

STUDY GUIDE FOR NOVEMBER 1- ALL SAINTS DAY

HOPEFUL GRIEVING – 1 Thess. 4:13-18

1. HELPFUL BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- *The idea of setting aside a particular day of the year to honor/remember martyrs of the Church goes back as early as the 4th Century, not long after Christianity was made “legal” in the Roman Empire by Emperor Constantine.*
- *In 609 AD, Pope Boniface IV officially established May 13th as the day the whole church would celebrate the passing of the martyrs.*
- *Somewhere in the mid-700’s, Pope Gregory III changed the date to November 1st. That date may have been chosen to counter the widely celebrated pagan holiday of remembering the dead on October 31st, known today as Halloween.*
- *In 837 AD Pope Gregory IV ordered the universal celebration of All Saints’ Day on November 1st, permanently establishing the date but also widening the day to honor more than just the early martyrs of the Church but for honoring all believers who had died and passed on to glory.*

2. QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- *What, if any, special meaning has the celebration of All Saints Day meant in your life?*
- *The focus of the passage from 1 Thess. 4:13 is to note a difference between the way Christian believers grieve and the way non-believers grieve. For Paul, he says the key is that believers’ grieving comes with hope, while non-believers have no hope. Have you found that to be true in your own personal experiences?*
- *The “hope” Paul alludes to is the hope for the resurrection of the dearly departed because of their belief in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. In Scripture the word “hope” is viewed as a certainty, not a 50-50 chance that something will happen. Does this Biblical definition of hope help to understand why Christian grieving is different from non-Christian grieving?*
- *From your own personal experience, recent or past, how have you grieved?*

3. CHALLENGE FOR THE WEEK

- *If you are grieving currently (or know someone who is), understand that grieving is holy, and that your holy grieving should be mixed with the hope/certainty that the one over whom you are grieving is in God’s hands. Center your prayers this week on the hopefulness of their gain as well as the pain of your loss.*