



Life Guide applying God's Word to life

We Are Family: Where You Are Perfectly Safe November 10, 2019

(2 Thessalonians 1:5-10)

⁵ All this is evidence that God's judgement is right, and as a result you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God for which you are suffering. ⁶ God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you ⁷ and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels.

⁸ He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. ⁹ They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power. This will happen ¹⁰ on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed. This includes you, because you believed our testimony to you.

1. What percentage of your income would you estimate you spend to feel safe?

Consider costs that secure your home like locks, cameras, and alarm systems; along with insurance policies like life, home, auto, and health insurance; and don't forget emergency savings accounts. Americans spend \$21 billion annually on home security. It doesn't really matter what the numbers are, the truth is that everyone likes to feel safe.

2. What would make the Thessalonian Christians feel unsafe?

They had been persecuted. **ACTS 17:1-8** (*When Paul and his companions had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. 2 As*

was his custom, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, 3 explaining and proving that the Messiah had to suffer and rise from the dead. "This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Messiah," he said. 4 Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and quite a few prominent women. 5 But other Jews were jealous; so they rounded up some bad characters from the marketplace, formed a mob and started a riot in the city. They rushed to Jason's house in search of Paul and Silas in order to bring them out to the crowd. 6 But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some other believers before the city officials, shouting: "These men who have caused trouble all over the world have now come here, 7 and Jason has welcomed them into his house. They are all defying Caesar's decrees, saying that there is another king, one called Jesus." 8 When they heard this, the crowd and the city officials were thrown into turmoil. 9 Then they made Jason and the others post bond and let them go.)

They had only been Christians for a few months when they got Paul's letter. They were still maturing in their faith.

3. What kinds of injustices make you upset in 2019?

Answers will vary but there are many options. In many parts of the world women are treated unjustly. Many children face cruelty and injustice. Minority groups are often the object of racism and miscarriages of justice.

4. How does Paul's description of Judgement Day address those injustices?

God's judgement is right. The day is coming when God, who is just, will pay back trouble to people who cause trouble, and give peace to all who believe in him. In the end, bad guys don't get away with anything.

5. Paul describes Jesus' judgement the same way all the other Bible writers do. Jesus comes to judge all people from all of history. One group gets punishment, the other gets relief. Underline words from these verses that describe the "relief" group. Circle words that describe the "punishment" group. What does this teach you about the groups?

Give everyone a minute or two to circle and underline. Pastor Wordell's underlines and circles are marked on this page.

We learn that the groups aren't different because some are good people and some are bad people. The punishment people will be held accountable for their sins. They will be punished eternally. They will have no access to God. The relief group are NOT those who never did anything wrong. They are those who believed the gospel, who trusted God. ESPECIALLY ASK PEOPLE WHY THE RELIEF GROUP IS **COUNTED** WORTHY. COUNTED worthy of God's kingdom. You can be considered worthy without earning it. This is God's unfairness, his grace.

6. A co-worker says, "People who don't know God, cannot be held accountable to God's standards. They don't even know him!"

What truths might you include in a response to him?

Romans 1 (also written by Paul) is a good go-to passage for this. He says that "**men are without excuse**" because God's power and might are obvious from creation.

Isaiah 55 says that "*as high as the heavens are above the earth, that's how far God's thoughts are above ours*". If what God says doesn't make sense it's an error in my sense, not in error in what God says.

This can be a great opportunity to turn the conversation toward Jesus.

Romans 3:23 says that "**all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.**" It's not a wonder that God would send people to hell. It's a wonder that God would save anyone! **Romans 3** continues, "**all are justified through faith in Christ Jesus.**"

7. The word in verse 8 for "obey" the gospel means "what you hear has an impact on you." If a command has an impact on you, you "obey" it. But the gospel isn't a command. It's a *promise*. What do you call it when a *promise* has an impact on you?

There are lots of good options, but OBEY is not one of them! You might say, "*believe*" or "*trust*" or "*transformed by*" or "*overjoyed at*". The meaning of the verse is that people who go to hell do not believe the promise of our Lord Jesus Christ. Those who do trust the promise go to heaven.

8. When Pastor Wordell asks confirmation students how they feel about Judgement Day some of them say they can't wait for it to get here and others say they are scared. How would you respond to an 8th grader who says one of those answers?

If a student is overjoyed, I first say "Good! Jesus is coming back and in Revelation the writer says, "Come quickly Jesus!" But don't you think it might be a little scary? We will face a judge and that should

make us think twice about our sins. Jesus told his disciples to "***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***" (Matthew 21:36) To the ones who are afraid I say, "Good! That's because you know it's serious! But it's also great news! Jesus judges you based on your personal record, you should hope he never comes. But Jesus judges you based on *HIS* record. Does Jesus have anything to be ashamed of from his past? If he doesn't then you don't have anything to fear.

9. No matter what percentage of your income you spend on security, there are always things that make us feel unsafe. (That's how the Thessalonians felt.) What would the *right-now-version* of you say to the *fearful-version* of you to give you assurance and comfort?

Encourage Life Group members to rephrase the good news from the Bible verses and then apply them to themselves.

Here's an example: Jesus is coming back with all his angels to bring justice for all who are wronged, to gather all people who believe in him, to give us relief and to be glorified in us, and we will marvel at him. Everything will be ok in the end. If you get in a car accident, it will all be ok in the end. If you lose your health, it's ok to be sad, but it will all be ok in the end. If your life falls apart, that is terrible but it will all be ok in the end. Even if heaven and earth should pass away (and they will) it will be scary, but it will all be ok in the end.

10. If you knew Jesus was returning on Sunday morning after the 8 AM service. List five things you would do with your time before that.

Come up with your list individually or together. But then hit the group with this zinger: **JESUS MIGHT ACTUALLY COME BACK ON SUNDAY! THEREFORE, WHY AREN'T WE DOING THESE THINGS NOW?**

There may be a few things on the list for which there is a good reason we don't do them! But perhaps there is one or two that we could incorporate into our life now. We can live every day with eternity in view.

Here are some possible answers:

If I knew Jesus were coming on Sunday morning at 8 AM I would...

1. be in the 8AM service on Sunday for sure!
2. pray for grace to stand in the judgement.

3. read my Bible a ton, to make sure my faith was as strong as possible.
4. be extra generous, not to earn Jesus' favor but just because I'd realize how little earthly blessings matter compared to eternal bliss.
5. share the good news with every. person. I. meet.
6. thank God in prayer for taking me to heaven.
7. spend tons of time thinking about Jesus and what he looks like and how he'll get here and what his voice sounds like and who I'll meet soon.
8. probably do a few crazy things I never thought I'd get a chance to do.
9. live with more urgency.
10. pay more attention to people and their problems, and care less about what I need to get done (I'd realize my agenda doesn't matter nearly as much as it does.)
11. talk a lot more about Jesus.
12. call a lot of people who I've been meaning to have a hard conversation with, including my family members who don't believe the gospel of Jesus.
13. think about my loved ones who have already gone to heaven and seen Jesus.
14. think a lot less about my retirement savings! I may even try to use that money to build relationship with people so I could tell them about Jesus.