

## Living in Light of Jesus' Return – Practise What You Preach

## 1 Thessalonians 1:4-10

1. What characteristics in a person would convince you that he or she was a genuine Christian chosen by God?
2. What can Christians today learn from the way in which Paul and his companions presented the gospel in Thessalonica?
3. How does Paul express his confidence in the believers of Thessalonica, and what can we learn from that about supporting one another in faith?
4. Of the three ways in which conversion to Christ changes you – (1) turning to God [faith]; (2) serving God [love]; (3) waiting for Christ's return [hope] – which is most evident in your life?
5. How are the Thessalonians examples for our daily living? In what ways do we need to imitate Jesus Christ and other Christians we know? How can you be more of a model to other believers this week? Are you a contagious Christian? Would others look at your life and be inspired to imitate your devotion to Jesus?

6. Explain why hope is so important in the Christian life. How does your hope for the future influence how you live today? How can we cultivate a deeper sense of hope in our own lives despite challenges?
7. What are some idols to which you cling? How do these idols compete with your loyalty to Christ?
8. If you could share one piece of advice to someone new to faith, what would it be and why?
9. Consider section 7 of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelisation's Manila Manifesto below and conduct an assessment on your own life and the life of our church in light of this statement.

Nothing commends the gospel more eloquently than a transformed life, and nothing brings it into disrepute so much as personal inconsistency. We are charged to behave in a manner that is worthy of the gospel of Christ, and even to "adorn" it, enhancing its beauty by holy lives. For the watching world rightly seeks evidence to substantiate the claims which Christ's disciples make for him. A strong evidence is our integrity.

Our proclamation that Christ died to bring us to God appeals to people who are spiritually thirsty, but they will not believe us if we give no evidence of knowing the living God ourselves, or if our public worship lacks reality and relevance.

Our message that Christ reconciles alienated people to each other rings true only if we are seen to love and forgive one another, to serve others in humility, and to reach out beyond our own community in compassionate, costly ministry to the needy.

Our challenge to others to deny themselves, take up their cross and follow Christ will be plausible only if we ourselves have evidently died to selfish ambition, dishonesty, and covetousness, and are living a life of simplicity, contentment, and generosity.

We deplore the failures in Christian consistency which we see in both Christians and churches: material greed, professional pride and rivalry, competition in Christian service, jealousy of younger leaders, missionary paternalism, the lack of mutual accountability, the loss of Christian standards of sexuality, and racial, social, and sexual discrimination. All this is worldliness, allowing the prevailing culture to subvert the church instead of the church challenging and changing the culture. We are deeply ashamed of the times when, both as individuals and in our Christian communities, we have affirmed Christ in word and denied him in deed. Our inconsistency deprives our witness of credibility. We acknowledge our continuing struggles and failures. But we also determine by God's grace to develop integrity in ourselves and in the church.