

Resource: Familiarization, Internalization, Articulation (Fia)

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Familiarization, Internalization, Articulation (Fia)

1TH

1 Thessalonians 1:1–10

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 1 Thessalonians 1:1–10 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 1 Thessalonians 1:1–10 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 1 Thessalonians 1:1–10 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

This passage is the beginning of a letter from Paul, Silas, and Timothy. You will remember that Paul, Silas, and Timothy visited the city of Thessalonica on Paul's second missionary journey. As a result of both the way Paul taught and the way he acted, many Jews in Thessalonica believed the gospel. But other Jews did not. The Jews who did not believe the gospel became angry, and, after a while, they began to riot. Paul and Silas had to leave because of the riot. Even worse, these unbelieving Jews began to cause trouble for all the believers in Thessalonica.

Paul *strongly* wanted to return and continue to teach the new church in Thessalonica. But Paul could not. So Paul sent Timothy to visit the church. After his visit, Timothy returned to Paul with news that the Thessalonian believers were trusting in Jesus more and more, *even though* the unbelieving Jews were persecuting them.

Although Paul could not return to Thessalonica, he still wanted to encourage and continue to teach the believers in Thessalonica. So Paul sent the believers a letter. Probably, Paul spoke his message, and someone else wrote the message down. Another person would take it to Thessalonica and read it to the Thessalonian church.

Stop here. Talk about how you send messages to a friend who lives in another place. How do you tell a friend something important when you are unable to go to them? How do you make sure that the friend knows the message is from you? Pause this audio here.

Paul was probably the main author of this letter. Since God chose Paul as his messenger, the Thessalonian believers could trust that this message was from God. But Silas and Timothy were also with Paul when he was in Thessalonica. The Thessalonian believers would have respected Silas and Timothy, too. Silas and Timothy were probably with Paul when he wrote the letter. Silas and Timothy may have helped Paul write the letter. The Thessalonians could also trust the authority of Silas and Timothy.

Paul starts his letter with a greeting and moves to a prayer of thanksgiving. In this prayer, Paul thanks God for the Thessalonian church's faith—their belief in Jesus. Specifically, Paul thanks God for three things: first, Paul thanks God that the believers' faith caused them to live in a way that pleased God; second, Paul thanks God that the believers' love caused them to do hard things to serve one another; and, third, Paul thanks God because the believers were always hoping for the time when the Lord Jesus Christ comes back to Earth.

Paul wanted to make sure the Thessalonians were confident that God loved them and chose them to be God's people. Paul wanted the Thessalonians to remember that when he gave them the gospel, the good news about Jesus, they did not just hear a message. The Thessalonians also experienced the power of the Holy Spirit.

More than that, Paul did not just preach about the Good News of Jesus. Paul also did actions in his life that showed the Holy Spirit had changed him. Paul lived like Jesus. In the same way, the Thessalonians lived like Paul, because Paul lived like Jesus. The Thessalonians welcomed Paul's message even though they suffered because the unbelievers were persecuting them. And the Holy Spirit gave the Thessalonians the power to suffer *with joy*.

Stop here. Ask people to tell you about someone they know whose life was changed when they believed the good news about Jesus. What kinds of change did you see in that person's life—what did they do differently? What did that person's friends and family do when they saw that person change? Pause this audio here.

The news about the Thessalonians' faith greatly encouraged Paul. But Paul was not the only one who had heard about the Thessalonians' faith. People throughout the Roman provinces of Macedonia and Achaia had started to hear about the Thessalonians' faith. Many other people also heard that the Thessalonian believers had stopped worshipping idols and had started to worship the one living and true God.

Stop here and tell a story about a time when a lot of people knew about something good that a group of people were doing, such as a sports group winning a lot of games. How did people know about what this group was doing? How did people spread the good news quickly to others? Pause this audio here.

Stop here and look at a map that includes Thessalonica, Macedonia, and Achaia as a group. Notice that Thessalonica is a city within the province of Macedonia. Also, notice that Achaia is a nearby province. Pause this audio here.

Paul taught the Thessalonians that Jesus had suffered and died on the cross and that Jesus had come back to life. Paul also taught that Jesus will return from heaven one day. Jesus is the one who rescues believers from the judgment that is coming. Sin angers God, and God will judge sin. But God will not judge those people who follow Jesus. This is the Gospel, the good news, that Paul preached.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 1 Thessalonians 1:1–10 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the parts, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has four parts.

In the first part: Paul, Silas, and Timothy begin their letter and greet the Thessalonian church.

In the second part: Paul tells why Paul is so thankful for the Thessalonians' faith.

In the third part: Paul tells how Paul is encouraged because people all over have heard about the good life of the Thessalonians.

