



COUNTER CULTURE

APRIL 19- MAY 31, 2020

**LIFE GROUP
LEADER PACKET**



Counter Culture: 1 & 2 Thessalonians

Participants Guide

A couple of pictures that come to my mind when I think about 'counter culture' include a salmon swimming upstream against a raging current. Also, the picture of a swimming pool and creating a strong whirlpool and then trying to fight the undertow by walking the opposite direction. For some reason I also picture a military General charging forward (when everyone else is retreating) to inspire their troops to victory. Going against the norm is not easy and fighting our culture's prevailing spiritual tendencies, or lack thereof, requires an abnormal faith and sure foundation.

The resurrection of Jesus was truly extraordinary. He defeated and triumphed over our curse of sin and death and promised to be with us and have all authority in heaven and on earth. As a result, the world as we know it was forever changed. Enter a new way to live and love. An alternative way to see the world and one another. A rare spirit, ethos, and character are now available and becoming mainstream. We now have an uncommon affection to love, forgive, and believe the impossible because of what Jesus accomplished. Our very destiny and future has been given a new trajectory. Death itself has been turned upside down and an unexpected Day of the Lord now awaits, which is deliberately at variance with today's understanding of judgment. This new uprising finds its fulfillment with a counterculture King coming with a rare and magnificent glory. Paul's letters to the Thessalonians reveals a new normal for all believers in Jesus. In this series we will go against the prevailing tendency and thinking of our day to discover a rare faith, affection, life, sleep, day, judgment, and coming King. Let this be your new beginning!

**At Living Hope, we believe that we must be
connected relationally to grow spiritually.**

PURPOSE OF LIFE GROUPS

We exist to reach the world for Jesus, one person at a time. We feel that is best done in small, relational environments where biblical disciples can be made. Life Groups are the primary vehicle by which we carry out the vision and mission of Living Hope Community Church. We will be a church that makes disciples, who make disciples of Jesus.

Vision: The vision of our Life Groups is to provide a spiritual community where groups of people are transformed into the image of Christ, growing in their understanding of God's story, and living it out in the context of loving accountability and expected reproduction.

We believe that a definition of a disciple is found in Matthew 4:19: [And Jesus said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."](#) Here is how we define disciple: (1) A disciple knows and follows Christ; (2) a disciple is being changed by Christ; and (3) a disciple is committed to the mission of Christ.

I Thessalonians 2

So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us.

Galatians 5:22-23

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

Matthew 22:37-40

Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind'. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments".

John 15:4-5

Remain in Me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in Me. "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in Me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from Me you can do nothing."

We believe that we cannot grow spiritually if we are not connected relationally

Matthew 28:18-20

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age".

Acts 2:42-47

And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

SAFE GROUP: We will strive to create an environment where everyone can be real, open, and honest with their struggles and victories.

CONFIDENTIALITY: What is said in the group stays in the group.

LISTEN: Let's value one another during the discussions by really listening to what is being shared. Try to avoid thinking about how you are going to respond, or what you are going to say next.

PAUSE: Allow a pause in conversation after someone shares. Give the person sharing the chance to finish and the group the opportunity to consider what was just shared before responding.

SILENCE: It is important to allow silence in the group as it provides an opportunity for someone to share and for members in the group to process the topic or questions being considered.

NO "CROSS TALK": Be considerate of others as they are sharing. No side conversations.

NO FIXING: We are not here to fix each other. Jesus does that part. Give encouragement; speak truth; and point to Jesus. Don't try to solve or fix each other.

NO RESCUING: When people are sharing something deeply personal, there can be a tendency to try to make them feel better about themselves or the situation by providing immediate condolences. This will often cause them to stop sharing. Resist the temptation to rescue people.

SHARING: Be sensitive about the amount of time you share.

BE SELF-AWARE: Be self-aware of how you are personally affecting the environment through your words, actions, and non-verbal communication.

USE "I" STATEMENTS: It's easy to talk about the issues of others, but for our purposes, we want you to put yourself on the table. Try to use "I" statements rather than "them", "the church", "us", "we", etc.

