



NEW
HOPE
WINDWARD

the
END
TIMES

WHO MAKES
IT TO
HEAVEN?

SMALL GROUP GUIDE

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SMALL GROUP TIPS

- 1. START & FINISH ON TIME.** Doing this will show your small group you value their time.
- 2. BE COMFORTABLE WITH SILENCE.** Uncomfortable silences are bound to happen. It's okay! A long pause during a group discussion can be powerful. A *pause* gives space for quieter people to break into the conversation; silence allows people to figure out exactly what they would like to say.
- 3. CONFIDENTIALITY IS IMPORTANT.** Confidentiality is the key to building trust in relationships. Here are a few mottos to remember to be confidential: "What is said in small group, stays in small group." **Nothing, nobody, never...** "*Share nothing, to nobody, never*" outside of the group.
- 4. MAKE GROUP A PRIORITY.** Communicate in advance when you will be unable to attend by either calling and/or texting your host or responding to the zoom email invitation by accepting or declining. This will help your host to plan accordingly especially if it is an in person small group gathering.
- 5. LISTEN WITHOUT FIXING AND TEACHING.** People desperately need a safe place to share their thoughts and be real with others. Give people space to talk without trying to fix them, correct their thoughts or teach. Choose the relationship over the desire to cast judgement or prove your point over theirs, to be "right".
- 6. BE REAL, AUTHENTIC & TRANSPARENT ABOUT WEAKNESSES & STRUGGLES.** Some people in your group may be new to faith or new to small group and will not feel comfortable answering discussion questions. They show up and listen in, but don't share what's really on their minds. Create an environment for honest and vulnerable answers. Share with a level of vulnerability that sets the tone and gives permission for everyone— regardless of spiritual maturity—to respond authentically.
- 7. NO GUILT, NO SHAME.** This series is not meant to guilt or shame anyone into doing anything.

WARNING

This series is designed to foster conversation amongst believers on a topic that is often considered taboo and uncomfortable. While literal interpretation is the rule in most other bible books, it's the opposite with Revelation, where symbolism is the rule and literalism is the exception.

It's easy to get carried away trying to interpret the symbolism of Revelation, but we need to be cautious. Even after 2,000 years, Bible scholars still aren't sure of what everything in Revelation represents. Still, the ultimate themes of End Times theology are God being in charge and good ultimately triumphing over evil.

Some of the content in this series may trigger you to preach your End Times beliefs. Please do not veer into topics that invite judgement and division. We ask that you not debate, argue or justify your beliefs of the rapture, tribulation or armageddon. Whether you are a premillennial, postmillennial or amillennial believer, the most important thing is that Jesus will return and when he does he will be looking for those who know him and are following him.

We pray you enjoy what you learn and grow closer to Christ and his family.

"Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

"Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye. --Matthew 7:1-5 (NIV)



the eND TIMES

TIPS TO A SUCCESSFUL GROUP

- **LISTEN WITHOUT FIXING AND TEACHING.** People desperately need a safe place to share their thoughts and be real with others. Give people space to talk without trying to fix them, correct their thoughts or teach. Choose the relationship over the desire to cast judgement or prove your point over theirs, to be "right".

Week 1: What are the End Times?

ICEBREAKER

What was/is the hardest subject for you in school? Ex: Math, Geography, Speech, PE etc.

INTRODUCTION

There is nothing in the bible quite as profound, complex and confusing as bible prophecy. The most important and talked about prophecy in the New Testament being the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Even the disciples had to approach Jesus at the Mount of Olives to ask "Tell us, when will all this happen? **What sign will signal your return and the end of the world?**" (Matthew 24:3 NLT). This week, we will look at what Jesus and the apostles tell us about the Last Days so we can better answer; What are the End Times?

READ |

One of the best ways to answer the question posed in the title of this lesson is to say; the End Times are the steps the world will go through before the second coming of Jesus Christ and His final judgement of the world.

Here are **Five steps** of the End Times Jesus gives us in Matthew 24:

1) The Birth Pains, a time without discernment

*For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Messiah,' and **will deceive many**. You will **hear of wars and rumors of wars**, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. **Nation will rise against nation**, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be **famines and earthquakes** in various places.*

--Matthew 24:5-7 (NIV)

In this step, mankind is divided amongst themselves through fear, deception, rumor, aggression and disaster. This will be a time of little trust and much confusion, where the world will be crying out for a savior.

2) The Great Distress, a time without conviction

*Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of **most** will grow cold, but the **one** who stands firm to the end **will be saved**. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.*

--Matthew 24:12-14 (NIV)

In this step, mankind is demoralized by the teaching of false prophets and divided from the church and Word of God. This will be a time of persecution, anger and bitterness, where the world needs the Word, but many will be deaf to its peace and promise.

