

## 1 THESSALONIANS

### DISCUSSION GUIDE 5

#### ABOUT THIS SERIES

What do you do when you're persecuted for being a Christian?

Seventeen years after the resurrection of Jesus, the persecution of Christians became hostile in a city called Thessalonica. As they lost their livelihood and lost their lives, the followers of Jesus naturally started to question if the faith was worth the cost.

To encourage them, the Apostle Paul wrote them a letter to give them hope and perspective to their persecution. Today, this letter is known in your Bible as "1 Thessalonians". More than a historical document, 1 Thessalonians gives perspective to all Christians as they endure any hardships or persecution.

Join St. Mark for the next five weeks and explore 1 Thessalonians, one verse at a time, and discover timeless truths to give you hope today.

#### ITEMS NEEDED

Bibles

#### CHECKLIST BEFORE YOUR GROUP ARRIVES

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pray for your group | <input type="checkbox"/> Read through the Discussion Guide | <input type="checkbox"/> Refreshments (optional) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clean meeting area  | <input type="checkbox"/> Clean bathroom                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Crack front door        |

#### OPENING (10 MIN)

*After a general welcome, say:* Let's get this party started with an icebreaker—

#### **WHEN YOU GO ON A TRIP, DO YOU PACK THE DAY OR DAYS BEFORE, OR DO YOU PACK THE DAY OF?**

*After a discussion, say:* As we wrap up the book of 1 Thessalonians we get into a conversation on the end times. We may not have bags to pack for the last day, but there are things we can do to get ready.

We got a lot to cover today, so first, let's pray.

#### OPENING PRAYER (1 MIN)

*Host, lead the group in prayer, asking God to bless your time together.*

#### 1 THESSALONIANS 4:15–5:11 (10-15 MIN)

*After the prayer, say:*

#### **IF SOMEONE ASKED YOU LAST MONTH YOUR THOUGHTS ON THE END TIMES, WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE SAID?**

**CAN SOMEONE READ 1 THESSALONIANS 4:15 THROUGH 1 THESSALONIANS 5:11 ALOUD FOR US?**

*After the reading, say:* A key point that Paul makes is the idea of the end times should encourage us (5:11 and 4:18) and give us hope instead of causing us fear or confusion.

**HOW DOES THIS READING CLARIFY THE END TIMES FOR YOU?**

**HOW DOES THIS READING ENCOURAGE YOU ABOUT THE END TIMES?**

**WHAT ARE YOU DOING OR WORRYING ABOUT NOW THAT YOU WOULDN'T DO OR WORRY ABOUT IF YOU KNEW GOD WAS COMING BACK THIS WEEK?**

*After the reading, say:* The end times is a big topic that Pastor Chris gave us an overview on this Sunday morning. So, if you have any other questions on the rapture or Armageddon or the tribulation, that's a good resource to go back listen to. But we have the rest of Paul's letter to get to!

**1 THESSALONIANS 5:12-21 (10-15 MIN)**

The next section should be understood in the context of the end times. In particular, it's commands on being ready for the Lord's return. What does it mean to be awake? It means we do the following.

**CAN SOMEONE READ THE SECOND HALF OF VERSE 3 THROUGH VERSE 8 ALOUD FOR THE GROUP? AND CAN SOMEONE ELSE READ 1 CORINTHIANS 6:15-17 FOR US?**

*After the reading, say:* Depending how you count it, Paul lists off 14 quick commands in this section on how to be ready for the Lord's return.

**WHICH ONE ARE YOU DOING WELL AT, AND WHICH ONE OF THESE DO YOU NEED TO WORK ON THE MOST? WHY?**

**1 THESSALONIANS 5:23-24 (10 MIN)**

*After a discussion, say:* Paul end's his letter with a reminder that doing the good works don't save us at the Lord's return, it's the work of Christ. But to close our time together we're going to read these words as they're intended to be—a blessing.

**CAN SOMEONE READ 1 THESSALONIANS 5:34-24 ALOUD FOR US?**

**CLOSING PRAYER (5 – 7 MIN)**

*After a discussion, say:* Speaking of prayer—

**ARE THERE ANY OTHER PRAYER REQUESTS?**

**IS THERE ANYONE WHO WOULD LIKE TO PRAY FOR US?**

*Close the group in prayer.*