CONFLICT: We will commit to resolve conflict biblically. When conflict or sin issues between group members arise, we want to make sure that we are honoring God and each other in the way we deal with these issues. The following are a few key Scriptures in this regard (there are many others):

If someone sins against you – Matthew 18:15-20
Restoring someone in sin – Galatians 6:1-5
Forgive a sinner – Colossians 3:12-13
Reconciling differences – Matthew 5:23-26, Matthew 7:1-5

Step 1: Welcome:

- Members, visitors, and new believers feel valued and welcomed...
- Starts the moment someone arrives and ends when everyone is gone.

Step 2: Opening Prayer:

- Invites God's Holy Spirit into our presence to prepare our hearts for what God has for us.

Step 3: Purpose/Vision Casting:

- Encourages relationships with God and relationships with others.
- Expresses the purpose of meeting together as a life group and challenges one another to grow and multiply (Branching).

Step 4: Group Guidelines: (see page 5)

Step 5: Follow Up:

- How did last week's discussion impact your week? or
- What did you take away from the sermon? or
- What are you thankful for?

Step 6: Setting the scene:

- Discuss the background to today's passage and the target for today's discussion.

Step 7: Tell the story:

- Read or Tell the passage. Rebuild the story: have the group recreate the passage together.
- Ask if anything was left out?

Step 8: Debrief the story:

- Ask Head (what the Word says), Heart (wrestle with what we believe), and then Hands Questions (bring truth and belief into our everyday realities).
- Remember the 'discussion idea' to help you focus the direction of the discussion.

Step 9: Close in prayer:

- Share personal prayer requests and give everyone an opportunity to pray.



BIBLICAL FOUNDATION FOR RELATIONSHIP

The Bible alone gives a clear and complete picture of what God wants done—His mission—and how He wants it done—His methods. The purpose of the Church is to make disciples of Jesus who can make disciples of Jesus. We do this with the understanding that relationship is the key vehicle.



INTENTIONAL LEADER

An intentional leader understands that part of their role is to reach the lost, make disciples of Jesus, and create Christ-centered environments where disciple-making can happen. They understand where a person is spiritually and what is needed to help them grow.



RELATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

This is a group facilitated by a leader who is intentionally modeling spiritual fruit. They are doing life together with a kingdom mindset. The relationships go beyond just the group time. These relationships press into areas of privacy, transparency, and vulnerability.



REPRODUCIBLE DISCIPLE-MAKING PROCESS

This is the process for developing people toward Christ-likeness.

This includes three parts:

“My Part” the discipler; “Their Part” the disciple, and “God’s Part”.

Leaders understand the Stages of Spiritual Growth and can identify where a person is spiritually and help them mature and grow at each stage.

TIPS FOR ASKING QUESTIONS

GENERAL QUESTIONS: The following questions are examples that will help you have a base to begin with and will give you ideas for developing your own questions. Be intentional to ask all three types of questions (head, heart, hands) as you lead your discussion.

HEAD

- What do you see God doing, saying, or showing about Himself?
- Who are the people and what is going on with them?
- What stands out to you in this passage?
- What do you think the main point is?
- What does this show us about _____?
You can fill in the blank with - God/man/_____?
(Or the topic of discussion such as worship)

OBSERVATION

HEART

These questions help us wrestle with what we believe.

- What do you see about yourself?
- Have you known anyone who is an example of this?
- What has it looked like when you have or have not known/believed/lived this in your life?
- What questions does this raise for you?

INTERPRETATION

HANDS

These questions help us bring truth and beliefs into everyday realities.

- What is one way you can apply this to your life this week?
- What are you challenged to think/believe/do differently because of this passage and our discussion?
- How can you use this to disciple others?
- How does this impact you? Your relationship with _____?
(Fill in with: family, fellow believers, work-place or community.)

APPLICATION

FOLLOW UP QUESTIONS:

Asking a question after hearing someone's response helps people process and gives everyone better understanding. Follow up questions come from a heart of being interested, curious, and seeking to understand and draw out. They are not intended to grill or corner people.

- What has brought you to that understanding?
- What would be an example?
- Explain a little more.
- What might be another way to look at it?
- How does _____ affect _____?
- What does it mean?

