

Read: 1 Corinthians 7:29-31

Follow Jesus by Honoring Jesus

1 Corinthians 7:29-31

What I mean, brothers and sisters, is that the time is short. From now on those who have wives should live as if they do not; those who mourn, as if they did not; those who are happy, as if they were not; those who buy something, as if it were not theirs to keep; those who use the things of the world, as if not engrossed in them. For this world in its present form is passing away.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Things are very different when time is running out! How a team plays in the first half of the game compared to how they play in the final 30 seconds when they are trying to come back and win is very different. How people shop for Christmas on December 1 compared to how they shop for last-minute gifts on the morning of Christmas Eve is very different. How you work on a science project a month before it is due compared to how you work on it the night before because you forgot is very different, too. When time is short, you live and act very differently!

That's really what the apostle Paul is trying to help us understand in the verses for our devotion today. They might sound a little strange to us at first. Does Paul really mean that we should live as if we aren't married, sad, happy, or like we don't own anything? Well, not *exactly*.

It is a blessing to have a husband or wife. It is good for us to mourn when we are sad (like when a loved one dies), to be happy when good things happen, or to be thankful for the many possessions we have. Those things are good. But what the apostle wants us to understand is that none of those things—or anything else in life—should ever be *more* important than God. Why? Because time is running out!

We never know how many years God will bless us with in our lives in this world. We might live to be very old, but we might not. At the same time, our Lord Jesus might return on judgment day at any time. It could happen ten years, ten months, or ten minutes from now. Because our time is limited in this world, we shouldn't get too attached to things of this world. Friends and family are wonderful. Money can be a blessing. School is good for you (yes, it really is). Toys, tools, and technology can be useful and fun. But finally, our relationship with Jesus is the one and only thing that will last forever.

Thank God that he has put us first in his heart by giving his Son Jesus to bring us forgiveness and to give us the gift of eternal life in heaven! Through Jesus we have a blessed relationship with God now in this world and forever in heaven. So enjoy your many blessings in this world.

They are good gifts of God. But remember to put first in your heart the greatest blessing of all—a life with Jesus in heaven. What a joy it will be to be there in a place where time will never run out with him!

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- How did Jesus show us that he loves us so very much?
- What are some ways that you can show your love for Jesus?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- What are some of your favorite earthly blessings that God has given to you?
- How might some of those good blessings turn into something that leads us to push God out of our lives?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- Why do you think God *doesn't* tell us when our life will end or when he will return on judgment day?
- Discuss real, practical ways that you can show honor and love for God this week.

Closing Prayer:

Dear Jesus, you gave yourself in love to pay the price for my sins so that I can be a child of God. Help me show you love and honor now with the way that I live for you. Amen.

Hymn: CW 453:1,4,5 – Come, Follow Me, the Savior Spoke

“Come, follow me,” the Savior spoke, “All in my way abiding.
Deny yourselves; the world forsake; Obey my call and guiding.
Oh, bear the cross, whate’er betide; Take my example for your guide.

“I teach you how to shun and flee What harms your souls’ salvation,
Your hearts from ev’ry guile to free, From sin and its temptation.
I am the refuge of the soul And lead you to your heav’nly goal.”

Then let us follow Christ our Lord And take the cross appointed
And, firmly clinging to his Word, In suffering be undaunted.
For those who bear the battle’s strain The crown of heav’nly life obtain.