3) The Plunge Into Darkness, a time without order and light

*"the sun will be darkened,
and the moon will not give its light;
the stars will fall from the sky,
and the heavenly bodies will be shaken."*

--Matthew 24:29 (NIV)

In this step, mankind loses sight of the glory of God's creation and is divided from His light and its order. This will be a time of darkness, where chaos will thrive and the foundations of many will be shaken.

4) The Sign and Coming, a time of repentance

*“Then will appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven. And then all the peoples of the earth **will mourn** when they see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory.
--Matthew 24:30 (NIV)*

In this step, Christ is revealed and mankind is divided into the faithful and the fallen. This will be a time of grief and regret, where many come to terms with the hour at hand.

5) The Judgement, a time of reckoning

*That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left.
--Matthew 24:40-41 (NIV)*

In this step, mankind is judged by the living God and divided (set apart) from the evil of the world. This will be a time of justice and retribution, where many are suddenly taken.

Discuss the steps above. What stood out to you as an important point or new idea?

READ

According to Paul's writings the End Times are a time when people will turn away from God and his commandments to live in the sin and desire of the fallen world:

*"In the last days there will be very difficult times. For people will **love only themselves and their money**. They will be **boastful and proud**, scoffing at God, **disobedient** to their parents, and **ungrateful**. They will consider nothing sacred. They will be unloving and unforgiving; they will slander others and **have no self-control**. They will be cruel and hate what is good. They will betray their friends, **be reckless, be puffed up with pride**, and **love pleasure rather than God**. They will act religious, but they will reject the power that could make them godly. Stay away from people like that!
--2 Timothy 3:1-5 (NLT)*

In this passage he describes the heart of man as it grows cold in the End Times. They will love only themselves, their money and not God. They will be boastful, proud, disobedient and ungrateful. They will be unloving, unforgiving and lack self control. They will love pleasure more than God. Some will even be religious but won't have a relationship with Jesus in their heart or live on the foundations of His grace and power.

How can you better guard your heart from people and actions like those described in 2 Timothy 3? Which of the bolded phrases is hardest for you to guard against?

READ |

The bible even ends in this prophesy! In the Revelation of John he is given a vision of the End Times while worshiping in the Spirit (Revelation 1:9). John is shown how the End Times will unfold through the fall of Babylon, Jesus' mighty return, His judgement, reign, defeat of satan and the raising of a new Jerusalem or heaven on earth.

"It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I will give water without cost from the spring of the water of life. Those who are victorious will inherit all this, and I will be their God and they will be my children.

--Revelation 21:6-7 (NIV)

John's vision of the End Times is a love story. Jesus returns to fight for His bride (church) and the people He loves against the forces of evil. With the weapon of truth / the Word of God (Sword coming from His mouth) he will defeat all enemies. Jesus is coming for his bride and that makes the End Times a time of hope and joy for believers.

How does it make you feel knowing that God's truth and love for us will overcome all evil in the End Times? How has knowing God's Word helped you to fight off evil?

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

This week, find comfort in your own understanding of the End Times. Guard your heart from the world by staying in God's Word and using it in prayer to call out any Evil that may be stealing peace from your life.

ADDITIONAL ACTION STEPS (Optional):

- Each week, we encourage you to read additional scriptures and feed your mind, heart and soul with God's word. We have provided SCRIPTURES on the next page for you to do your daily devotions.

CLOSE IN PRAYER:

Father, thank You for Your wisdom and warning of the End Times. We ask for Your mercy on all who do not know You or have turned away from You. Open their hearts and minds with the light of Your love and bring them out of darkness.

(PRAYER FOR SALVATION) Lord Jesus, I confess I'm a sinner and ask for Your forgiveness. I accept Your death as the penalty for my sin. Please come into my heart as my Lord and Savior. Take complete control of my life. By faith I receive You into my heart as the Son of God, my Savior and Lord of my life. From now on, help me live for You, with You in control. In Jesus' name.



Make Time to be in God's WORD

Reading God's Word daily re-patterns the way you think & transforms your mind. Doing your daily devotions is an excellent way to record, process, & share what God is teaching you on a personal level. We do this using S.O.A.P.

- S - Scripture**
- O - Observation**
- A - Application**
- P - Prayer**

Here's an example:

S: *Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.' "*

--Matthew 4:4 (NIV)

O: Jesus said that we can't live on food alone. Our life is sustained through His Word.

A: Just as food is important to me, God's Word is even more because it will sustain me and give me the strength to live out my life.