BEFORE GROUP STARTS – YOUR ROLE:

Read through the curriculum and discussion passages. Be aware of what God is showing you personally. Pray for your group members. What do you see God doing in each of them? What is God's part and what is your part as you walk with them? Psalm 119:18
Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law.

WELCOME: (Share a meal, snack, ice-breaker, game or story)

OPEN IN PRAYER

VISION CAST:

Help everyone grow in their relationship with God and others. Remind everyone that spiritual maturity is growing into the image of Jesus and bearing the fruit of the Spirit. Encourage everyone to grow in community, to reach out to one another and others through service and the daily rhythms of life. Galatians 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

LIFE GROUP GUIDELINES:

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ANNOUNCEMENTS:

FOLLOW UP & WARM UP:

- *How was your Easter? What did you eat? How was it different from your normal Easter celebration? Did any part of the Resurrection story really challenge or convict you?*
- *Take a moment to picture your resurrected body. What does it look like? What do you hope it is capable of? What do we know from the Bible about Jesus' resurrected body and what instruction is given in I Corinthians 15 about our new bodies?*
- *Besides our new bodies, what does your faith cause you to do, feel, or believe that is counter culture to the norms of society today?*

SERIES THEME: Counter Culture Faith: 1 & 2 Thessalonians

WEEK 1: A Counter Culture Faith

TEXT: 1 Thessalonians 1: 1-10

1 Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace. **2** We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, **3** remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. **4** For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, **5** because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake. **6** 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, **7** so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. **8** For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything. **9** For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, **10** and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

DEBRIEF THE STORY: Retell this passage together by memory. What were Paul's main thoughts, statements and words?

Spend time explaining the passage again in your own words. (The meaning of the author's terms, structure, literary form, and atmosphere.)

These questions help us to examine what the Word shows.

- What do you know about the theme of this Book and purpose for Paul writing it?
- Take some time to read Acts 17 and Paul and Silas' visit to Thessalonica. Read this short summary of the book from "Got Questions" at <https://www.gotquestions.org/Book-of-1-Thessalonians.html>

Watch this video from the Bible Project to learn more...

<https://bibleproject.com/explore/1-thessalonians/>

- What is the tone of this introduction? Is it encouraging or discouraging? Explain.
- Where do you see a counter culture faith in these verses?
- What stands out to Paul about their faith and life? What is the testimony of Thessalonica in the world?
- What role does suffering play in the development of their faith? What about the role of the Holy Spirit?
- What do we learn about Jesus from this passage?
- Verse 9 and 10 are very significant to the theme. How do they describe God?

These questions help us wrestle with what we believe.

- If God is living and true, what does that make all the other gods? Why do we serve and worship lesser gods? What is their appeal and trap?
- Are we still awaiting His Son from heaven? When will He appear? What is the purpose of His second coming?
- How should we live if Jesus is going to reappear once again? What is the most difficult thing about 'waiting' for Him?
- How has the Gospel come in power and full conviction for you?
- Why does suffering reveal a counter culture faith?
- Believing in the midst of suffering is evidence of true faith and a powerful word to the watching world. What does suffering typically reveal about your faith? When is it difficult for you to live for Jesus?

These questions help us bring truth and beliefs into everyday realities.

- What is your testimony in your home, neighborhood, community, work, church, and world? Are they consistent? What would others say? Would strangers and friends hear and see the same testimony? What 'service' can we do to give evidence of a counter culture faith? What 'attitude' would exhibit a similar Christlike testimony?
- There is much suffering in the world now, so how can you allow it to strengthen your faith and persevere? What lessons of comfort and grace could you share because of your genuine faith?
- Do you understand God's calling on your life? Do you know the ministry He has called you to?
- Who can you encourage this week who is young in their faith and yet living for Jesus out loud and in extraordinary ways? Give them an encouraging text or call today!
- How can you use this passage to make disciples?
- What are you challenged to think/believe/do differently because of this passage and our discussion?
- Share this passage with someone this week!