In the fourth part: Paul tells how other people are telling the story about the Thessalonians. This is the story of how the Thessalonians stopped worshiping idols and began to worship the living and true God.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- Silas
- Timothy
- The believers in the church of Thessalonica
- Believers in Macedonia and in Achaia
- Other people
- God the Father
- The Lord Jesus Christ
- And the Holy Spirit

In the first part, Paul begins the letter. First, Paul lists the messengers: Paul himself, Silas, and Timothy. Next, Paul names who he is writing to: the Thessalonian church. Lastly, Paul greets the Thessalonian church with the Christian greeting "grace and peace." This is both a greeting and a believer's blessing. Paul wanted the Thessalonians to know that God gives them grace, which means God is kind to the believers even when they do not deserve it. God also gives the believers peace, so the believers can live in harmony with God and with each other.

Notice that in the letter, Paul calls the believers in Thessalonica the "church of the Thessalonians." Remember that Paul was not speaking about the building where the believers came together to worship, but about the people themselves. Paul further explains what the church is when Paul says the church has a special relationship to God the Father and to the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the second part, Paul moves into the message of his letter. Paul starts by telling the Thessalonians that he always thanks God for the Thessalonians during Paul's normal prayer times. Paul says that when he prays, Paul thanks God for three things. First, Paul thanks God for the Thessalonians' work that they do because they trust in their Lord Jesus Christ. Second, Paul thanks God for the work the believers do because they love Jesus and each other. Third, Paul thanks God because the believers confidently expect that the Lord Jesus Christ will return! This hope gives the believers the ability to stay strong even when people persecute them.

Remember that when Paul says "brothers" in this passage, Paul is including both men and women. Some translations will say "brothers and sisters" to make this clear. Paul was very confident that God loved all the believers and had chosen them all. This is why Paul says, "For we know, brothers and sisters." The Thessalonians should not fear. The Thessalonians should be confident that God loved them and marked them as his own people. How does Paul know this? Why is Paul so confident? Because when Paul brought the gospel, he did not just speak words. The Holy Spirit also came with power and told the Thessalonians that what Paul said was true.

In the third part, Paul reminds the Thessalonians that something about the way Paul, Silas, and Timothy lived proved that their message was true. The way Paul, Silas, and Timothy lived showed the Thessalonians that the Holy Spirit had changed these men's lives.

The Thessalonians believed Paul's message about Jesus. Because the Thessalonians believed, they suffered a lot. But the Thessalonians still believed Paul's message—and the Holy Spirit made the Thessalonians able to believe it with joy. The Thessalonians were living like Paul, Silas, and Timothy, but they were also living like

the Lord Jesus. Jesus suffered even though he lived a completely good life; Paul, Silas, and Timothy suffered even though they lived good lives; and, in a similar way, the Thessalonians suffered even though they were living good lives. This meant that the Thessalonians themselves became an example for other believers all around the provinces of Macedonia and Achaia. People in Macedonia and Achaia were seeing what the Holy Spirit was doing in the lives of the Thessalonians. The way the Thessalonians lived their lives was causing people all around—even beyond Macedonia and Achaia—to hear the message, or the word of the Lord, which is the gospel. Paul says the gospel rings out to others, like the sound from an instrument. When someone blows a trumpet, or a horn, the sound of the instrument spreads out from that place. In a similar way, the Thessalonians were spreading the Lord's message to the rest of Macedonia, Achaia, and everywhere. The Thessalonians would tell people about the gospel, and those people would continue to talk about the Thessalonians' words and behavior.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Remember the story you told in the last section about how people talked about what a group of people were doing. In your language, how would you describe the way that people spread that news to others? How would you describe the way that people spread news quickly, even to people who are far away? Pause this audio here.

In this passage, Paul tells the Thessalonians that he was finding people everywhere talking about the Thessalonians' faith or trust in God. Paul did not even have to tell the story of the gospel, because people already knew it from the Thessalonians.

In the fourth part, Paul tells the story that other people are telling about the Thessalonians. This is the story: When Paul first came to Thessalonica, the Thessalonians welcomed Paul. Not only that, but also many of the Thessalonians stopped worshiping idols that are not alive. And these Thessalonians started to worship the true God, who is alive. The Thessalonian believers were waiting for God's son to return from heaven—God's son, Jesus, the one who God raised from the dead. Jesus is the one who will rescue believers from the coming judgment, when God, who is angry at sin, will judge people.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it. As you do this, you might want to use drawings, objects, or even people to represent Paul, Silas, Timothy, the Thessalonian believers, the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia, God the Father, the Lord Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and other people.

Choose people, drawings, or objects to be each one of these characters. As you begin to retell the story of these verses, you can act out Paul, Silas, and Timothy's first visit to Thessalonica when they first told the good news about Jesus to the Thessalonians. The person playing the Holy Spirit can stand near the three men to show that he was with them. Have all the Thessalonians stand together and worship false gods. But then have the person playing God pick people out of the group to be his people. Those people get rid of the false gods and start worshiping the real God. Even though other people are mean and hurt the Thessalonian believers, the Thessalonian believers are still joyful—they can clap and sing to show this! Show how when Jesus does something, Paul does the same thing, and then the Thessalonians do what Paul does. Show how the Thessalonians help each other and tell others the good news about Jesus. They can point to the person playing Jesus when they do this. Paul, Silas, and Timothy leave Thessalonica, so they can stand apart from the Thessalonians. Show how believers from Macedonia and Achaia are watching the Thessalonians and then do the same actions as the Thessalonians. Then those other believers can go tell Paul about the good way the Thessalonians are acting. Paul cannot even start talking about the gospel because the other people start saying it first! Then you can act out how Paul is now telling all this to the believers in Thessalonica. Paul, Silas, and Timothy can wave or show that they are greeting the Thessalonian believers. Paul, Silas, and Timothy can also act out the way they pray to God and thank God for the Thessalonians.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 1 Thessalonians 1:1–10 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has four parts.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- Silas
- Timothy
- The believers in the church of Thessalonica
- Believers in Macedonia and in Achaia
- Other people
- God the Father
- God the Son, who is called Jesus
- And the Holy Spirit