P: Jesus, thank You for reminding me that I need Your Word to give me the wisdom & strength to follow You. Help me to make time to spend with You daily. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

SCRIPTURES FOR S.O.A.P.

Day 1:

In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch of David to spring forth; and He shall execute justice and righteousness on the earth.

--Jeremiah 33:15 (NASB)

Day 2:

For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you.

--1 Peter 1:20 (NLT)

Day 3:

Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come.

Therefore we know that it is the last hour.

--1 John 2:18 (NIV)

Day 4:

So that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

--Ephesians 2:7 (ESV)

Day 5:

God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things.

--Hebrews 1:1-2 (NIV)



the END TIMES

TIPS TO A SUCCESSFUL GROUP

- **LISTEN WITHOUT FIXING AND TEACHING.** People desperately need a safe place to share their thoughts and be real with others. Give people space to talk without trying to fix them, correct their thoughts or teach. Choose the relationship over the desire to cast judgement or prove your point over theirs, to be "right".

Week 2: Signs Of The End Times

ICEBREAKER

What is your most anticipated day of the year and why? Ex. Birthday, Holiday, Event etc.

INTRODUCTION

From the moment it was first prophesied that Jesus would return, every generation has proclaimed that the time is near or now. Today, as it was back then, many Christians are wondering if the current times are the End Times. In this lesson, we will be looking at the signs and symptoms that Jesus and his apostles tell us will be shown and felt as the birth pains of Jesus coming. Let's dive into scripture and attempt to look around us for Signs of the End Times.

READ | **WHEN WILL JESUS RETURN?**

The first question to discover if we are in the End Times is; when will Jesus return? This is one of the most talked about events in the New Testament. Early Christians asked:

“Where is this ‘coming’ he promised? Ever since our ancestors died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation.” --2 Peter 3:4 (NIV)

Many first-century Christians believed that Jesus would come in their lifetime. As Christians began to die without His return, some began to doubt. False teachers, used that doubt to question whether Christ was real or ever going to return. To avoid this trap ourselves we must turn to the words of Jesus who reminds us:

“No one knows the day or hour when these things will happen, not even the angels in heaven or the Son himself. Only the Father knows.” --Matthew 24:36 (NLT)

No one will know the time, so do not stress about it! Jesus does not want us to lose our peace for prophesy as so many have in the past and present.

Do you feel anxiety or anticipation when it comes to the End Times? How does it make you feel knowing that the people of the bible likely felt the same way? Why do you think that the God who gives us everything we need, doesn’t give us the time?

READ | SIGNS OF THE END TIMES: **GREAT PERSECUTION**

Although we aren't meant to know the time, the bible gives us plenty of things to look for as signs of the End Times. One of the first signs Jesus tells us to look for is great persecution of Christ followers. He said it this way:

*“But before all this occurs, there will be **a time of great persecution**. You will be dragged into synagogues and prisons, and you will stand trial before kings and governors because you are my followers. But this will be your opportunity to tell them about me. Even those closest to you—your parents, brothers, relatives, and friends—will betray you.* --Luke 21:12-13,16 (NIV)

Even in 2023, there are many places around the world where Christians are openly arrested and abused for practicing their faith. We often take for granted the luxury we have to preach the Word and live openly in our Christian beliefs. Jesus' words in Luke are a call for conviction in our faith and a reminder that in the End Times, even those who love us will turn against us because of our devotion to Christ.

Have you faced persecution for your belief and faith in Jesus Christ? Share some tips, scriptures or actions you use to stay strong in your faith, in the face of adversity.

READ | SIGNS OF THE END TIMES: **WARS AND DISASTERS**

While Christians are being persecuted, the world will not have the peace of Christ. Jesus warns us of multiple signs we should look for, but not stress over, in those times.

*And when you hear of **wars** and **insurrections**, don't panic. Yes, these things must take place first, but the end won't follow immediately." Then he added, "Nation will go to war against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be **great earthquakes**, and there will be **famines and plagues** in many lands, and there will be terrifying things and great miraculous signs from heaven. --Luke 21:9-11 (NIV)*

Turn on the news and you will see terrifying things happening all around the world. From a global pandemic to armed conflict in Europe with rumors of World War, to the earthquake in Turkey that killed tens of thousands, things appear to be getting worse.

Discuss a stressful time or process you had to go through. Did panicking help the situation or make things worse? How does your relationship with Christ and trust in God help you to find peace in the storm of recent turmoils?