BEFORE GROUP STARTS – YOUR ROLE:

Read through the curriculum and discussion passages. Be aware of what God is showing you personally. Pray for your group members. What do you see God doing in each of them? What is God's part and what is your part as you walk with them? Psalm 119:18
Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law.

WELCOME: (Share a meal, snack, ice-breaker, game or story)

OPEN IN PRAYER

VISION CAST:

Help everyone grow in their relationship with God and others. Remind everyone that spiritual maturity is growing into the image of Jesus and bearing the fruit of the Spirit. Encourage everyone to grow in community, to reach out to one another and others through service and the daily rhythms of life. Galatians 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS:

FOLLOW UP & WARM UP:

- *What are you thankful for today? How did last time's discussion impact your week? Where did you step out in obedience this past week? What did you take away from the sermon?*
- *Who is your best friend? What qualities does that friend possess that you appreciate the most? What does their friendship mean to you?*
- *What is your love language? Which one of these ways do you give or receive love: Acts of Service, Words of Affirmation, Physical Touch, Quality Time, or Gifts? Explain.*

SERIES THEME: Counter Culture Faith: 1 & 2 Thessalonians

WEEK 2: A Counter Culture Affection

TEXT: 1 Thessalonians 2: 1-13

2:1 For you yourselves know, brothers, that our coming to you was not in vain. **2** But though we had already suffered and been shamefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we had boldness in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in the midst of much conflict. **3** For our appeal does not spring from error or impurity or any attempt to deceive, **4** but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not to please man, but to please God who tests our hearts. **5** For we never came with words of flattery, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed—God is witness. **6** Nor did we seek glory from people, whether from you or from others, though we could have made demands as apostles of Christ. **7** But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children. **8** So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us. **9** For you remember, brothers, our labor and toil: we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. **10** You are witnesses, and God also, how holy and righteous and blameless was our conduct toward you believers. **11** For you know how, like a father with his children, **12** we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory. **13** And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers.

DEBRIEF THE STORY: Retell this passage together by memory.

Spend time explaining the passage again in your own words. (The meaning of the author's terms, structure, literary form, and atmosphere.)

These questions help us to examine what the Word shows.

- What stood out to you from this verses? What didn't make sense?
- What is counter culture in this passage regarding our affections?
- What does God test about us?
- What pictures does Paul use to describe his care and concern for the people?
- What did Paul say and do while with the people of Thessalonica? How does he address them and what was his approach?
- Do you know what happened in Philippi?
- What are the responsibilities of someone who is presenting the Gospel of God?
- Verse 8 is our theme verse for Life Groups!! What stands out to you from that verse? What does becoming 'dear' to someone look like and feel like?

These questions help us wrestle with what we believe.

- What does gentleness look and feel like to you?
- What sacrifices are you willing to make for others on behalf of the Gospel?
- What is your typical excuse for not sharing your life with others?
- Are you more service-centered or people-centered? How do you keep the right balance between the two?
- How do you not let people become projects?
- How have you seen or experienced someone misrepresent the Gospel by their actions? What are ways that the church has been hypocritical in its testimony? What are signs of a greedy church?
- How do you know when your motives are becoming selfish?
- Why does Paul describe the Christian journey as a 'walk'?

These questions help us bring truth and beliefs into everyday realities.

- How can you keep the glory of God as your supreme goal and pursuit?
- Has your witness been 'holy, righteous, and blameless' towards believers?
- Is your thinking, speaking, and acting in conformity with God's Word and will? Repent, confess, and follow Jesus in obedience.
- Have you been accepting the Word of God as God's Word? If God's Work is not at work in your life then maybe your time and approach needs to be reworked. What would a meaningful daily time in Scripture look like for you this week?
- Who can you share this passage with this week?
- Talk with your group about a possible connection with someone in need. Who can you encourage with the Good News? Who could you visit? Who could you surprise with a meal?

BEFORE GROUP STARTS – YOUR ROLE:

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Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law.

