

JESUS FOLLOWERS WAIT WITH ANTICIPATION

ADVENT - REMEMBER TO ANTICIPATE

BIG TRUTH: JESUS FOLLOWERS WAIT WITH ANTICIPATION

Revelation 22:20; Galatians 5:5; Hebrews 9:28; 1 Corinthians 3:11-14; James 1:12

BIBLE VERSE: 2 TIMOTHY 4:8

"Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing."

BIG IDEAS

- Jesus is coming again to establish His kingdom.
- Jesus followers wait well for Christ's appearing by holding fast to truth.
- Jesus followers love Christ's appearing over the present age.

BIBLE PASSAGE: 2 TIMOTHY 4:1-8

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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BIBLE VERSE: 2 TIMOTHY 4:8

"Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing."

God gives rewards for His faithful followers.

"Henceforth there is laid up for me... not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing."

- The Bible talks often about the rewards that the faithful follower of God will receive in heaven. We are commanded not to seek to store up treasures on this earth, for they will pass away, but rather to store up treasures in heaven.
- We are told to "run the race" of life with purpose and intention— as one who aims to win the prize. These rewards are not immediate, but faithful ones can trust that God's rewards are waiting for them.

The faithful Jesus follower will receive the crown of righteousness.

"...there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness..."

- It is only the righteous one who will enter the kingdom of heaven, and yet we are warned that there is no one who is righteous of their own merit or will. Instead, we believe in Jesus and trust in Him, and His righteousness becomes our own.
- James 1:12 says that the man who is steadfast through trial is blessed and will receive the crown of life. These two pictures show that for the one who is faithful to the end, they will receive eternal life with God by the enduring fruit of their righteousness in Christ.

The Lord is the righteous judge of our faithfulness.

"...which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing."

- We tend to think negatively of judgment. But this verse calls God "the Righteous Judge." He is the one who judges our faithfulness, who measures and establishes justice in our world. He can do this because He is just and righteous. He is holy.
- It can be easy in this life to get distracted. Even if we are a Jesus follower and we believe that Jesus is coming back again, we can get focused on the mundane, the routine, and the everyday things that seem so urgent to us. However, to be faithful is to be diligent to fight the good fight of faith and to finish the race, by the grace of God and in the power of God.

JESUS FOLLOWERS WAIT WITH ANTICIPATION

BIG IDEA #1: JESUS IS COMING AGAIN TO ESTABLISH HIS KINGDOM.¹

[THIS]

Paul gives weight to his charge to Timothy with the presence of God, with the judgment of God, with the appearing of Christ, and with the kingdom that He will establish. The reason that Timothy is to “preach the Word” at all times is because of the promised reality that Jesus is returning. We do not proclaim truth to appease our own pride. We do not pursue living a sober-minded life that fulfills our ministry for our own sake or for the approval of man. We do so because Jesus is coming again, and He is the righteous judge of both the living and the dead.

[THEREFORE]

Do you believe that Jesus is coming again?

It is harder to walk by faith than to walk by sight, as 2 Corinthians 5:7 and John 20:29 affirm. It can be easy to disbelieve that Jesus really is coming again, either because we do not have a mental concept of what this will look like, or because it seems so far off into the future that it doesn't seem to matter to us. 1 Corinthians 9:24 reminds us that we should run the race in order to obtain a prize. We should keep our eyes fixed on God's promises, and in particular the promise of His return.

[THIS]

Christ is not just coming to appear and then go back to heaven. He is coming to establish His perfect kingdom. The Jesus follower cannot ignore the implications of His kingdom for our lives. Christ is the ruler over His kingdom, and we are not. We are under the perfect authority of another. We give honor and fame to another. We are to die to ourselves and our kingdom of self. We are to do the work of an evangelist: one who shares the good news of the gospel with others, pointing them to the one true King.

[THEREFORE]

Why does it matter for our daily lives that Christ's kingdom is not of this world?

In John 18:33-40, Jesus tells Pilate that He has been delivered over to the Jews and is going to die because His kingdom is not of this world. When we live for Christ's kingdom that is not of this world, we can be purposed to live for something that is greater than anything that we will find on this earth. We can die to ourselves because we trust in the resurrection.

What does it mean to long for Christ's kingdom? What should this look like in our lives?

Longing for Christ's kingdom means that we will live for His kingdom and not our own. We will do things that are challenging or unpopular in this life because they reap rewards in the next life. We will discipline ourselves not just for physical health in this life, but for godliness, as 1 Timothy 4:8 instructs us.

1. John 18:36: Jesus tells His disciples that His kingdom is not of this world.

JESUS FOLLOWERS WAIT WITH ANTICIPATION

BIG IDEA #2: JESUS FOLLOWERS WAIT WELL FOR CHRIST'S APPEARING BY HOLDING FAST TO TRUTH.²

[THIS]

Paul tells Timothy to preach, or proclaim, the Word. He charges him to reprove, rebuke, and exhort those who hear him with complete patience and teaching. This charge is because there will be a time when people will not listen to the truth, but instead will reject it and find their own teachers who say the things that the people want to hear. This is a dangerous reality and temptation for us. Truth is not subjective; it does not change from person to person. We often are tempted to go to those who tell us what we want to hear because we do not want to hear the truth, or we know that truth will require repentance or some difficult action from us. John 17:17 tells us that God's Word is truth, and 2 Timothy 3:16-17 reminds us that this is because Scripture is breathed out by God Himself.

