

## Will you be worthy of the Lord’s call?

### 2 Thessalonians 1:1-5 NIV

“Paul, Silas and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: <sup>(2)</sup> Grace and peace to you from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>(3)</sup> “We ought always to thank God for you, brothers, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love every one of you has for each other is increasing.

<sup>(4)</sup> “Therefore, among God's churches we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring. <sup>(5)</sup> All this is evidence that God's judgment is right, and as a result you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering.”

Great news today if you wonder about life’s purpose.

That question vexes many.

**Life doesn’t always work the way we hope.**

"My son, nothing is worth dying for,"

urged the priest. ‘Come off that ledge.’



‘My neighbor took off with my wife,’ sobbed the disconsolate man. ‘But that was a year ago,’ responded the priest. ‘Well, he called me this morning,’ cried the man, ‘and he's bringing her back.’”

**Morning, noon, and night, the media bring us bad news.**

**On the scene reporters detail events that scare and anger us.**

**Bad news especially alarms us when we think that happiness is life’s chief purpose.**

**How can you be happy when you have to worry every time you ride in an airplane?**

**How can you enjoy life when you have to be concerned at work, at school, or the mall about someone coming and shooting up the place?**

**Educators, philosophers, safety experts, scientists, politicians ponder,**

**“How do we prevent tragic occurrences?”**

**Life is precious.**

**The question is definitely worth asking.**

**On the other hand, many scientists, educators and media folks insist that life came accidentally.**

**Even though the idea of randomness has fatal flaws, the accident theory seems to prevail.**



If life began spontaneously—as some scientists and philosophers teach—the best we can do is hang on and enjoy the ride as long as possible.

Some of us recall the day golfer Payne Stewart’s airplane was flying on autopilot.

It was simply up there.

No one knew how far that plane would fly, where it would crash, or how much that accident might affect people on the ground.

That uncertainty troubles many folks.

In their view, we’re accidental creatures on a tiny sphere we call earth--hurtling through space—part of a universe that came about by accident.

You go around only once.

So you try to be happy and enjoy yourself till your number comes.

We can laugh at life as Joseph Paul Tierney did in a little poem called, “Donne Redone”:

*Ask not for whom the bells toll.*

*Don’t get yourself in a stew.*

*As long as you can hear the clang,*

*Relax, they’re not for you.*

Someone more serious wrote,

*The clock of life is wound but once,  
And no man has the power  
To tell just when the hands will stop  
At late or early hour. Anon.*

The news gets worse for those who think that life runs all by chance.

Most of us have walked in cemeteries and observed grave stones inscribed,

“Gone but not forgotten.”

In old cemeteries, we see badly eroded tombstones with that inscription.

Not only are the deceased forgotten; so too are those who thought they’d never forget them.

As Washington Irving wrote in *The Sketch Book*, *Man passes away;*  
*His name perishes from record and recollection;*  
*his history is as a tale that is told, and his very monument a ruin.*

- Are we simply the result of randomness, chance, and accidents?
- Are we merely here briefly and then all those who know us and remember us leave the stage, too?

Is the only sane approach to brief, uncertain life to simply grin and bear it?

**Modern-day thinkers insist on using human wisdom for answers to eternal questions.**

**They search for answers in old rocks, dinosaur bones, or evidence of life on Mars.**

**One writer related:**

a humorous skit performed by Karl Vallentin, a Munich comedian graphically illustrated the tragedy of the modern search for our origins.

Walking on a stage where everything was dark except for a small area under a street lamp, the actor began to look for something on the ground.

He told the policeman who came on the scene that he was trying to find a key.

The two of them continued the search.

Finally, the police officer asked,

"Are you sure you lost it here?"

"Oh, no," said Vallentin as he pointed to a corner, "it was over there, but here is where the light is!"

The search for answers by science and philosophy seems as futile that comedian’s search for a key.

**They look in the wrong places for origins.**

**In contrast, God’s word gives us a profoundly simple three-part assurance about life.**

**1. Life began by design and moves toward a definite destination:**

The Lord launched time, space, and our earth.

**“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth,” Genesis 1:1.**

Life moves according to our Creator’s flight plan.

**God is the flight chief.**

**He’ll end the flight according to his design.**

**That’s what God’s word tells us.**

“For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God.”<sup>1</sup>

**If we’re headed for an appointment with Jesus on the last day, life definitely has purpose.**

**We’re headed for a certain destination.**

**Jesus will appear one day to terminate earth’s flight, to bring us all down safely, as it were.**

**What folks call randomness results from our limited sight and knowledge.**

**2. God put us here for a reason.**

As the Bible repeatedly tells us, the Lord put us here to serve him.

**Our Creator rightly expects us to honor him and to help one another as Jesus showed us.**

**Many human creatures deny God and live to please only themselves.**



<sup>1</sup> 1 Thessalonians 4:16 NIV

**More we measure life by the world’s standards, the more we’ll be deceived.**

**If we’re only serving only ourselves, trying to be happy, we’re making a big mistake.**

**Going by the world’s standards leads to disappointment now and in the world to come.**

**The old Jewish rabbis spoke of the *yetzer hara*, our evil inclination that distorts our vision.**

**As the greatest rabbi, Jesus of Nazareth, taught: this life is an entryway to something better.**

**In his book, *Strive for Truth*, Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler wrote about a savage knew nothing about the value of gold, silver, or precious stones.**

The savage once helped save the king’s life. As a reward he was taken to the king’s treasury, provided with a number of sacks and told to fill them with whatever he saw on the shelves.

The savage misunderstood the situation and thought he was being punished with hard labor for some unknown wrongdoing.

He started working but soon noticed that no one was watching. He promptly went to sleep, and even when he woke up, he worked as slowly as possible.

At the end of the day, his sacks were almost empty.

When he was sent away with his sacks over his shoulder, he was pleased with himself.

If I had obeyed all their orders, he thought, I would have had to work hard all day and then have a lot of heavy sacks to carry.

But when he met some of his more knowledgeable companions and told them his story, he soon learned what a fool he had been. He realized too late that he should have worked with a will during that one precious day when the treasure was his for the taking.

**The Bible tells us that this life is only an entryway, a brief training period for something lasting and far superior.**

**Going by world’s standards leads to disappointment now and in the world to come.**

**The more we measure life by the world’s standards, the more we’ll be deceived.**

**We’re headed for a definite destination.**

**God holds us accountable for honoring him and loving one another.**



### 3. If we serve Jesus, we can look forward to life in Him.

#### That expectation helps us in tough times.

*For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.*

*After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.*

#### **1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17**

Earl Cowden told about a young woman, named Linda, who was in a terrible car accident. When the paramedics came upon the scene, they found her in shock due to a loss of blood from a severed right leg. She was pinned in the wreckage. It was some time before emergency personnel could free her and treat her wounds. All the while, she remained conscious and alert. They were amazed at her calmness in view of the serious injuries she had sustained.

Later one of the paramedics said to newsmen covering the story, "I guess the only thing that saved her life was the singing." Puzzled at this revelation, they asked him what she was

singing. He replied, "What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear...what a friend we have in Jesus!"

- **Isn't it wonderful to believe in God and feel the confidence that life is going somewhere—that your life has purpose?**
- **Isn't it great to pray to him knowing that he listens and cares?**
- **It's assuring to know that he's in control of the universe, and that we have a future of eternity with him.**

The human beings presently in Shanghai, Moscow, Washington, D.C., New York, and Hollywood, who consider themselves so powerful and important will also be among the earth's forgotten, yet will account to our Creator.

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