WELCOME: (Share a meal, snack, ice-breaker, game or story)

OPEN IN PRAYER

VISION CAST:

Help everyone grow in their relationship with God and others. Remind everyone that spiritual maturity is growing into the image of Jesus and bearing the fruit of the Spirit. Encourage everyone to grow in community, to reach out to one another and others through service and the daily rhythms of life. Galatians 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS:

FOLLOW UP & WARM UP:

- *What are you thankful for today? How did last time's discussion impact your week? Where did you step out in obedience this past week? What did you take away from the sermon?*
- *If you could play the role of anyone in any movie who would you choose? Why would playing that character be important and/or fun for you?*
- *What part of your life and journey are you most proud of? What were the important decisions that you had to make? What kind of sacrifices did you have to make? What was out of your control and understanding?*

SERIES THEME: Counter Culture Faith: 1 & 2 Thessalonians

WEEK 3: A Counter Culture Life

TELL THE STORY: 1 Thessalonians 4: 1-12

1 Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more. **2** For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus. **3** For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; **4** that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, **5** not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; **6** that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. **7** For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. **8** Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you. **9** Now concerning brotherly love you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another, **10** for that indeed is what you are doing to all the brothers throughout Macedonia. But we urge you, brothers, to do this more and more, **11** and to aspire to live quietly, and to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we instructed you, **12** so that you may walk properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one.

DEBRIEF THE STORY: Retell this passage together by memory.

Spend time explaining the passage again in your own words. (The meaning of the author's terms, structure, literary form, and atmosphere.)

HEAD

These questions help us to examine what the Word shows.

- What do we learn about Jesus from this passage? How did He leave His mark?
- What do we learn about man from this passage?
- What about a 'counter culture' life do you see in this passage?
- How are we to 'walk' in the Lord? How do we do it 'more and more'?
- What is God's clear will from this passage? What is our 'calling'?
- How should our lives differ from the lives of 'Gentiles' or unbelievers?
- Why does Paul mention disrespecting God and Holy Spirit? What is the connection and significance?
- What does it mean to be taught by God?
- From this passage how should we live or 'walk' towards outsiders? Why?

OBSERVATION

HEART

These questions help us wrestle with what we believe.

- What does sanctification mean to you? What is God's part and what is your part?
- Why should you not be dependent on anyone? What does that look like? Does it include not having any needs or not being dependent on others in the Body of Christ relationally and physically? Explain.
- What does it mean to live 'quietly' and to 'mind our own affairs' in this world? Are these things true of you?
- How do you remain busy and not become a busybody?
- What does a healthy marriage look like? What does a holy marriage look like?
- What is the impact of sexually immorality upon relationships and marriage?
- How can you grow in self-control? What areas of your life needs self-control?

INTERPRETATION

HANDS

These questions help us bring truth and beliefs into everyday realities.

- How much has Jesus done for you? Who can you tell that to this week?
- Join an addiction group, ministry to men group, ministry to women group, or some smaller community that you can be honest with regarding your impurity and desire for holiness. Make sure you have accountability partners who can support and ask the difficult questions.
- How can you invest in your marriage this week? How can you show genuine love? Consider getting the email "I Do Every Day" from crosswalk.com for a marriage devotional.
- How can you use this passage to disciple someone? What is the main idea?
- What are you challenged to think/believe/do differently because of this passage and our discussion?
- Pray for God to change our lives and make us Holy!

APPLICATION

BEFORE GROUP STARTS – YOUR ROLE:

Read through the curriculum and discussion passages. Be aware of what God is showing you personally. Pray for your group members. What do you see God doing in each of them? What is God's part and what is your part as you walk with them? Psalm 119:18
Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law.

WELCOME: (Share a meal, snack, ice-breaker, game or story)

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VISION CAST:

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ANNOUNCEMENTS:

FOLLOW UP & WARM UP:

- *How did last time's discussion impact your week? Where did you step out in obedience this past week? What did you take away from the sermon?*
- *What is the worst way for you to die? Why is that so repulsive to you? To what degree do you fear death?*
- *Have you ever thought of what it must be like to be an angel? Why do you think God created angels? What role do they play in the unfolding of God's plan? What do you think their 'average' day consists of?*

SERIES THEME: Counter Culture Faith: 1 & 2 Thessalonians

WEEK 4: *A Counter Culture Sleep*

TEXT: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

13 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. **14** For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. **15** For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. **16** For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. **17** Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. **18** Therefore encourage one another with these words.

