**Learn in Community**

 Small Group Study

**Volume Overview**

**What does the Bible say about the future?**

“No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him.” ([1 Corinthians 2:9](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Co2.9))

*Many people want to know what the Bible says regarding the future. What is judgment all about? What does the Bible say about rewards for those who serve God? What do we know about the return of Jesus? What does this mean for our life while we wait for His return? These are just a few of the topics we’ll explore through this volume.*

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| ***You Will Need*** *• Scissors****Getting Ready*** *• Find a clear area with enough space for everyone to sit in a circle.* *• First time leading* Learn *for Youth? Look here for the* [**Facilitator Guide**](https://0b769b0ed3569ef9d18b-f88d8272f61086866d50d048b43ef630.ssl.cf2.rackcdn.com/sites/biblengagementproject/Listen_Facilitator_Guide.pdf)*.* |

*To access session content and videos from a computer, visit:* [***BibleEngagementProject.com/downloads***](https://bibleengagementproject.com/downloads)

**Engage**

**Welcome**

*Take this time to welcome everyone, introduce new students, learn names, and thank everyone for coming. Your friendliness here can create comfort levels that encourage student participation later.*

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| **QUESTION**Would anyone share a time when you were looking for something, couldn’t find it, then someone helped and found it right away? How did it make you feel? |

**Opening Prayer**

*Prayer thoughts: Thank God for our Savior, Jesus, who died for our sins. Thank God for the promise of our Savior’s return. We know He will keep His promise!*

**Introduction**

Today, we’re going to look at what the Bible says about preparing our mind, heart, and life as we wait for the return of Jesus Christ. Let’s find out more.

**Group Activity**

**Keep Watch!**

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| ***You Will Need*** *• Scissors****Getting Ready*** *• Have everyone sit in a circle, including the leader.* |

In our activity today, I’m going to pass these scissors around the circle. As I do, I’m going to receive them in a certain way and pass them in a certain way. The person on my left will then receive them in a certain way and then pass them to the person on their left. If they receive them or pass them incorrectly, I’ll call them out of the game. If they receive them and pass them correctly, they’ll remain in the game. Don’t say anything or tell anyone if you figure out how to do it. Just say things correctly when it’s your turn.

• *The secret of the game is that your legs are crossed or uncrossed when receiving and passing. The scissors are only a distraction.*

• *When you pass the scissors, say, “I’m receiving these scissors (open or closed) and passing them (open or closed).”*

• *You should purposely receive the scissors in one way and pass them in another while keeping your legs crossed or uncrossed during that round. This will confuse the students.*

• *The goal is to get only students who know what’s happening left in the game. Once this happens, tell the students who were eliminated how the game was played.*

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| **QUESTION**How many of you thought the whole activity was based on the scissors? |

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| **QUESTION**How many of you were initially watching the scissors and then noticed it had nothing to do with the scissors? What happened that made you notice this? |

This activity reminds us that we not only need to be watching closely, but we need to watch the right things. The same is true regarding Jesus’ return. Let’s watch this video before we talk further about this.

**Watch**

**Consider What the Bible Says**

*Ensure each student has access to a Bible, preferably the same version.*

**What Are You Waiting For?**

In today’s Bible passage, Jesus wanted His disciples to understand that the day would come when He returns. Jesus told them what signs to watch for, but also emphasized that only God the Father knows exactly when Jesus would come back.

Read [Matthew 24:42–44](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt24.42-44).

Jesus used this analogy of a burglar to help His followers think about the unexpected. The only way to be ready for something you don’t expect is to be ready all the time.

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| **QUESTION**Do you find yourself ever thinking about Jesus’ return? What do you think about it? |

• *The way students answer will give you insight into what they understand about this key doctrine of Jesus’ return.*

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| **QUESTION**According to Jesus, why should we keep watch for His return? |

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| **QUESTION**What are some ways a person could keep ready for Jesus coming back? |

Jesus’ return doesn’t have to be something we’re afraid of. We can look for Jesus’ return with joyful expectation. The best way to do that is by obeying God’s Word and the Holy Spirit’s leading. But even when we mess those up, Jesus is ready for us to turn back to Him and be forgiven.

**Did You Know?**

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| Banditry was a common reality of the ancient world, as policing was relatively nonexistent in the way we’re familiar with. Although protection from local military was available, it was usually only reserved for the wealthy and for citizens of the Roman Empire. As a result, an individual’s most important property, such as livestock and metal tools, would often be kept inside the owner’s house at night rather than in an exterior barn, so he could watch over his valuables and protect them when they were most vulnerable. |

**Stay Faithful**

So, what should we do while we wait for Jesus’ return? Do we simply wait for Jesus to come back? No, we continue to serve Him in the meantime and live in a way that pleases Him.

