

**Read: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11**

## Encourage Each Other About Judgment Day

### **1 Thessalonians 5:4-5, 11**

But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. You are all children of the light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness... Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

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

Have you ever played hide-and-seek? It's a fun game to play! The rules of the game are simple. First, you wait for your friends to hide. Then, you look high and low, near and far, searching for the spot where your friends might be. One way to make the game even more exciting is to play in the dark with a flashlight! Now, the game is more challenging! You have to shine your light into every corner and hiding place to see who might be there. For those who hide, the darkness can be a big help. They can sneak around without anyone noticing... until the light shines on them! Then, they're "it!"

The Bible talks about people who like to live in darkness and people who are called to shine a light. While the idea of hiding in the dark might make for a fun game, it's not a good way for us to live. God warns that sometimes people prefer to hide in the dark because that's where their sins and shame can't be seen. A person in the dark can cheat and steal without anyone else noticing... not a good place for a Christian to be! God gives us the light of his Word to keep us out of the darkness and away from sin. In that Word, God reminds us that Jesus died for us and we are his dear children who live in the light of his love. God's Word today reminds us, "You are all children of the light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness."

When King Jesus returns in glory on judgment day, his holy love will shine a light on everything we have ever done, just like a flashlight reveals everything that is hidden in the dark. Have you ever had the lights turned on first thing in the morning? What a shock! People who live in the darkness of sin and unbelief will be surprised when Jesus returns! But believers will be ready for Jesus to come back because we are awake in faith, living in his light. We are protected by his love and we are guarded from judgment by faith.

Games like hide-and-seek' can be fun, but we know that they are only games. When it comes to the life that Jesus has given me, it's not a game, it's for real! Jesus calls me to live in his light and shine his light into the world. God wants me to stay connected to his Word. Let's encourage

each other and encourage others, so all live in the light of faith until Jesus returns to take us to be with him forever in heaven.

*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 Younger Children**

- When we do bad things, we might be tempted to hide them and not tell anyone. Why is that a bad idea? What good things happen when we come clean and admit our sins?
- We are children of the light. What are some things we can do to shine like lights for Jesus?

### **Questions for Elementary Age Children**

- What does it look like to live in the “darkness” of sin? What does it look like to live in the “light” of faith?
- What can you do to encourage someone else to walk in the light with you?

### **Questions for Middle School and Above**

- In this passage, Paul encourages us, “Let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be awake and sober.” (v. 6) Compare and contrast what life looks like for a person who is spiritually “asleep” vs. one who is “awake and sober.”
- Describe a time when someone’s encouragement meant a lot to you or impacted your life. What did they say that meant so much to you?

### **Closing Prayer:**

Dear Jesus, without your love, I would be lost in the darkness of sin. But your perfect love and bright shining Word have shown me who I really am—your own child, called to share your love in a dark world. Make me strong to share your light until you come back to take me to heaven. Amen.

### **Hymn: CW 771:1 – I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light**

I want to walk as a Child of the light  
I want to follow Jesus  
God sent the stars to give light to the world  
The star of my life is Jesus  
In him, there is no darkness at all  
The night and the day are both alike  
The Lamb is the light of the city of God  
Shine in my heart, Lord Jesus.