DEBRIEF THE STORY: Retell this passage together by memory.

Spend time explaining the passage again in your own words. (The meaning of the author's terms, structure, literary form, and atmosphere.)

HEAD

These questions help us to examine what the Word shows.

- What do we learn about God from this passage?
- What do we learn about man from this passage?
- What questions do you have? What is counter culture about death from this passage?
- Why does Paul refer to believer's death as being 'asleep'?
- What is the difference between grieving with hope and grieving without hope? What would that look like?
- What happens to those who believe in Jesus but die before He comes? Do they miss the return of Jesus?
- Will everyone die? Explain. What will precede Jesus' coming? How long will this be for?
- Where will we meet Him? What should be the response to this information?
- Where do we see the trumpet of God in Scripture? Who is the archangel(s)?
- How many people do you think will be with the Lord?

OBSERVATION

HEART

These questions help us wrestle with what we believe.

- How do you feel about meeting Jesus?
- How should this passage impact your view on death?
- What does the Bible say happens when you die?
- Have you ever struggled with wondering if Jesus was ever going to return?
- How do you balance mourning with those that mourn and yet having a living hope? What are ways that may be insensitive or of poor timing with sharing even this remarkable hope?
- When do we receive our new resurrected bodies? Is it the same for everyone? How important is knowing this information now? Is it possible to have an over infatuation with eschatology?

INTERPRETATION

HANDS

These questions help us bring truth and beliefs into everyday realities.

- Jesus' victory over the law is a victory over sin! And Jesus' victory over sin is a victory over death and the grave! It is all swallowed up in victory. Celebrate, thank, and praise God for our victory in our Lord Jesus Christ!
- Describe your living hope. How has it changed you? Encourage someone this week with your hope.
- What parts of Scripture or Jesus do you not yet understand regarding eschatology? How can this group speak into a more fuller understanding of God? Share or write out your God questions for everyone to pray and consider for future weeks.
- Consider the future. He will wipe away every tear. We will experience life without pain and evil FOREVER. There will be harmony and no more curse. We will be with Jesus! What about that future Kingdom motivates and inspires you?
- How can you encourage someone going through a storm this week with the Return of Jesus?

APPLICATION

BEFORE GROUP STARTS – YOUR ROLE:

Read through the curriculum and discussion passages. Be aware of what God is showing you personally. Pray for your group members. What do you see God doing in each of them? What is God's part and what is your part as you walk with them? Psalm 119:18
Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law.

WELCOME: (Share a meal, snack, ice-breaker, game or story)

OPEN IN PRAYER

VISION CAST:

Help everyone grow in their relationship with God and others. Remind everyone that spiritual maturity is growing into the image of Jesus and bearing the fruit of the Spirit. Encourage everyone to grow in community, to reach out to one another and others through service and the daily rhythms of life. Galatians 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

LIFE GROUP GUIDELINES:

You don't need to read this every week but initially, when someone new comes, and when the series or topic changes is a good time to reorient yourselves to the guidelines. This helps set the tone for the group and helps everyone have clear expectations for each other.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

FOLLOW UP & WARM UP:

- *What are you thankful for today? How did last time's discussion impact your week? Where did you step out in obedience this past week? What did you take away from the sermon?*
- *Have you ever been to court? What was that experience like? What is the role of a judge? How did the judge act and talk during your court experience? How has TV presented the court room and judges?*
- *Explain what you think the end of the world will look like? Do you really believe that to be true?*

SERIES THEME: Counter Culture Faith: 1 & 2 Thessalonians

WEEK 5: A Counter Culture Day

TEXT: 1 Thessalonians 5: 1-11

5:1 Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. **2** For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. **3** While people are saying, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. **4** But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. **5** For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. **6** So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. **7** For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. **8** But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. **9** For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, **10** who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. **11** Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.

DEBRIEF THE STORY: Retell this passage together by memory.

Spend time explaining the passage again in your own words. (The meaning of the author's terms, structure, literary form, and atmosphere.)

These questions help us to examine what the Word shows.

- What do you learn about God from this passage?
- What do you learn about man from this passage?
- What is the Day of the Lord?