READ | SIGNS OF THE END TIMES: **FALSE MESSIAHS**

Another clear sign foretold by Jesus and his apostles that the End Times are near will be false prophets claiming to be the messiah. Jesus said it this way:

"Don't let anyone mislead you, for many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Messiah, and saying, 'The time has come!' But don't believe them." --Luke 21:8 (NLT)

The Jewish concept of a messiah is someone anointed to be King during the End Times. Claiming to be messiah would grant someone extreme influence and power over others. Jesus knew that as the world falls into times of distress, people will cry out for a savior and that bad actors would take advantage of this for their own benefit.

For false messiahs and false prophets will rise up and perform great signs and wonders so as to deceive, if possible, even God's chosen ones. --Matthew 24:24 (NIV)

We are called to have our life led by Christ and no one else. Each failed messiah leads more of God's people into doubt about Christ's Word and away from God.

Has someone ever led you away from your walk with Christ? How do you ensure you are following Christ with all the distractions, deceivers and doubt in the world?

READ | *JESUS' RETURN WILL BE SUDDEN*

Jesus warned us against false security. That even if we properly interpret all the signs and determine that we are surely in the End times, His return will still come upon us suddenly. To illustrate this point Jesus uses the story of Noah and the great flood.

“Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man.”

--Luke 17:26 (NIV)

In the days before the flood, life went on as usual for everyone except Noah and his family, who prepared. When it began to rain, the flood came swiftly and killed everyone.

Believers must always be ready for Christ's return, at a moments notice. When Jesus returns, there will be no second chances. We must prepare ourselves to be a vessel that will withstand the second coming by surrendering our lives to Christ daily and following Him to the best of our abilities.

How does it make you feel, hearing how suddenly Jesus will return? Do you feel you are ready if He were to return today? What can you do to be prepared for his return? (Ex. Accept Christ, work faithfully for Christ, share Christ with others, pursue Christ-likeness)

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

- This week, stay close to God's peace and purpose for your life by engaging in God's Word and with God's people.
- Be purposeful to separate your thought life from the anxiety and chaos of the world and steer it towards anticipation of His return.
- Begin a relationship with Christ if you haven't already, then surrender daily to his plans and work faithfully for Him.

ADDITIONAL ACTION STEPS (Optional):

- Do the daily devotion S.O.A.P.S for this week on the next page.

CLOSE IN PRAYER:

Dear Father, give me the strength, understanding and resolve to stay in Your will for my life. Thank You for giving Your Son to be my life leader and good Shepard. Help me to stay engaged in Your word and be renewed in my faith daily. Give me peace in Your presence from the stress and anxieties of this fallen world. I trust in Your timing and not in my own desires. Your ways are better than mine. In Jesus' name, amen.



Make Time to be in God's WORD

Reading God's Word daily re-patterns the way you think & transforms your mind. Doing your daily devotions is an excellent way to record, process, & share what God is teaching you on a personal level. We do this using S.O.A.P.

- S - Scripture**
- O - Observation**
- A - Application**
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Here's an example:

S: *Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.' "*

--Matthew 4:4 (NIV)

O: Jesus said that we can't live on food alone. Our life is sustained through His Word.

A: Just as food is important to me, God's Word is even more because it will sustain me and give me the strength to live out my life.

P: Jesus, thank You for reminding me that I need Your Word to give me the wisdom & strength to follow You. Help me to make time to spend with You daily. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

SCRIPTURES FOR S.O.A.P.

Day 1:

But stay awake at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."

--Matthew 24:21-22 (ESV)

Day 2:

...but the Lord rescued me from all of it. Yes, and everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

--2 Timothy 3:11-12 (NLT)

Day 3:

That is why we can say without any doubt or fear, "The Lord is my Helper, and I am not afraid of anything that mere man can do to me."

--Hebrews 13:6 (TLB)

Day 4:

The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

--2 Corinthians 4:4 (NIV)

Day 5:

"Behold, I am coming like a thief. Blessed is the one who stays awake and keeps his clothes, so that he will not walk about naked and people will not see his shame."

--3 John 1:4 (AMP)



the eND TIMES

TIPS TO A SUCCESSFUL GROUP

- **BE COMFORTABLE WITH SILENCE.** Uncomfortable silences are bound to happen. It's okay! A long pause during a group discussion can be powerful. A *pause* gives space for quieter people to break into the conversation; silence allows people to figure out exactly what they would like to say.

Week 3: How to Prepare for The End Times

ICEBREAKER

What is something you had to do but wasn't prepared for? (Ex. Take a test, have a kid, etc.)

INTRODUCTION

For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him (*John 3:17*). The End Times can be alarming and even scary. However, it is important to remember that Jesus is coming back for us, for His family, because He loves us. Scripture gives us certainty that Christ is coming back and in His glory He will judge the world and save all those who are faithful. This week we will seek comfort in God's Word to guide us in How to Prepare for the End Times.

