

1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11

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.

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.

Discussion Questions

- 1. Play a game of 20 Questions with your group. You think of a thing and they will collectively get 20 yes or no questions to figure out that thing. If you desire to make it extra hard and even pertain to the lesson, use "hope" or "sleep."**
- 2. Read 4:13-16. Why is the word "asleep" used multiple times instead of "dead?"**

Leader Tip: If your kids don't know, ask them, "What does John 3:16 say Jesus has come to give all believers"? ETERNAL LIFE! Paul's big point in this first section can be summed up to be: "as believers in Jesus, we have hope because of the gift of eternal life." The word, asleep, describes the dead body, not the soul. As verse 16 states, the dead in Christ will resurrect at His return and be with Him in heaven.

3. Read 4:16-18. This passage is specifically talking about the Rapture of the Church. What is the order of this event according to v. 16-18?

Leader Tip: “Rapture” is defined as the taking up or carrying away of believers to be with Christ when he returns to earth. Please note that there are MANY theories as to when the rapture occurs. (Pre-7 year tribulation, mid, post, etc.) The reason to discuss the rapture in this passage is not for end-times theology, but rather for the hope that God WILL unite us with himself and with all believers.

4. Look back at verse 13...what was Paul trying to keep from happening? (grief without hope) Look back at verse 18...how does the news of the rapture give people hope in their grief?

Leader Tip: Give the kids in your group some time to share stories where they might have grieved the loss of a loved one. Have them discuss the reality of the Rapture and whether they find hope because of that news.

5. Read 5:1-4. What are phrases that stand out to you in these 4 verses? Why? (Peace and Security, Day of the Lord, Thief in the Night, etc.)

Leader Tip: Paul’s subject in this part of the letter is changing from a discussion of the blessings of the Rapture of believers to the judgment of the world. Bring your group’s attention to the phrase, “thief in the night.” This phrase is never used to refer to the rapture of the church... rather it is used of Christ’s coming in judgment on the Day of the Lord, both at the end of the seven-year Tribulation and the conclusion of the Millennial reign of Christ. Confusing revelation stuff...in short...Christ’s judgment will be startling to the world, to say the least.

6. Read 5:5-7. What are the two juxtapositions (comparisons) being made in these verses (light & dark, sober & drunk)?

7. Read 5:8-11. Take some time to break down the Armor of God statements in verse 8.

Leader Tip: Faith is an essential protection against temptations, because it is trust in God’s promise, plan, and truth. It is an unwavering belief in God’s Word that protects us from temptation’s arrows. The helmet is always associated with salvation. Our future salvation is guaranteed, nothing can take it away.

8. Read verse 11 again. Make a plan as a group to “build one another up” this week.