

September 29, 2024

You Only Live Forever

“YOLO” is a phrase that entered our airwaves in 1993 and gained popularity for a few years, but it is quickly becoming a phrase that is lost to Gen Z and was only really ever used by millennials. YOLO stands for “you only live once.” This is how YOLO essentially works: you are in the process of making a big decision, you are weighing your options, and then, at the top of your lungs (or in your mind), you shout the phrase YOLO and spend the money or make the rash decision that probably isn’t the wise one because hey, you only live once.

For Christians, of course, this logic is flawed. We do only live once; however, the “one-time life” we live just so happens to be forever. Instead of “you only live once,” perhaps we should go throughout life with the mentality of “you only live forever.”

Imagine the decision-making process when this becomes a mindset! Suddenly, every decision I make comes with an eternal outlook! There is no decision that I make for today only because there isn’t a today-only outlook! It is a forever outlook!

1 Thessalonians 4-5 walks through a mindset that is this “you only live forever” mindset. Check it out.

1 Thessalonians 4:13–14

[13] But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. [14] For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep.

Paul is writing (inspired by the Spirit) discussing that we are not to live life as people who think this world is our only lives! We have Jesus, and because we believe that Jesus rose again, we should also believe that we are going to be alive with Him forever! Did you notice how death was described in that passage? Death is described here as “sleep.” All throughout scripture, we see death simply as a time of rest before the awakening into forever life with God. How beautiful is that concept?

The Thessalonians struggled with this, which is why Paul is writing this to them! He is trying to indicate to them that life isn’t a YOLO life; it is a YOLF life!

The believer in Jesus should never feel like life ends, but that we simply are taking a little nap before we wake up in eternity! He continues this thought in chapter 5!

1 Thessalonians 5:1–5

[1] Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. [2] For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. [3] While people are saying, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. [4] But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. [5] For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness.

Paul looks at the Thessalonians and says, "If we stay on guard (living a "You only live forever" lifestyle), then there is nothing to be afraid of!" We essentially get to have joy in Christ for all of eternity!

The challenge for us: how will we allow the joy of Christ to fill us to a point where we process life with this mindset?

#### Discussion Questions

1. Discuss some situations where you would have an opportunity to weigh a decision with a "you only live forever" mentality
2. How does the "you only live forever" mentality change the way I process daily decisions?
3. The Thessalonians needed to be reminded that death is not eternal for Christians. What do you think 1 Thessalonians 4:13 means practically when it says "we may not grieve as others who have no hope"?