

JESUS FOLLOWERS WAIT WITH PRAYERS

ADVENT - REMEMBER TO ANTICIPATE

BIG TRUTH: JESUS FOLLOWERS WAIT WITH PRAYERS

Mark 14:38; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; Romans 12:12; Psalm 42:8; James 5:13; Proverbs 15:29; Matthew 21:22

BIBLE VERSE: 1 PETER 4:7

“The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers.”

BIG IDEAS

- Jesus is coming soon.
- Our waiting is empowered by our prayers.
- Jesus followers wait well for Christ’s appearing when we cry, “Come, Lord Jesus!”

BIBLE PASSAGE: REVELATION 22:10-21; 1 PETER 4:7; LUKE 21:34-36

ADVENT

Advent is a special celebration and contemplation of the coming of Jesus Christ that Christians participate in during the Christmas season. Advent literally means “arrival” or “coming”. During Advent season, God’s people remember and rejoice in Jesus’ first coming to save His people from their sins, while at the same time long with anticipation and expectation for His return. Advent centers on Jesus, the saving Son. He alone is the one true King, and He is coming again!

SERIES AIMS



Every student should know that...

- Jesus has come and is coming again.
- At Advent, we remember His first coming to anticipate His return.
- We are called to wait faithfully for Jesus.



Every student should feel...

- Longing within their soul for the King.
- Dissatisfied by the things of the world.
- Awe and wonder that the King has come and is coming again.



Every student should strive to...

- Wait with purpose for the return of Christ.
- Memorize the Bible Verse each week.
- Tell someone else about the King who has come and is coming again.



Every student should want...

- Trust Christ in the everyday struggles of life.
- See and seek Jesus more than anything else this Christmas season.
- Tell others who are lost about the good news of the King.

GUIDES AND WORKOUTS

The Guide provides a commentary page on each week’s Bible verse and on each Big Idea that unpacks the Big Truth. Each week also includes a Student Workout as a resource to help the student pursue spiritual disciplines on their own. Additionally, each week has a Family Workout that helps equip parents and guardians to have spiritual conversations with their student.



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171 Promise Land Dr. Gray, TN 37615

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BIBLE VERSE: 1 PETER 4:7

"The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers."

Through Jesus' birth, death, and resurrection, everything necessary for God's plan of salvation for His people has been accomplished.

"The end of all things is at hand..."

- Since man's fall into sin in Genesis 3, God has been foreshadowing His redemptive plan. All throughout the Old Testament, prophecy foretold the coming Messiah who would be the true Savior and King to His people.
- Now, after Christ's death on the cross in our place as payment for our sins and His resurrection from the dead defeating the power of sin and death and the grave, all things that were needed for God's redemptive plan have been fulfilled. Jesus said that after He ascended to heaven that the Helper, the Holy Spirit, would come. When the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost, this prophecy was fulfilled. There is nothing else necessary for Christ's return. The end of all things is at hand, and He could return at any moment.

The Jesus follower should practice self-control.

"...therefore, be self-controlled..."

- Because Jesus could return at any time, the Jesus follower must be careful not to get distracted in their waiting. We must practice self-control in order to keep focused on the things of the Lord.
- Our sinful and fleshly passions will tempt us away from what is right and toward fleeting pleasures. To be self-controlled is to not let these things drive our thought life, our decision-making, our attitudes, or our actions.

The Jesus follower should not be influenced by the powers of the world.

"...and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers."

- To be sober-minded means to not have anything that is influencing your ability to see or think clearly. We must be able to rightly see and discern what is true, what is false, and where we are tempted.
- The one who is not sober-minded will be distracted by things that are lesser and will not be ready when Christ returns.

JESUS FOLLOWERS WAIT WITH PRAYERS

BIG IDEA #1: JESUS IS COMING SOON.¹

[THIS]

Jesus has promised that He is coming again. Throughout the gospels, He warns His disciples not to be lulled into complacency, not to be numbed to the revelation of Christ by the attractions of this world, and not to forget about His return. In Matthew 25:1-13, He tells the parable of the ten virgins who were waiting for the bridegroom. Five were wise and took extra oil for their lamps that they needed, but five were foolish and did not. While the foolish ones were out buying more oil, the bridegroom returned and they were not ready. Jesus reminds His disciples, "Watch therefore," because no one knows when He is coming back. This is a challenge for us: be wise with your time and be ready, for He could return at any moment.

[THEREFORE]

What does it look like for us today to be ready for Christ to come back? What do you need to do to prepare for His return?

Waiting faithfully means being prepared for Christ's return, which is enabled by our prayers, as Luke 21:36 reminds us. We can pray for strength to keep the faith, as Luke 18:8 and 2 Timothy 4:7 discuss. We pray for guidance, contentment, discipline, and endurance.

What about your everyday life tempts you to "fall asleep" and forget or ignore that Jesus is coming soon?

Waiting faithfully means being spiritually alert and aware of the dangers that surround us. 1 Peter 5:8 reminds us that our enemy the devil prowls around like a lion, seeking someone to devour. The enemy is not passive, but he actively seeks to lead us astray. We must not be ignorant of these dangers, or of the tendency of our own hearts to wander from the truth. To stay awake means to be aware of these dangers and to fight them, as Ephesians 6:10-18 teaches.

[THIS]

At Advent, we not only remember and celebrate Jesus' first coming to save us from our sins, but we anticipate and long for His second coming. When He comes again, our salvation will be made complete. We will no longer battle sin, and we will no longer be affected by pain or death. Christ will make all things new. The dwelling place of God will be with man, and He will be with us as our God— we will no longer be separated from Him because of our sin. We will dwell with Him, reign with Him, walk with Him by the light of His glory, and worship Him for all eternity. This is not a far-off promise, He has told us that He is coming soon.

