

# Prototypical Living

*Scripture and Background Information for June 18-24.*

To prepare for your group discussion each week, group members should use the **Community Group Discussion Guide** to complete the **GOD'S WORDS** and **MY WORDS** columns using the scripture below.

A prototype is the original copy of a product. It establishes the essential characteristics of the product and sets the standard for its proper function. It is an example that all other versions of the product must base itself on to continue to work properly. In many ways, the church in Thessalonica is a prototype for all other churches because it exhibits certain qualities that are necessary for a church to thrive. So, as we go through this series, we hope to learn from the example that the Thessalonians have given us so that we can take steps to live in this prototypical way.

## **Background for 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11:**

The Thessalonian church was the prototype church that all churches should model themselves after because of their faith, hope, and love. However, they experienced great opposition and lived in a time in which their prospects felt bleak. The political climate and roman leadership seemed to be against them, the culture was headed in a much different direction, and the people around them persecuted them. Yet, however unlikely it was, the Thessalonians still found ways to be optimistic in a society that tried to lead them to despair.

One of the reasons the Thessalonians were able to hold on to this optimism is because of what Paul calls, "the day of the Lord," (1 Thessalonians 5:2). The day of the Lord signifies the day in which Jesus will come back to earth vindicate His people and execute His judgement on those who are opposed to Him. Paul says that for many, Jesus' return will be a surprise because they don't know Him (1 Thessalonians 5:2-3). But, for those who follow Jesus, this day is a day of salvation that should bring encouragement to all those who are faithful (1 Thessalonians 5:8-11). Even though we may not know exactly when Jesus will return, we know that He is going to. Therefore, we should live like with the same faith, hope, and love that the Thessalonians had and encourage one another like they did so that we can endure whatever struggle we may face knowing that Jesus will return to save His people.

## Insights and questions to engage with the text:

1. How does God's salvation bring hope to a world that often seems to be filled with despair?
2. What about Jesus' future return gives you hope in your life now? Who in your life do you wish shared the same hope that you have? How can you share the hope that Jesus gives with them?
3. In verse 11, Paul calls the Thessalonians to continue encouraging one another. What can you do to be an encouragement to those around you, especially when the outlook of our lives, world, and future may seem grim?