

As we “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Pet 3:18), it’s important for us to listen to and learn from our Father in heaven as he teaches us about the **time** he’s given us.

_____ now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we _____ go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit”—yet you do not _____ what tomorrow will bring.

What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. Instead you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.” As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin. (James 4:13-17)

In the next few verses, James specifically warns those who have a great deal of stuff...

Come now, you rich, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you. Your riches have rotted and your garments are _____-eaten. Your gold and silver have _____, and their corrosion will be evidence against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have laid up treasure in the _____ days. (5:1-3)

Why “the **last days**”? Notice what this messenger from the Lord wants us to be ready **for**:

Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the _____ of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at _____. (5:7-8)

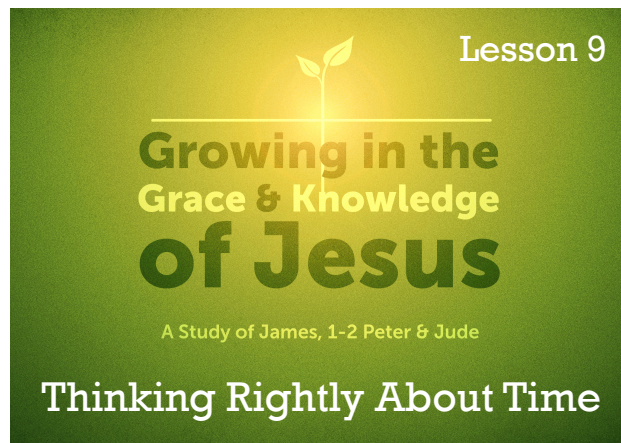
And James isn’t the only messenger to share news of this coming. Peter also describes...

The _____ of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers. (1 Pet 4:7)

...and he warns us in his second letter about listening to people who would scoff at the idea of the Lord returning and our time on this earth ending (2 Pet 3:4-7).

But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a _____ years, and a thousand years as _____ day. The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. But the day of the Lord _____ come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed. (3:8-10)

If all of that is true—if our time on earth is limited and the coming of the Lord really is at hand—isn’t the question Peter asks next the most important question of all? “What sort of people ought you to be?” (3:11). Three times within the next three verses he uses the word _____. Why? What are we waiting *for*? *How* should we be waiting? **Let’s talk about it.**



For Class & Family Discussion:

- ▶ Let's open our Bibles back to **James 4** and think about the picture being painted in **4:13**. "Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit..." What does it sound like when we frequently say the same sorts of things?
- ▶ Looking back over **James 4:14-16**, what does God want us to understand about our plans, our intentions, and even our lives?
- ▶ At the start of **James 5**, the rich are specifically addressed. It sounds a whole lot like Jesus' words in **Matthew 6:19-21**. What's the big idea and what does it have to do with thinking rightly about time?
- ▶ We hear James describe "the last days" in **5:3**. In what sense are we living in "the last days," and why does that matter?
- ▶ "Be patient, therefore, brothers and sisters" (**James 5:7**). What does patience have to do with thinking rightly about the time God has given us? And what about being "self-controlled and sober-minded" (**1 Pet 4:7**)?
- ▶ Finally, let's turn our Bibles back to **2 Peter 3**. There were people 2,000 years ago scoffing at the idea of the Lord returning and our time on this earth ending. Some continue to scoff. But according to **3:5-9**, what were they overlooking and failing to understand?
- ▶ How would you rephrase the message of **2 Peter 3:11** in your own words?
- ▶ Many of us don't really like "waiting" on things. Sometimes, waiting is hard, but three times in **2 Peter 3:12-14** the word "waiting" is used. Why? What are we waiting *for*? *How* should we be waiting?