Check out this short summary <https://www.gotquestions.org/day-of-the-Lord.html>

- When is this 'Day of the Lord' going to take place? What will be the signs?
- How is this 'day' counter culture to what the world may be thinking or hoping?
- Why is it described as a 'thief'?
- What is difference between being a child of the light and a child of darkness? What are the implications based on this text?
- What actions or behaviors describe children of the light and children of darkness?
- Why does he refer to death as 'sleeping'?
- What does verse 9 mean? What wrath are we missing?
- What do children of the light need to put on?

These questions help us wrestle with what we believe.

- Is this passage encouraging to you? Explain.
- Why do you think this day is going to take so many by surprise?
- Describe the destruction that will overtake children of the darkness.
- Why the reference to 'children' in this passage?
- Do you feel any compassion for someone after reading this? If not, why?
- Are you personally ready for this day? What steps do you need to take to be ready?
- What does being 'sober' look like in your world of faith, hope, and love?
- In light of God's salvation how is the persecution that we face as children of the day bearable and fitting?

These questions help us bring truth and beliefs into everyday realities.

- How excited are you to live with Jesus?
- Who can you share this passage with this week?
- How can you bring your unsaved family and friends to the understanding and awareness of this day of the Lord?
- What are you challenged to think/believe/do differently because of this passage and our discussion?
- How can you build up one another in Jesus this week?
- Consider doing a personal study on the Books of Daniel or Revelation to understand future prophecy.

BEFORE GROUP STARTS – YOUR ROLE:

Read through the curriculum and discussion passages. Be aware of what God is showing you personally. Pray for your group members. What do you see God doing in each of them? What is God's part and what is your part as you walk with them? Psalm 119:18
Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law.

WELCOME: (Share a meal, snack, ice-breaker, game or story)

OPEN IN PRAYER

VISION CAST:

Help everyone grow in their relationship with God and others. Remind everyone that spiritual maturity is growing into the image of Jesus and bearing the fruit of the Spirit. Encourage everyone to grow in community, to reach out to one another and others through service and the daily rhythms of life. Galatians 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS:

FOLLOW UP & WARM UP:

- *What are you thankful for today? How did last time's discussion impact your week? Where did you step out in obedience this past week? What did you take away from the sermon?*
- *Can you tell about a time that you got revenge on someone who hurt or embarrassed you? How did that make you feel? What effect did it have on the relationship? Would you do it again?*
- *Describe something you have built. It could be Legos, a model plane, or car engine, but what was that process like? Why didn't you quit or stop? Do you still have it?*

SERIES THEME: Counter Culture Faith: 1 & 2 Thessalonians

WEEK 6: A Counter Culture Judgement

TEXT: 1 Thessalonians 1: 5-12

5 This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering— **6** since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, **7** and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels **8** in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. **9** They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, **10** when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed. **11** 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, **12** so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

DEBRIEF THE STORY: Retell this passage together by memory.

Spend time explaining the passage again in your own words. (The meaning of the author's terms, structure, literary form, and atmosphere.)

HEAD

These questions help us to examine what the Word shows.

- What does this passage teach us about God?
- What does this passage teach us about man?
- How does this passage teach us to think and act in a counter culture way regarding facing the future judgment of God?
- Check out these resources to further your understanding on II Thessalonians
<https://www.gotquestions.org/Book-of-2-Thessalonians.html>
<https://bibleproject.com/explore/2-thessalonians/>
- Was this a difficult time for these people to be Christians? Explain.
- Whose job is justice and retribution? Why?
- What will be the punishment for those that don't obey the Gospel of Jesus?
- What are the symbols of judgment from this passage?
- What does Paul's prayer include?
- What does this passage teach us on how to glorify God?
- What should our response to unfair persecution be?

OBSERVATION

HEART

These questions help us wrestle with what we believe.