Read [Matthew 24:45–47](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt24.45-47).

Like the servant in Jesus’ second analogy, each of us has responsibilities He has given us. Some are the same for all Christians, like sharing Jesus’ love and truth. Others may vary based on His specific desires for your life. But all of us can be faithful with His assignments.

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| **QUESTION**How could caring for other people show someone’s faithfulness? |

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| **QUESTION**What are specific things you do to care for people in your life? |

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| **QUESTION**What did Jesus say in these verses is the result of being faithful and sensible? |

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| **QUESTION**How can we not only serve God faithfully, but live faithfully for Him too? |

We have a responsibility to minister to others. And when we do that, our faithful service will result in increased trust and responsibility. Although we should serve because we love Jesus, it’s nice to know that we’ll also be rewarded for working diligently as we wait for Him to return.

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| **QUESTION**What does it mean to live faithfully for God? |

**Live Like Jesus Is Watching**

This next part sounds pretty harsh. As we read Jesus’ description of punishment from the master in this story, remember that He is the same loving Savior who died to give us eternal life. He doesn’t want to punish anyone. Every person chooses whether to obey Him or go down a path that leads to punishment.

Read [Matthew 24:48–51](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt24.48-51).

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| **QUESTION**Have you ever done wrong behind the back of a parent, teacher, or another authority figure, knowing you wouldn’t do it if they were watching you? |

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| **QUESTION**How might someone live if they don’t think Jesus could return soon? |

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| **QUESTION**How should our lifestyle demonstrate that we expect Jesus to return any day? |

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| **QUESTION**What does it say about God’s character that there would be consequences for treating others badly and living in a way that dishonors Him? |

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| **QUESTION**Do you think there should be punishment for people who hurt others? Why or why not? |

This passage is clear. We need to live a God-honoring life and treat others with care and respect. If we don’t, it’s a sign that we may not be ready for Jesus’ return. We place ourself in eternal danger when we ignore these commands of God.

Let’s look at one more Bible passage that gives us a picture of how some people will view Jesus’ return.

Read [2 Peter 3:3–9](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.2Pe3.3-9).

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| **QUESTION**What’s the result of ignoring God’s ways and living for selfish pleasures? |

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| **QUESTION**What does the end of these verses say about God and why Jesus hasn’t returned yet? |

We place ourself in eternal danger if we plan to sin now and repent later. Sinful and self-centered living will cause us to live in denial of Jesus’ return. As the apostle Peter noted, we don’t view the passage of time the way God does. Instead of letting God’s patient passage of time lull us into forgetfulness, let’s keep in mind the return of our Lord, Jesus!

**Reflect**

**Jesus Is Coming Back**

Scripture shows us Jesus’ return could happen at any time. We must be ready by having our heart and life surrendered to Him. For the person who refuses God’s grace, Jesus’ return will be distressing. But for the follower of Jesus, the appearance of Jesus is exciting and joyous as we live ready and waiting for Him.

**Listen to God**

Let’s pause and listen to what God might want to say to us about what we have read and shared. Answering the following questions is completely voluntary. These questions are meant to serve as a conversation between you and God. However, you may want to share your response with the group, but no one should feel obligated.

• *Optional: Pause for a few moments of silent reflection before asking students if they want to share.*

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| **QUESTION**How does the way you live for and serve others show God that you’re ready for Jesus’ return? |

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| **QUESTION**What are some priorities in your life that may need rearranging based on Jesus’ return at any moment? |

**Activate**

The verses we read today clearly remind us to put action to our faith while we wait for Jesus’ return. Do something in the next twenty-four hours to show someone care and love.

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| **Salvation Opportunity***Include this if you think there may be some in the group who do not have a personal relationship with Jesus.*Living for God starts with surrendering your heart and life to Jesus Christ. God sent Jesus to save us because He loves us. And He doesn’t just want to have a relationship with us during our earthly lifetime. He wants us to be with Him forever.**Is there anyone here that we can pray for who doesn’t have a relationship with Jesus or wants to renew their relationship with Him?***Take a moment to acknowledge those who respond and thank them for their desire to make things right between themselves and God. Pray with them as you close in prayer or after the group time is over. Following group time, talk more about where they are in their walk with God and how you might be able to help.* |

**Conclusion**

When Jesus returns, both those believers who are alive and those who have died will be raised. Together, we will live with Jesus eternally. This is what’s sometimes called the Blessed Hope of the Church.

**Prayer**

Father God, thank You for the Blessed Hope of Jesus’ return. Thank You for providing salvation through Him. Help us live and serve You in readiness for Jesus’ return. Help our family and friends see our love for You and want to be ready for Jesus’ return, too. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.

Be sure to read the daily devotions this week. You’re going to read some really cool things about this Blessed Hope.