

Living in the Last Days - Small Group Guide:

****Based on 1 Thessalonians 1:1–10****

Opening Prayer

Begin your group time with prayer, asking God to open hearts and minds to His Word and to help everyone engage honestly and thoughtfully with the material.

Icebreaker (5-10 minutes)

****Question:**** When you hear the phrase "the last days," what's the first thing that comes to your mind? What emotions does it stir up?

Sermon Overview

Paul wrote to the Thessalonian church—brand-new believers facing persecution and uncertainty—to encourage them to stay faithful while waiting for Christ's return. His message remains relevant today: we are called to ****turn**** from idols, ****serve**** the living God, and ****wait**** expectantly for Jesus' return.

Key Scripture

Read 1 Thessalonians 1:1–10 together as a group.

Discussion Questions

Part 1: Understanding the Context (10 minutes)

1. ****What challenges were the Thessalonian Christians facing that made them wonder if they were living in the "last days"?****

2. **How are our circumstances today similar to or different from what the Thessalonians experienced?**

3. **Paul commends the Thessalonians for their "work produced by faith, labor prompted by love, and endurance inspired by hope" (v. 3). What do you think each of these looks like in practical terms?

Part 2: Turn From Idols (15 minutes)

4. **The sermon defined an idol as "anything we put in God's place." What are some modern-day idols that people (including Christians) struggle with today?

5. **Which of these modern idols do you find most challenging personally?

- Success and achievement
- Money and comfort
- Relationships (even good ones)
- Self (my image, my truth, my wants)
- Technology and social media
- Other: _____

6. **The sermon said, "Repentance isn't just turning away from something, it is turning toward Someone." How does this perspective change the way we think about repentance?

7. **Is there something in your life right now that God might be asking you to turn away from? (You don't have to share specifics if it's too personal, but consider sharing the category or how the group can pray for you.)

Part 3: Serve the Living God (15 minutes)

8. **What's the difference between believing in God and serving God? Why is this distinction important?

9. **The sermon said, "Salvation happens in a moment—Serving Him happens every day." How does this truth challenge or encourage you?**

10. **What does it look like practically to say each morning, "Lord, this day is Yours. Use me"? Have you ever tried starting your day this way? What happened?**

11. **The Greek word for "serve" (*douleuō*) means complete loyalty—putting someone else's will above your own. In what area of your life is God calling you to greater surrender right now?**

Part 4: Wait for His Return (15 minutes)

12. **The sermon described waiting as "active, faithful, and expectant"—like preparing for guests. How can we wait actively for Jesus' return rather than passively?**

13. **If you knew Jesus was returning next week, what would you do differently? What does your answer reveal about your current priorities?**

14. **Read through the four practical questions from the sermon. Which one speaks most directly to where you are right now?**

- Have I forgiven those who hurt me?
- Have I shared my faith with those who need Jesus?
- Am I more focused on this world than eternity?
- Am I trusting in God's grace alone to save me?

Key Takeaways

Write these down or share them on your group's communication platform:

1. **We are called to TURN** from idols and anything that takes God's place in our lives, and turn toward Him in repentance.

2. ****We are called to SERVE**** the living God daily, surrendering our plans and allowing Him to direct our steps.

3. ****We are called to WAIT**** actively and expectantly for Christ's return, living with urgency, faith, and hope.

4. ****Living in the last days means:**** Stay strong in faith, keep on loving, and live every day with hope.

Practical Application

Personal Reflection (Can be done during the week)

Choose one of the four practical questions from the sermon and spend time in prayer and reflection this week:

1. ****Forgiveness:**** Write down the names of people you need to forgive. Consider writing a letter (you don't have to send it) or praying specifically to release them.

2. ****Sharing Faith:**** Make a list of 3-5 people in your life who don't know Jesus. Commit to praying for them daily and ask God for opportunities to share your story.

3. ****Eternal Focus:**** Do a "priority audit" of your schedule and finances. What percentage of your time, energy, and resources are invested in eternal things versus temporary things?

4. ****Grace Alone:**** If you're unsure about your salvation, talk to your small group leader or pastor this week. Don't wait.

Group Challenge

****This Week's Challenge:**** Each day this week, start your morning by praying, "Lord, this day is Yours. Use me." At your next meeting, share one story of how God answered that prayer.

****Accountability Partner:**** Pair up with someone in your group to check in mid-week about your personal application goal.

Prayer Time (10-15 minutes)

****Guided Prayer Prompts:****

1. ****Confession:**** Invite the Holy Spirit to reveal any idols in your life. Silently confess and turn from them.
2. ****Surrender:**** Pray prayers of surrender, offering your plans, your day, your week to God's service.
3. ****Intercession:**** Pray for those who don't know Jesus yet. Pray specifically for the people on your lists.
4. ****Expectation:**** Pray for the return of Christ, asking God to help you live with urgency and hope.

****Close with this prayer (or similar):****

"Father, thank You for reminding us that we're living in the last days—days of both urgency and grace. Help us turn from everything that distracts us from You. Help us serve You with joy. Help us wait faithfully and live ready for Your return. Keep us steady, humble, and full of hope until that day. In Jesus' name, amen."

Looking Ahead

Next week we'll continue our series "Living in the Last Days" from 1 Thessalonians. Read chapter 2 in preparation for our next group meeting.

Additional Resources

- ****Book Recommendation:**** *The Second Coming* by John MacArthur or *Surprised by Hope* by N.T. Wright
- ****Worship Song:**** "Even So Come" by Passion or "What a Beautiful Name" by Hillsong Worship
- ****Podcast Episode:**** Consider listening to a podcast on 1 Thessalonians or living with eternal perspective

****Group Leader Notes:****

- Be sensitive to those who may be struggling with fear about the end times
- Create a safe space for honest discussion about personal idols
- Have tissues available for the forgiveness discussion
- Be prepared to pray individually with anyone who has questions about salvation
- Follow up during the week with anyone who seemed particularly moved or troubled