



# LIVING AT THE END OF TIME

WHAT SHOULD WE LOOK FOR IN A CHURCH?

April 2, 2023

## 1 Thessalonians 5:12-28(NIV)

<sup>12</sup> Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, to acknowledge those who work hard among you, who care for you in the Lord and who admonish you. <sup>13</sup> Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other. <sup>14</sup> And we urge you, brothers and sisters, warn those who are idle and disruptive, encourage the disheartened, help the weak, be patient with everyone. <sup>15</sup> Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always strive to do what is good for each other and for everyone else.

<sup>16</sup> Rejoice always, <sup>17</sup> pray continually, <sup>18</sup> give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

<sup>19</sup> Do not quench the Spirit. <sup>20</sup> Do not treat prophecies with contempt <sup>21</sup> but test them all; hold on to what is good, <sup>22</sup> reject every kind of evil.

<sup>23</sup> May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>24</sup> The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it.

<sup>25</sup> Brothers and sisters, pray for us. <sup>26</sup> Greet all God's people with a holy kiss. <sup>27</sup> I charge you before the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers and sisters.

<sup>28</sup> The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

## Introduction

### 1. I want to be in a church that respects its leaders.

1 Thessalonians 5:12-13

"Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers-- not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock." 1 Peter 5:2-3

### 2. I want to be in a church where people look out for each other.

1 Thessalonians 5:14

- a. Warn those who are idle
- b. Encourage the timid
- c. Help the weak
- d. Be patient with everyone

1 Thessalonians 5:15

We admonish one another to go the way that Christ bids us to go. We warn one another against the disobedience that is our common destruction. ... why should we be afraid of one another since both of us only have God to fear. The practice of discipline in the congregation begins in the smallest of circles. Where defection from God's Word in doctrine or life imperils the family fellowship and with it the whole congregation – the word of admonition and rebuke must be ventured. Nothing can be more cruel than the tenderness that consigns another to his sin – nothing can be more compassionate than the severe rebuke that brings a brother back from the path of sin. — *Life Together*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer

### **3. I want to be in a church that helps me each week to re-connect with God in worship.**

1 Thessalonians 5:16–18

Psalm 95:1–2; 6–7 (note the emphasis on “us”)

### **4. I want to be in a church that has spiritual discernment.**

1 Thessalonians 5:19–22

“The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron.” 1 Timothy 4:1–2

a. the plain truth of Scripture

b. the truth of the divine-human nature of Jesus

“Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God,” 1 John 4:1–2

c. the test of grace

d. a true message is known and validated by the character of the speaker

“Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them.” Matthew 7:15–16

e. the degree to which a message edifies and builds up the church

“... do not be devoted to myths and endless genealogies. These promote controversies rather than God's work-- which is by faith. The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.” 1 Timothy 1:4–5