we can miss this time completely. Also, we can let church confession and absolution become a substitute for confessing to each other, especially the one that we've sinned against. Prioritizing law gospel conversations between husband and wife, parents and children, and Christian friends is an important part of being ready for the Last Day.

6. Jesus tells his disciples not to bend in fear but to stand and lift up their heads when Judgment Day comes. What preparation needs to have happened to be able to do that without fear?

The preparation that Jesus accomplishes in our hearts during his first coming is what prepares us to stand before him without fear at his second coming. He shared our flesh and blood to destroy the devil's work and free us from the fear of death. The Spirit's preparation of repentance and trust in Christ as our righteousness is the only thing that can make us confident for Judgment Day. Knowing that he is our substitute and advocate makes us unafraid to face him as our judge.

7. The "Great Exchange" is one of the simplest outlines for a law/gospel conversation with someone. Use 2 Corinthians 5:21, "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" to articulate the exchange that makes us confident for Judgment Day.

We have sins we can't get rid of or make up for. God made Jesus to be sin for us. God takes the innocent one and puts all of our sins on him, including the punishment for those sins and punishes Jesus for them on the cross. The punishment that brought us peace was on him, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Then God takes Jesus perfect holiness and righteousness, which he lived during his time on earth and credits it to us, through faith. He gives us a righteousness we never had, and so we become righteous. Now when God looks at us, he sees perfect, holy people, because of the Lord Our Righteousness. This is why God will let us into his heaven.

8. When Jesus returns, he is bringing redemption and salvation for believers. How does this change our living now?

Just like we didn't play football in the living room anymore after Dad replaced our lamp that we broke, Jesus giving us righteousness as a costly price inspires us to live carefully, in appreciation of his sacrifice. It makes us watchful and careful, not wanting to be lulled to spiritual sleep, but on guard so that we stay away from the sins of the flesh and are ready for Jesus to return at any moment.