

MEMORY VERSE

For the Lord Himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage each other with these words. 1 Thess.4:16-18

CORE COMPETENCIES

Core Beliefs

- Trinity
 - Salvation by Grace
 - Authority of Bible
 - Personal God
 - Identity in Christ
 - Church
 - Humanity
 - Compassion
 - **Eternity**
- "I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and establish His eternal kingdom."**

- Stewardship

Core Practices

- Worship
- Prayer
- Bible Study
- Single-Mindedness
- Biblical Community
- Spiritual Gifts
- Giving Away My Time
- Giving Away My Money
- Giving Away My Faith
- Giving Away My Life

Core Virtues

- Love
- Joy
- Peace
- Patience
- Kindness/Goodness
- Faithfulness
- Gentleness
- Self-Control
- Hope
- Humility

Monday

Begin your time in prayer. Ask God to give you insight into His Word as you study this passage.

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 three times, slowly. In the space below, note any key words/phrases.

What are Paul's main ideas in this passage?

What was Paul's purpose for writing these six verses to the Thessalonian believers?

Next to each reference below, jot down a phrase or sentence that summarizes the verse. This will help you create a summary outline of the passage.

vs. 13:

vs. 14:

vs. 15:

vs. 16:

vs. 17:

vs. 18:

How often do you think about when you will be reunited with Jesus? Why?

Ask God to give you a fuller understanding and hope in the promise of Christ's return and eternity with Him.

Tuesday

Think of a time when someone you knew, who was a believer, died. Describe the grief that you and others experienced.

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; reread verse 13.

In verse 13, Paul states two purposes for writing this passage, what are they?

Paul is writing to instruct the Thessalonian believers in what happens to believers who have died. The phrase fallen asleep is a common New Testament euphemism for death. Read John 11:11-15. Why is it important that the Thessalonian believers have a right understanding regarding the future hope for those who have died?

How does Paul instruct them to grieve over the death of a believer?

Notice that Paul doesn't tell them not to grieve. Even Jesus experienced grief, read John 11:17-35. Compare and contrast the grief we as believers should experience with the grief over the death of an unbeliever. What is similar and what should be different?

End your time in prayer. Ask God to fill you with an unwavering hope in His promises.

Wednesday

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. Reread verse 13-14.

What two reasons does verse fourteen give for why we should not grieve like unbelievers?

How does Jesus' death and resurrection give us hope that believers who have died will be reunited with Christ?

God demonstrated power over death and raised Jesus from death to life. If we believe this to be true, then Paul states that we must also believe in God's power and ability to raise the dead when Christ returns.

Read the account of Jesus death and resurrection in Luke 23:44-24:53. Note the following truths about Jesus resurrection.

He was resurrected and met the disciples in a physical body, not just as a spirit or soul.

He was recognizable as Jesus, not just a nameless figure. He even had the scars from the nails on his hands and the spear in his side.

Just as Jesus was raised in a physical, recognizable body, so will all believers who have died when Christ returns to take us to heaven. Think on this truth. Spend a few moments pondering how wonderful it will be reunited with friends and family again.

Spend a few moments imagining what it will be like to actually be in the presence of Jesus. Let that thought overwhelm you and give you hope. Close your time in prayer, praising God for His death and resurrection and the promise of resurrection in the same way for all believers.

Thursday

There are multiple views regarding the timing and progression of the events of the end times. This section of scripture focuses specifically on the rapture, the point when Christ will return and all believers living and dead will be reunited with Christ. Today we will look only at the rapture, one event in the end times. For a further explanation regarding end times, be sure to attend Sunday morning's worship service.

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. Reread verses 13-17.

In verse 15, to whom does Paul attribute this teaching?

Who does verse 16 tell us will descend from heaven?

What two audible pronouncements will be heard at the coming of the Lord?

Who will rise to meet Christ first?

Who will rise to meet Christ second?

Where will we meet Christ?

What promise is given at the end of verse 17?

Verse seventeen says all living believers will be "caught up" together with believers who have previously died and Christ. The Latin for "caught up" is *rapturo* which is where we get the term rapture. (*taken from [The Bible Knowledge Commentary](#), eds. Walvoord & Zuck, 1983, Cook Communications, pg. 704)

Spend a few moments attempting to picture what the rapture will be like? Ask God to build in you a hopeful anticipation for this day when we will be reunited with Christ to be with Him forever.

Friday

"...and so we will be with the Lord forever." (1 Thessalonians 4:17b)

Meditate on these words. Allow them to spark hope and joy in the future that God has for us.

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, reread verse 18.

What final instruction does Paul give to the Thessalonian church?

How does the future event of the rapture provide encouragement to believers?

How often do you find yourself looking to the promise of Christ's return for hope? Why or why not?

Paul instructs the Thessalonians in verse 18 to not just be individually encouraged by this future event, but to use these very words to encourage one another!

How can you encourage the community of believers around you with these words? Be specific!

Reread verses 13-18 one last time. Ask God to fill you with encouragement and hope in His promises found in this passage.