[THEREFORE]

What is the danger of finding teachers who will say what you want to hear?

As 2 Timothy 4 warns us, we will be tempted to find teachers who suit our own passions. This is dangerous because our passions are sinful. Jeremiah 17:9 reminds us that our hearts are deceitfully wicked, meaning that our passions are also the same. 2 Timothy 3:6 tells us that we can be led astray by our various passions. Ephesians 4:14 gives two pictures of being tossed back and forth by waves, and carried about by winds. If our teachers only suit our passions and tell us what we want to hear, we will not be rooted and grounded by truth.

How can we discern truth and teachers of truth?

John 17:17 says that God's Word is truth. We can know truth when we know God and His Word, and we can discern what is true and false by comparing it to what God's Word says. This is important for us, because 2 Peter 2:1-3 warns us that there will be false teachers among us. These false teachers will "secretly bring in destructive heresies" that will attempt to lead us astray.

[THIS]

Paul models the life of waiting well. He has been poured out as a drink offering, he has fought the good fight, he has finished the race, and he has kept the faith. He has laid down his life and sacrificed it for the sake of others and for the sake of obedience to Christ. He has continued in faithfulness until the end. This is the charge for us as well. This is not something we do of our own power, but rather because we are guarded by God's power, as 1 Peter 1:5 reminds us. It is by the grace of God and the help of the Holy Spirit that we can walk as children of the light like Ephesians 5:8 commands.

[THEREFORE]

How does truth help us anticipate the coming of the King?

Truth helps us to stay rooted and grounded. It reminds us that He is coming again. In Mark 13:37, Jesus tells His disciples to stay awake because He is returning and no one knows when that will be. Truth helps us to stay awake and keeps us from getting distracted and lulled to sleep. Ephesians 6:14 reminds us that truth is a part of the armor of God, necessary for our fight against the schemes of the devil and against the spiritual forces. Truth keeps us fighting and keeps us standing firm.

2. Proverbs 4:4: "“Let your heart hold fast my words; keep my commandments, and live.” God's Word is truth, and there is life found in it.

JESUS FOLLOWERS WAIT WITH ANTICIPATION

BIG IDEA #3: JESUS FOLLOWERS LOVE CHRIST'S APPEARING OVER THE PRESENT AGE.³

[THIS]

Matthew 6:19-24 tells us that we cannot serve two masters, because we cannot truly love two things that are competing. We will always love one and hate the other. Our devotion cannot be divided. This means that we cannot love, be devoted to, and live for our life on this earth if we want to live for eternal life with Christ. When we practice loving His kingdom now, as Christ reigns in our lives, this fuels our waiting for His return when He will reign fully and completely over all things. This also means that we do not live as if this life is all there is. Our ultimate goals are not to be happy or to be fulfilled in this life, because this life is fading and passing away. We can find joy in Jesus now because we know that there is fullness of joy coming in the next life. As Paul tells Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:5-7, in this life we endure suffering, we work hard to fulfill the ministry that has been given to us, and we run the race that has been set before us. We can do this because we love Christ's appearing, and as Romans 8:18 reminds us, all of the hardships of the present age are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed to us.

[THEREFORE]

If someone were to watch your life: what you do, think, talk about, and how you spend your time, what would they say that you love most?

The things that we are devoted to will be obvious to others. When we love someone, we will spend time with them. When we love something, we will talk about it. We cannot quietly decide that we love Jesus and follow Him privately. When we follow Jesus, we are transformed and made new, and this will be evident to those around us.

As we pursue loving Christ's appearing, how should we respond to things that we enjoy in the present life?

Loving and living for the life to come does not mean that we must be miserable in this life. God is a good Father, and He gives us every good and perfect gift (Matthew 7:10; James 1:17). We should enjoy the things that God gives us, and we should respond in thanksgiving and give Him glory for them. However, we should also remember that these things are not ultimate. While good things in this life are evidence of God's kindness to us, they are not what we live for.

[THIS]

To love Christ's appearing is to wait with anticipation because we know He will return, and we are excited for that day. We treasure, value, appreciate, and love what is coming more than the earthly life we currently live, and we purpose to die to ourselves and to the temporal. In 2 Timothy 4:10, Demas is an example of one who has not done this. He was in love with the present world, and so he had abandoned Paul and the ministry that they were doing.

[THEREFORE]

How should loving Christ's appearing be visible in our lives?

If we are living for the things of this world, how we spend our time will be oriented towards this world. If we are living for when Christ comes again, our time will be spent saying "no" to the things of this world and pursuing heavenly things. We will spend time with God's Word and with God's people, and we will be obedient to His commands even when this brings us challenges.

3. 2 Timothy 4:8, 10: Paul contrasts those who have loved Christ's appearing, who will receive the crown of righteousness, with Demas who has deserted him and the ministry because he is in love with the present age.