

# Leading Up To That Day

## 5 Day Devotional

### *Day 1*

Matthew 24:32–36; 1 Thessalonians 5:1–6

#### Devotional

Jesus makes two things equally clear: No one knows the exact day or hour of His return. God's people should not be surprised when it happens. He uses a simple picture: a fig tree. You may not know the exact date of harvest, but you can recognize the signs of the season—buds, leaves, warmth. In the same way, God expects His people to live awake to the spiritual "weather," not lulled to sleep by comfort, routine, or distraction. Paul picks up this thought in 1 Thessalonians 5. He contrasts two groups: People in darkness, surprised by the "thief" (the Day of the Lord). People in light, awake and sober, who see what's happening and live prepared. Being "children of light" doesn't mean you solve every prophecy chart. It means you live aligned with reality—the reality that Jesus is coming back, judgment is real, and eternity is near. The problem in our time isn't lack of information; it's spiritual dullness. Many hear about Jesus' return their entire lives and grow numb: "People have been saying that forever." That attitude is itself a sign of the last days (2 Peter 3:3–4). The point of prophecy is not to make you curious; it's to make you serious. Not panicked. Not date-setting. But steady, alert, and purposefully faithful in a darkening world.

#### Application

**Reflection:** How many times do you hear or think about Jesus' return and then quickly move on as if it changes nothing in your daily decisions? What signs in the "season" around you (morally, spiritually, culturally) do you tend to ignore or explain away?

**Action:** Choose one area of life (time, money, relationships, entertainment) and ask: "If Jesus really could return at any time, how should this area look different?" Make one small, concrete adjustment this week in that area. Set a daily reminder (alarm or sticky note) with a short phrase like: "Live ready – Jesus is coming." Let it interrupt your routine at least once a day.

**Prayer:** "Lord Jesus, You said I will not know the day or the hour, but I do not want to live in the dark. Wake me up where I have grown spiritually sleepy. Help me to see the season I'm living in and to live ready, not fearful or careless. Make my priorities, my schedule, and my choices reflect the reality that You are coming again. Amen."

## Day 2

2 Thessalonians 2:1–3, 9–12; 1 John 2:18–19

### Devotional

Paul warns that before Christ returns there will be a great apostasy—a large-scale falling away from the faith. Not just people drifting from church attendance, but a deep rejection of God’s truth and authority. John explains that some who “went out from us” were never truly “of us.” They may have looked like believers—served, sang, led—but their leaving showed that their hearts had never truly belonged to Christ.

This is sobering because it confronts the idea that outward religion equals true faith. A person can sit in church, use Christian language, even engage in ministry, and still never have been born again. So what does genuine faith look like?

It doesn’t mean you never struggle, doubt, or sin. It means when you sin, it grieves you, and you come back to God for cleansing. It means you love the truth, even when it confronts you or costs you. It means the Holy Spirit is actively changing your desires over time.

The apostasy will be visible on a large scale in the last days—but its seeds are already here in every generation: hearts that want the benefits of religion without the authority of Christ. The question is not, “Do you attend church?” but, “Has Jesus truly become Lord of your life?”

### Application

**Reflection:** How many parts of Scripture do you quietly “skip over” or downplay because they conflict with your preferences, lifestyle, or cultural pressures? What kind of response do you usually have when God’s Word exposes your sin—defensive justifications, or humbled repentance?

**Action:** Choose one passage you normally find uncomfortable or confrontational (for example, on forgiveness, purity, pride, or loving enemies). Read it slowly, and instead of arguing with it, ask, “Lord, what do You want to change in me through this?” Identify one practical obedience step (even small) in that area and act on it this week.

**Prayer:** “Holy God, protect me from a fake faith that only looks Christian on the outside. Give me a deep love for Your truth, even when it challenges me. Where my heart has resisted You, soften me. Do not let me be hardened by sin or deceived by lies. Make my faith real, rooted in repentance and trust in Jesus alone. Amen.”

## Day 3

### 2 Thessalonians 2:3–8; Daniel 7:23–25

#### Devotional

Scripture describes a future world leader, often called the Antichrist, “the man of lawlessness.” He will exalt himself above God, deceive nations, and sit in a place of worship claiming to be God.

Paul points out something crucial: The mystery of lawlessness is already at work. The full unveiling of the lawless one is restrained until God allows it. In other words, the spirit that will characterize the Antichrist’s world is already spreading: hostility to God’s authority, rewriting morality, reshaping laws and norms to remove any trace of divine accountability. You see it every time culture calls good “evil” and evil “good,” and every time God’s design is mocked or discarded. The man of lawlessness will fit that environment perfectly. He will not appear in a vacuum; he will be welcomed in a world that already despises God’s law. If people hate God’s rule now, they will gladly embrace a leader who encourages their rebellion.

Yet notice the outcome: He is doomed to destruction. The Lord will destroy him with the breath of His mouth and the brightness of His coming (2 Thessalonians 2:8). The greatest manifestation of evil in human history collapses at a word from Christ.