READ I

We are born into the world yet we are called to not be of the world. Instead, we are taught to turn away from the temptation of sin in the world and focus on saving ourselves and others through the Word of God and our relationship with Christ.

Pray that we may be delivered from wicked and evil people, for not everyone has faith. But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen you and protect you from the evil one. We have confidence in the Lord that you are doing and will continue to do the things we command. May the Lord direct your hearts into God's love and Christ's perseverance.

--2 Thessalonians 3:2-5 (NIV)

We have been given a race and are called to run it as though we will win the prize (1 *Corinthians 9:24*). However, we are not running a race of the world but of the Word. Blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear the Truth of Jesus, the author and Perfecter of our faith. We must keep our eyes fixed on Him, and call upon His strength and understanding that awards get distributed at the finish line.

Share how your relationship with Christ has been a source of strength in your race. Discuss how you can separate yourself from the temptation, sin, fear, stress and distraction of the world to better focus on living God's Word.

READ I

To ensure we run our race well, the bible gives us wisdom through scripture. In *Matthew 24* after warning that we will not know the hour of the Last Day and that it will come like a thief in the night, Jesus assures us:

*"Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time? It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns." *Matthew 24:44-45 (NIV)**

Here are three ways we can be faithful and wise stewards of the gifts God has given us:

1) Remain active and put your God given spiritual gifts and talents to work.

Paul urges us to be diligent in doing good, and warns us not to be idle in the End Times.

"We hear that some among you are idle and disruptive. They are not busy; they are busybodies. Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the food they eat. And as for you, brothers and sisters, never tire of doing what is good.

--2 Thessalonians 3:2-5 (NIV)

God created you perfectly with plans and purposes for this life. God wants you to fulfill these plans by using your gifts and talents to build a life of faithful service to the Kingdom. Focus on His will for you. Serve and give your time for others, and He will steer you into using your gifts as talents for good.

2) Overcome adversity with prayer and discernment in the Holy Spirit.

Christ through His Word and sacrifice has given us all the tools we need to make it through the Last Day. While we will undoubtedly face adversity in our life, we are not meant to be discouraged.

For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.
--2 Timothy 1:7 (NIV)

God wants us to be free of the debt, addiction and reliance on the world. To help set us free he gave us the Holy Spirit and the ability to focus on and harness its fruit.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.
--Galatians 5:22-23 (NIV)

To experience the fruit of the Spirit we are told to stay connected to the Vine (in relationship with Jesus) and grow in the Word (learning and obeying God's Word).

3) Trust in His will and do not fear, God is in control.

If you have given your life to Jesus Christ then you know that God is in control and you can relax. Stress and fear distract us from the good we are called to do.

But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters loved by the Lord, because God chose you as firstfruits to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. He called you to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. --2 Thessalonians 2:13-14 (NIV)

God chose you! And while salvation is a free gift, we must accept it through our faith in knowing Jesus and giving Him control over our lives. So, if you are unsure in your faith, if you do not have a relationship with Christ, or if there are still areas you haven't given Him control over, **now** is the time to commit.

Which of these three (above) is hardest for you to be consistent in? What can you start doing now to be a more wise and faithful servant/steward of God's grace?

READ I

Regardless of the End Times, every day we have until the Last Day, is a gift from God. Each day is an opportunity to make an impact and save another life. So the best way to prepare for the End Times is by fulfilling the **Great Commandment and Great Commission** listed below:

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’
--Matthew 22:37-39 (NIV)

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always,” --Matthew 28:19-20 (NIV)

Praise God that you are in the right place for these times because New Hope Windward is guided by these in our vision to **Love God, Love People, Make Disciples**. So take every opportunity to do right by God, do good for others, invite them to church and share with them the difference that Jesus has made in your life. Don't stop short, go the extra mile and share the truth of our Salvation through Christ and His desire to show them the way.

Share how Jesus has made an impact in your life and how you can use that testimony to help bring others to Christ in preparation for the End Times.

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

This week, focus your actions and intentions on how to better:

- Separate yourself from this sinful world to live in God's will for you.
- Use God's wisdom, gifts and talents to be more obedient and have more peace.
- Impact and save others living out the Great Commandment and Commission.

ADDITIONAL ACTION STEPS (Optional):

Do the daily devotions this week on the next page.

CLOSE IN PRAYER:

God, You are in control. Fill me with Your Holy Spirit so that I can be a better vehicle for Your will in my life. Thank you for Your Word and giving Your only Son to be my life leader and the example of how I can overcome anything through You. Guide me and give me strength in my race and let my victories be a source of strength for others. Give me purpose in all my work and effort as I use them to glorify You. In Jesus' name, amen.