- How does the Justice of God fit and relate with the Love of God?
- Why is endurance important to the believer? What is key to our faithfulness?
- Have you ever gotten vengeance on someone who treated you unfairly? Was it fulfilling? Explain.
- What encouragement do you get from the fact that Jesus suffered persecution and all that God brought about because of it? How can you model Jesus better?
- How can you be better centered on the Kingdom of God and not your kingdom?
- Do you typically look at suffering as God's forsaking or God's perfecting? Explain.
- Do you believe that when Jesus is revealed He will judge rightly and fairly?
- What does 'everlasting destruction' teach us about hell? What are other places in Scripture describing hell?
- How is the glory of God a beautiful thing and at the same time a horrific thing?

INTERPRETATION

HANDS

These questions help us bring truth and beliefs into everyday realities.

- How about praying the prayer of verses 11 and 12? What a great prayer for believers to live out their calling in the power of the Spirit for the glory of Jesus and by the grace of God.
- What do you need to trust God with today regarding your future and regarding His justice and vindication? Commit it to the Lord!
- Who can you tell this story to this week? How can you share about hell and judgment in a relevant and compassionate way to unbelievers?
- What can you learn from maybe never being persecuted for your faith? Evaluate your lifestyle and attitude so that you are honoring Jesus in all areas and arenas of your life.
- Think about this summer. Plan a day or days that you can build the Kingdom of God in your life or in the lives of others. Invest and invite others into your journey.

APPLICATION

BEFORE GROUP STARTS – YOUR ROLE:

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VISION CAST:

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ANNOUNCEMENTS:

FOLLOW UP & WARM UP:

- *What are you thankful for today? How did last time's discussion impact your week? Where did you step out in obedience this past week? What did you take away from the sermon?*
- *Describe what it is going to be like to see Jesus for the first time. What will you do or say? What will He look like? Are you longing for this encounter? Explain.*
- *Can you describe the most evil person you could ever meet? What is their character, appearance, and personality? What about this person would be highly offensive to you?*

SERIES THEME: Counter Culture Faith: 1 & 2 Thessalonians

WEEK 1: A Counter Culture King

TEXT: II Thessalonians 2: 1-12

2:1 Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we ask you, brothers, **2** not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. **3** Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, **4** who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God. **5** Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? **6** And you know what is restraining him now so that he may be revealed in his time. **7** For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way. **8** And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming. **9** The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, **10** and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. **11** Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, **12** in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

DEBRIEF THE STORY: Retell this passage together by memory.

Spend time explaining the passage again in your own words. (The meaning of the author's terms, structure, literary form, and atmosphere.)

These questions help us to examine what the Word shows.

- What do you learn about Jesus from this passage? How is He pictured?
- What do you learn about man?
- How is our coming King counter culture compared to the man of lawlessness?
- What questions do you have? What do you not understand in these verses?
- Has the Day of the Lord already come?
- What must happen before the Day of the Lord comes?
- Who is the man of lawlessness?
- Who is the one restraining lawlessness now?
- How will the lawless one be defeated?
- Why does Satan and his leaders have a following?
- What is God's part in all these happenings?

These questions help us wrestle with what we believe.

- Some of the problems here were because of false information being spread. Do you understand the responsibility we have in talking, teaching, and sharing with others the correct understanding of the Word of God? How has false teachings hindered the work of Jesus?
- What were some of the effects of the false teachings in Thessalonica?
- How do Isaiah and Daniel and Revelation speak into and develop some of these future events?
- Do you see the Rapture of the Church in these passages or is this all the Second Coming of Christ? This is a big theological discussion and may be best done in humility and when you have more time to discuss.
- You don't want to be left to the consequences of your sins. How does one accept God and Jesus today?
- How do we stand fast today in the truth and love of Jesus? What can you do to be more firmly rooted?

These questions help us bring truth and beliefs into everyday realities.

- Take some time to work out your salvation, including getting a better understanding on what the Bible says the future will entail. Talk about this in community and in light of the Gospel.
- Who can you share this story with this week?
- Considering reading chapter 3. It deals with being idle and irresponsible to the future. Be ready - Jesus is coming back!
- Are you living like Jesus wins? Are you praying like Jesus wins? Put your faith in Jesus and receive His hope and comfort. "What you hope for shapes what you live for!" Don't grow weary but warn one another!
- What are you challenged to think/believe/do differently because of this passage and our discussion?

LIFE GROUP



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