

Living in the Last Days— Preparing for the Return of Christ

... To the church of the Thessalonians ... ²We always thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers. ³We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Thessalonians 1:1-3 NIV

For we know, brothers and sisters loved by God, that he has chosen you, ⁵because our gospel came to you not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction. ...

1 Thessalonians 1:4-5 NIV

3 Ways Believers Live Ready in the Last Days

We turn.

We serve.

We wait.

1. We turn from idols that deceive to the God who saves.

... They tell how you turned to God from idols ...

1 Thessalonians 1:9 NIV

An idol is anything you put in God's place.

But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. ²People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, ³without love, unforgiving, ... ⁴lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God—⁵having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with such people. 2 Timothy 3:1-5 NIV

2. We serve the living God, not dead idols.

... They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God ... 1 Thessalonians 1:9 NIV

douleuō

**to serve with complete loyalty,
putting the will of another above your own**

3. We wait actively, preparing for the return of Christ.

... They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, ¹⁰and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom [God] raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.

1 Thessalonians 1:9-10 NIV

anaménein

***ana:** again, intensely*

***menein:** to remain, stay, abide*

to wait actively, faithfully, and with great expectation

3 Questions I'm Asking in the Last Days

1. Have I forgiven those who hurt me?

“For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.”

Matthew 6:14-15 NIV

2. Have I shared my faith with those who need Jesus?

3. Am I trusting in God's grace alone to save me?

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. Ephesians 2:8-9 NIV

TALK IT OVER

Read **1 Thessalonians 1:9-10**. What are some idols people might pursue in today's world? Are there any idols you personally need to turn away from?

Review the three ways believers live ready in the last days. Which one is easiest for you, which one is the most challenging, and why?

Discuss the following questions and any barriers that keep you from confidently saying "yes": Have you forgiven those who hurt you? Have you shared your faith with those who need Jesus? Are you trusting in God's grace alone to save you?