[THEREFORE]

What are you most longing for in the return of Christ?

In the beginning, when God created the world, it was perfect and without sin. Adam and Eve walked with God in the Garden of Eden in the cool of the day, until their sin broke their relationship with Him. When Jesus returns, He will usher in the new creation. All things will be restored to the way they were designed to be, and by faith, we will be with Him forever.

1. In Revelation 22:7, Jesus says to John in his vision, "Behold, I am coming soon."

JESUS FOLLOWERS WAIT WITH PRAYERS

BIG IDEA #2: OUR WAITING IS EMPOWERED BY OUR PRAYERS.²

[THIS]

1 Peter 4:7 reminds us that because the end of all things is coming, we must take care to be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of our prayers. Our prayers empower us to wait well for the return of Jesus. We are reminded when we pray to “Our Father, who is in heaven” that we are not sovereign, not in control, and not lord over our own lives. We need to pray to be guarded from temptation, as Mark 14:38 reminds us. We need to pray for help from the Holy Spirit, who is the power of God dwelling in us. Because we cannot wait well out of our own strength or power, we must pray.

[THEREFORE]

What do you most often pray for?

What we think about the most will naturally come out in our conversations, including when we talk to the Lord in prayer. When we are prideful and self-centered, our prayers will be like the Pharisee in Luke 18:9-14 who prays to thank God that he is not like sinners. When we are embarrassed by our neediness before the Lord, we will be like the Gentiles in Matthew 6:7 who use a lot of empty phrases, thinking we will be heard because of our many words. However, when we are focused on God and His goodness, adoration will flow out of us through our prayers.

How does prayer sustain us as we wait for Christ's return?

Prayer sustains us as we wait because it connects us in communion to the One who is our Sustainer. Romans 8:26 tells us that even when we do not know what to pray for, the Holy Spirit is interceding for us with groanings that are too deep for words. This is another picture of how, even when we recognize we have nothing to give— not even words to say in prayer— God is sustaining us.

[THIS]

In addition to empowering us in our waiting, prayer keeps our focus on the King. Prayer grounds us to the reality of God's presence, God's sovereignty, God's control, and God's authority. Prayer helps us to keep our gaze fixed on the things that are heavenly, not the things that are earthly, as Colossians 3:2 exhorts. When we are praying in genuine adoration to the King, it is difficult to be self-centered. When we are confessing our sins to the King, we are assuming a posture of humility before Him, aware of our need for Him. When we pray in supplication, it is a challenge to feel prideful, because we are aware that we can do nothing apart from God, and He is the one who will supply our every need.

[THEREFORE]

How does prayer help us keep our focus on the One we are waiting for?

John 15:5 reminds us that we can do nothing apart from the Lord. On our own, we are totally powerless to even sustain our own lives through the night, let alone make anything happen in our lives. Prayer reminds us of our dependence on God, and is a practice in which we exercise our trust in Him and our confidence that He will keep His promises.

2. Luke 21:36 tells us to stay awake while we wait for the return of Christ, and to pray so that we may have strength to withstand trials in this life and to endure until we stand before God.

JESUS FOLLOWERS WAIT WITH PRAYERS

BIG IDEA #3: JESUS FOLLOWERS WAIT WELL FOR CHRIST'S APPEARING WHEN WE CRY, "COME, LORD JESUS!"³

[THIS]

Revelation 22:17 says, "Let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price." When we cry out to our Savior, "Come, Lord Jesus!" we are proclaiming to those around us the reality that Jesus is coming again and that He is the one who will satisfy the dry and weary soul. We are speaking the truth to ourselves that He is coming again and that He is the only one who can satisfy us. This proclamation reminds us of the picture of Jeremiah 2:13, the other things that we would turn to are like broken cisterns that hold no water. They may appear promising, but eventually they leave us unfulfilled. There is nothing and no one in the world other than Christ that can sustain the weight of our souls. He is the only one who satisfies, and we wait with anticipation for His return.

[THEREFORE]

What are we tempted to look to for our satisfaction?

We may be tempted to find our satisfaction in material things, in other people, or in ourselves. However, Scripture reminds us that material things rust and get destroyed or stolen. Other people will let us down and abandon us. We will make terrible gods for our own lives, leading ourselves astray in pride. Only Jesus satisfies.

How should our prayer of "Come, Lord Jesus!" proclaim Him to those around us?

Just as we are tempted to look to other things for satisfaction, so are our friends and family around us. When we proclaim that Jesus is coming again, and when we excitedly long for this reality, others can see the joy and hope that we have in Him.

[THIS]

We long for the return of the King. We long for Him to make all things new. We do not hold tightly to the things of this world, but instead we willingly cast them aside as we yearn for King Jesus to come again. When we proclaim, "Come, Lord Jesus!" it reveals that our hope is more in the next life than it is in the current one. We proclaim a willingness to lay aside our desires and our ambitions and a readiness for the kingdom of Christ to come, for the old heaven and earth to pass away, and for the new heaven and earth to be ushered in.

[THEREFORE]

What are you most tempted to hold fast to in this world?

All throughout Scripture, we see people make terrible trades because they are tempted by fleeting pleasure in a moment. Abraham trades his trust in the Lord when he has his son Ishmael by Hagar. Esau trades his birthright to Jacob in Genesis 25 for a bowl of soup. Ananias and Sapphira trade their integrity when they lie in Acts 5. Judas trades Jesus' life for thirty pieces of silver. We are distracted by all kinds of momentary beauty and the empty promises of fulfillment. However, if we hold fast to any of these momentary things— to our possessions, to our friendships, to our ambitions, to our abilities, even to our lives— we will be let down. Only Jesus satisfies.

3. The Bible ends with this proclamation, "He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus! The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen." -Revelation 22:20-21