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P: Jesus, thank You for reminding me that I need Your Word to give me the wisdom & strength to follow You. Help me to make time to spend with You daily. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

SCRIPTURES FOR S.O.A.P.

Day 1:

Don't you realize that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize? So run to win!

--1 Corinthians 9:24 (NLT)

Day 2:

God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might bring Israel to repentance and forgive their sins. We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him."

--Acts 1:8 (NIV)

Day 3:

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

--Psalm 23:4 (MEV)

Day 4:

If you love me, you will obey what I command. I will ask the Father. And he will give you another Friend to help you and to be with you forever. The Friend is the Spirit of truth.

--John 14:15-17 (NIV)

Day 5:

You didn't choose me, but I chose you. I have appointed you to go, to produce fruit that will last, and to ask the Father in my name to give you whatever you ask for.

--John 15:16 (GW)

WHO MAKES IT TO HEAVEN?



TIPS TO A SUCCESSFUL GROUP

- **KEEP DISCUSSIONS CONFIDENTIAL:** Confidentiality is the key to building trust in relationships. Here are a few mottos to remember to be confidential: *“What is said in small group, stays in small group.”* **Nothing, nobody, never...** *“Share nothing, to nobody, never”* outside of the group.

Week 4: Do Gooders Don't Go to Heaven

ICEBREAKER

What is something you consider yourself good at doing? Ex. Skills, talents, passions etc.

INTRODUCTION

A common belief is that good people go to Heaven. So, if we are good and follow the golden rule to Do unto others as you would have them do unto you (Luke 6:31), then we will go to heaven. After all, that seems like a fair, just, and attainable path that supports our desire for a God who only knows and does good. However, when we dig into scripture we find that good is not good enough for heaven. This week we will be looking at who makes it to heaven and confronting the uncomfortable truth from scripture that Do Gooders Don't Go to Heaven.

READ |

Every Christian wants to get into heaven. We give our lives to Christ in the hope that when we die we hear our Lord say, "**Well done, good and faithful servant!**" However, the bible gives no equation for "'good enough". Instead, Paul insists that whatever we do, our deeds alone will not justify us into heaven:

*"No one will be declared righteous in God's sight by the works of the law,"
--Romans 3:20*

Paul's words seem critical, surely Jesus will be more reasonable in His expectations for us to get into Heaven. In His famous sermon on the mount Jesus explains:

*"For I tell you that **unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law**, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven"... **"Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect."**
--Matthew 5:20,48 (NIV)*

It appears as though Jesus is raising the bar on "good enough" by telling the people they must be perfect like God and live more righteously than their pastors. In reality, Jesus is smashing the bar and leveling the playing field for all believers, because if no one is worthy, then everyone is equal in the eyes of God.

Have you ever felt less worthy than others when you have fallen short of God's standards? How does it make you feel to understand that in Christ, we are all equal in the eyes of God?

READ |

God leveled the playing field because he wants us **ALL** to make it into heaven. God made the path foolproof by anointing His Son as our living role model, example and guide to Him. **To show us the way** Jesus had to make the ultimate sacrifice in love.

*When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. Jesus said, "**Father, forgive them**, for they do not know what they are doing."
--Luke 23:33-34 (NIV)*

According to scripture, **good people are NOT going to Heaven. Forgiven people are.** But not just any forgiveness, the one gifted to us by Christ, which cannot be earned, isn't justified, isn't fair and one that we definitely do not deserve.

*For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever **believes in him** shall not perish but have **everlasting life**.
--John 3:16 (NIV)*

There is nothing you can **DO** to go to heaven. It is already **DONE** through Jesus Christ, who is the way the truth and the life. Only Jesus is good enough for heaven "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God," (Romans 3:23) so **we are saved not by our good deeds but by the Good News** of our salvation in Christ, which is based on:

1. **FAITH:** The *Justification* of our salvation based on acceptance and belief in the righteousness from God given to us by Jesus.

"For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.
--Romans 3:28 (NIV)

2. **GRACE:** The *Giving* of our salvation, which we do not deserve and have not earned.

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)

3. **MERCY:** The *Receipt* of our salvation despite our sin which was forgiven on the cross.

He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy.
--Titus 3:5 (NIV)

**How have these truths of Faith, Grace and Mercy helped you in your walk with Jesus?
How does the Good News of your salvation motivate you to help others accept
Christ's gift of salvation?**

READ |

Through Christ's sacrifice we are saved, not **BY** good works, but **FOR** good works. To prepare us in our salvation for His will in our lives He teaches us to do the following:

ACCEPT Christ's Righteousness

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.
--2 Corinthians 5:21 (NIV)

The only way to be righteous enough to make it into heaven is to accept God's free gift of salvation. When we do, we become righteous to God. In other words, when God sees us, He sees His Son in us and thereby we become "the righteousness of God." This is how we, as imperfect people, get to go to a perfect place...Heaven. The only ticket to heaven is through Jesus' righteousness, not our own.