It is not enough to simply be against “the Antichrist” in theory while living lawlessly in practice. You are either growing in submission to Christ’s authority, or you are being quietly shaped by a lawless spirit.

#### Application

**Reflection:** What kinds of attitudes, shows, music, or social media do you regularly consume that normalize or celebrate “lawlessness” (rejection of God’s standards) in your heart? How many of your moral positions are formed more by culture and feelings than by Scripture?

**Action:** Identify one input in your life (a show, account, podcast, or habit) that clearly pulls you toward lawlessness or dulls your sensitivity to sin. Replace that time with prayer and Scripture.

**Prayer:** “Lord Jesus, in a world that is rushing toward lawlessness, anchor my heart in Your truth. Expose any ways I have quietly agreed with or enjoyed what You call sin. Give me courage to stand for Your ways, even when they are unpopular. I trust that You will ultimately defeat all evil. Help me to live on the side of Your kingdom now, in my choices and convictions. Amen.”

## Day 4

### 2 Thessalonians 2:9–12; Matthew 24:4–5, 23–25

#### Devotional

End-time deception will not be shallow. It will involve “all kinds of false miracles, signs, and wonders” and every kind of wicked deception. The man of lawlessness will be empowered by Satan to produce spiritual experiences that look impressive, persuasive, even “anointed.” The frightening part is not just that there will be deceivers; it’s that there will be people ready to be deceived. Paul tells us why: “They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.” The problem is not that they never heard the truth. The problem is that they never loved the truth.

You can admire the Bible, quote it, or use it selectively—and still not love it. Loving the truth means you welcome it even when it confronts your idols, rearranges your plans, or puts you at odds with the world. Because they rejected the love of the truth, God gives them over to a strong delusion. They no longer merely choose lies; they are handed over to lies. That is a frightening judgment. Jesus warns that the deception will be so persuasive that, if it were possible, even the elect would be deceived. His point is not that true believers will finally be lost, but that the deception will be incredibly convincing—emotional, experiential, and popular. So, how do you guard yourself? Not by chasing every new teacher, dream, or sign, but by rooting yourself deeply in Scripture and loving what God loves. The safest Christians in a deceptive age are not the most sensational, but the most biblically grounded and truth-loving.

#### Application

**Reflection:** How many of your spiritual influences (books, podcasts, teachers, music) do you evaluate mainly by how they make you feel rather than by how faithfully they line up with Scripture? What kind of truth from God’s Word do you tend to resist the most? Truth about sin, suffering, money, sexuality, forgiveness, authority?

**Action:** Take one passage this week (for example, John 14–17, Romans 8, or a psalm you know) and slowly read it, asking specifically, “Lord, teach me to love this truth, not just agree with it.”

**Prayer:** “God of truth, protect me from deception. Expose any love for lies in my heart, any desire to hear only what is comfortable. Give me a deep love for Your Word. When Your truth confronts me, help me to receive it with humility instead of resistance. In a world full of persuasive voices, train my ears to recognize the voice of my Shepherd. Amen.”

## Day 5

1 John 2:3–6; Hebrews 10:23–25; Matthew 25:1–13

### Devotional

Are you ready? Not just doctrinally aware, but spiritually prepared. In Matthew 25, ten virgins wait for the bridegroom. All have lamps. All expect him. But only five bring extra oil. When the groom is delayed, the unprepared five run out, leave to get more oil, and return to find the door shut. The difference is not in their initial intention, but in their ongoing preparedness. 1 John 2 gives a clear test of genuine readiness: "We know that we have come to know him if we keep his commands." Obedience does not earn salvation, but it proves the reality of it. A heart that has been saved by grace is a heart that increasingly desires to obey. Hebrews 10 ties this directly to life in the church. As the Day approaches, we are not to pull back from gathering but to spur one another on and encourage each other. The closer we get to Christ's return, the more we will need each other. Yes, churches are full of broken, inconsistent, sometimes hypocritical people. But that is precisely why God places you there: to grow in love, patience, forgiveness, and humility. You cannot practice Christlike love in isolation. The question is not only, "If Jesus came today, would you be saved?" but also, "If Jesus came today, would He find you faithfully loving Him, His Word, and His people?"

### Application

**Reflection:** How many times have you allowed hurt, disappointment, or the flaws of others to keep you at a distance from active involvement in your local church?

**Action:** Choose one concrete way to lean into your local church this week: attend faithfully, join a small group, serve in a simple role, or intentionally encourage a struggling believer. Identify one person who has hurt or frustrated you in the church. Ask God to help you take a small step toward them—praying for them daily this week, speaking kindly, or letting go of a grudge.

**Prayer:** "Lord Jesus, I want to be ready for Your return—not just in words, but in the way I live. Teach me to obey Your commands out of love for You. Give me grace to love Your church, even when people are difficult or disappointing. Fill me with the oil of Your Spirit so that my faith does not dry out. When You come, may You find me trusting, obeying, and loving as Your disciple. Amen."