CONFESS our Sins

Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.
--James 5:16a (NIV)

In order to forgive others, we must first be able and willing to confess our sins to each other, so that we may be healed. As we humble ourselves in confession of our sins, we can start to build trust in our relationships.

FORGIVE Sin Against Us

For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.
--Matthew 6:14 (NIV)

The basis of our salvation is forgiveness. So we are called to forgive each other in order to save our relationships and put into practice the Mercy and Grace shown to us.

RECONCILE our Relationships

“Everything is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.”
--2 Corinthians 5:18 (NIV)

Our reconciliation to God through Christ on the cross allows us to have a relationship with Him. It also models for us how to reconcile and make peace in our relationships.

Which practice above is easiest and hardest for you to do in your relationships? How does your relationship with God inspire you to do good works for others?

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

This week, share the Good News of your salvation with others and seek to reconcile relationships and do good for those around you. If you haven't invited Jesus into your heart, pray and ask him to forgive you of your sins and become your Lord and Savior.

ADDITIONAL ACTION STEPS (Optional):

- Do the daily devotions this week on the next page.

CLOSE IN PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, thank You for making me worthy of eternal life despite my thoughts and actions. Thank You for the grace and mercy You showed the world on the cross when you sacrificed your only son. Help us to remain worthy of this gift through our faith and belief in our salvation which we share with others as the Good News. Allow us to do your bidding in our relationships and to focus our good deeds not on your approval but on the blessing of those around us. In Jesus' Name, Amen.



Make Time to be in God's WORD

Reading God's Word daily re-patterns the way you think & transforms your mind. Doing your daily devotions is an excellent way to record, process, & share what God is teaching you on a personal level. We do this using S.O.A.P.

- S - Scripture**
- O - Observation**
- A - Application**
- P - Prayer**

Here's an example:

S: *Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.' "*
--Matthew 4:4 (NIV)

O: Jesus said that we can't live on food alone. Our life is sustained through His Word.

A: Just as food is important to me, God's Word is even more because it will sustain me and give me the strength to live out my life.

P: Jesus, thank You for reminding me that I need Your Word to give me the wisdom & strength to follow You. Help me to make time to spend with You daily. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

SCRIPTURES FOR S.O.A.P.

Day 1:

There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.
--Galatians 3:28 (NIV)

Day 2:

...bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so must you do also.
--Colossians 3:13 (NASB)

Day 3:

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him."
--John 14:6-7 (NIV)

Day 4:

In his kindness God called you to share in his eternal glory by means of Christ Jesus. So after you have suffered a little while, he will restore, support, and strengthen you, and he will place you on a firm foundation.
--1 Peter 5:10 (NLT)

Day 5:

and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith
--Philippians 3:9 (ESV)

WHO MAKES IT TO HEAVEN?



TIPS TO A SUCCESSFUL GROUP

- **MAKE GROUP A PRIORITY.** Communicate in advance when you will be unable to attend by either calling and/or texting your host or responding to the zoom email invitation by accepting or declining. This will help your host to plan accordingly especially if it is an in person small group gathering.

Week 5: Can I Lose My Salvation?

ICEBREAKER

What is the most valuable thing you have ever lost? Ex. Property, relationship, freedom etc.

INTRODUCTION

God loves you so much that He gifted you with a free pass to heaven through forgiveness and salvation. For this, He asks for your belief in His Word and acceptance of the sacrifice His Son Jesus made on the cross. It is so simple. This week, we will be discussing questions of salvation such as: Are you secure in your salvation? Can you, as a Christian, lose your salvation? Will we be judged in our salvation? And, can anyone be saved? Let's finish our series on Who makes it to Heaven.

READ |

When we accept Christ's salvation, it changes our eternity but it does not change our sinful nature, which can creep in through doubt to make us feel unworthy of His love. When we feel unworthy, it is important to remember this promise:

Whoever comes to me I will never drive away. For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all those he has given me, --John 6:37-39 (NIV)

Jesus assures us that we are locked into our salvation. He will always keep us and never forsake us. God knows that our flesh is weak so He makes us strong through Christ.

Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. --Philippians 1:6 (NIV)

Even when we feel like giving up, God is not finished with us and will complete the work He chose for our lives. He will see us through any struggles on our way to heaven.

Have you ever felt like giving up on your faith? How does it make you feel knowing that God will never give up on those who accept salvation through Christ?

READ |

Security in our salvation is one of the most comforting things about being a Christian. However, that comfort can often lead to complacency and the temptation to take for granted our great gift. So does guaranteed salvation give us a license to sin? Paul says:

*Should we keep on sinning so that God can show us more and more of his wonderful grace? **Of course not!** Since we have died to sin, how can we continue to live in it?* --Romans 6:1-2 (NLT)

A life of sin is a pit of despair and those delivered from it by Christ surely won't go back. When we accept Christ, our sins die on the cross and we are made a new creation in Him (2 Corinthians 5:17) and through faith Christ remains alive in us (Galatians 2:20).

Even when we wander and turn away from Christ in our weakness. We are sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13) which will continue to give us victory over sin and guide us in our gifts and passions. If we choose a life of sin again, were we really saved?

Since accepting Christ in your life, have you ever turned away from sin? How did it make you feel? What does it mean to you to be a new creation in Christ?

READ I

Salvation is offered to all through His Grace and Mercy, but is only received by those who accept and honor it. To teach us how He will recognize believers that accept His gift, Jesus speaks in parable of goats and sheep:

"All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left." --Matthew 25:32-33

In this section, we will analyze the Sheep and the Goat to understand what Christ wants from his faithful and what he promises those who reject his offer.

Sheep: Respectful and obedient, sheep go where they are led and only eat the tops of grass; allowing the fields in which they eat to thrive. Christ recognizes His sheep by their acceptance of salvation and His righteousness, shown in how they *care for others*.

(Jesus said) For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in... Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me. --Matthew 25:35,40 (NIV)

This parable is not teaching salvation by doing good deeds, but that the evidence of your salvation will result in you doing good deeds. If you're saved and love Jesus, your life will be marked by the help you give to those in need.

Goat: Unruly and wild, goats will climb over anything to go where they please and consume grass down to the root; destroying the fields from which they eat. The goats are recognized by their selfish and stubborn actions toward others.

For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in... 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me. --Matthew 25:42,45 (NIV)

The goats are those who reject Jesus' ministry to help and heal others. They live for themselves and not with Christ in their hearts. For this selfishness they are promised banishment to hell and eternal fire. Goats are judged by their lack of compassion, understanding and acceptance of His will and commandments for their lives.

Do you feel as though you have accepted Salvation through Jesus Christ? Where are you most sheep like (obedient to care for others in need)? Where are you most goat like (stubborn) in your walk? Name one thing you can do to help those in need.

READ I

In the last series we learned that JOY stands for **Jesus, Others, Yourself** and represents the order we should prioritize in life. Putting the needs of others above your own is the key to heaven and living a Christ like life. Jesus supports this in his teachings to reconcile and be good to one another as part of our salvation (Read Matthew 18).

“Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me.
--Matthew 18:2-5 (NIV)

We often worry for our loved ones who don't know Christ, but do not know where to begin. First, start to pray for them. Help them. Witness by sharing with them how Jesus has changed your life. Invite them to church to hear the Good News. This Easter invite those in your life who need salvation to celebrate the resurrection and the hope it brings for new life. Heaven is waiting for them, they only need to believe.

Discuss your Easter Service plans. Who can you invite to start on a path to salvation and celebrate Easter this year? What do you think it means to believe like a child?

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

This week, be confident in your salvation through Christ, allow the Holy Spirit and Word of God to bring victory over any sin you are struggling with. Focus on your good works for others and start making Easter plans for you and your loved ones.

ADDITIONAL ACTION STEPS (Optional):

- Each week, we encourage you to study God's word. We have provided SCRIPTURES for S.O.A.P. to help you get into the habit of spending time with God daily.

CLOSE IN PRAYER:

Father God, thank You for loving me and sealing me in my salvation with your Son Jesus Christ. I pray you continue your work in me so that I can overcome any sin and use my talents to glorify You. Make in me a heart to serve and help those in need, start a fresh fire to keep the light in my life shining for others. Give me the confidence to be bold in my faith as I look to invite others to Easter service. Give them the eyes and heart of a child to know you and be saved. In Jesus' name, amen.



EASTER

AT NEW HOPE WINDWARD

APRIL 8 & 9



SCAN FOR TICKETS

SCRIPTURES FOR S.O.A.P.

Day 1:

to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,
--1 Peter 1:4 (NIV)

Day 2:

This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!
--2 Corinthians 5:17 (NLT)

Day 3:

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.
--Galatians 2:20 (ESV)

Day 4:

And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit,
--Ephesians 1:13 (NIV)

Day 5:

I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.
--3 John 1:4 (ESV)



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