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Paul says, "This letter is from me, Paul. I, along with Silas and Timothy, greet you who are believers in Thessalonica and who belong to God our Father and to our Lord Jesus Christ. May God act graciously toward you and cause you to have peace."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Silas and Timothy, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I remember when we met the Thessalonians and many of them became our friends. I miss them! or
- I want the believers in Thessalonica to know that I still care for them; or
- I remember that there were riots when we were last in Thessalonica. I hope that the believers there are not afraid and worried, but instead have peace from God.

Paul says, "Every time we pray to God for you, we continually thank God for you all. When we pray to God our Father, we always remember these things: the way you work for God because you believe in the Lord Jesus, the way you work to help other believers because you love those believers, and the way you endure everything because of your certain hope that our Lord Jesus Christ will come again."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- Whenever I talk to God, I remember all the good things God has done. One thing God has done is that he protects the Thessalonian believers and causes them to act in this wonderful way. I am so thankful that God is doing this! or
- I wish I could meet my friends in Thessalonica again, so I can help them and rejoice with them. I am so glad that God is taking care of the Thessalonians and teaching them even when I am not there; or
- I remember how the Thessalonians acted when we told them the truth. I rejoice that the Thessalonians chose to follow Jesus and now live in this way!

Ask the person playing the Thessalonian believers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I believe that Jesus truly has done so much for me. Because I am so thankful, I want to work for God! I want others to know about this truth too! or
- Because we are all God's people, and God is our father, we believers are part of one family. I love the other believers and want to take care of them; or
- People are mean to us and hurt us because we are believers. I sometimes feel sad and angry about that, but I know Jesus will return and make things right, so I will not give up.

Then Paul says, "My fellow believers, whom God loves, we know that God has chosen you to be his own people. We know this because, when we came and told you the good news about Jesus, it was not just the words that we spoke to you that caused you to believe in Jesus. It was also the Holy Spirit working powerfully in us, and you realized that we strongly believed that the words we spoke were true."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing God, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I love the Thessalonians—even the ones who do not follow me yet. That is why I ask the believers to tell others about me, so that others can become my people too; or
- I told Paul to go to Thessalonica, and I prepared Paul to face many difficult things, because I want the people in Thessalonica to be my special people; or
- The Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, and I all work together to save people.

Ask the person playing the Holy Spirit, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I gave Paul words to speak and showed the people that what Paul said was true. This way everyone knows that it is God who saves and that Paul is not just teaching something that humans made up; or
- I know that people do not always know what to say, so I help and reassure believers in difficult or hard times.

Paul says, "You know that when we lived among you, we behaved in such a way as to help you. You followed our example and the example of the Lord. Although you suffered greatly, you joyfully accepted this message about Jesus, because the Holy Spirit caused you to rejoice."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I paid close attention to the words I said and how I chose to act. I always try to honor God's instructions in the way I live, but I made sure I did not do anything that would confuse the new believers as they learn about God; or
- Like a child learns from a parent, the Thessalonian believers learned about God from me. Like a parent, I care about the Thessalonians and tried to show them the right way to act; or
- I was sad that the Thessalonians were suffering because of this message, but I was so glad and amazed at how the Thessalonians still accepted joyfully!

Ask the person playing the Thessalonian believers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I did not grow up hearing stories about the true God. I have so much to learn! I am glad that Paul showed us the right way to live; or
- People have attacked us because we believe in Jesus, but I know this good news is so much more important than anything they could take away from us or anything they could do to hurt us; or
- I see how the Holy Spirit is with me and helps me. Since he is with me, I do not need to fear any people! The Holy Spirit is much more powerful!

Then Paul says, "Because of this, all those who believe in the Lord in the other parts of Macedonia and in Achaia consider you people they should imitate. It was because of you that people of the surrounding area heard the message about the Lord. Not only did people throughout Macedonia and Achaia hear this message, but people everywhere we go have heard how you trust in God. So we do not need to tell anyone about you. Instead, the people are talking about what happened when we visited you. They tell how you stopped serving your false gods and how you began to serve the only real God who is alive. And they tell how you are waiting for God's Son to return to Earth from heaven. This Son is Jesus whom God raised back to life. Jesus keeps us safe from God's anger that will punish those who sin."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing the people in Macedonia and Achaia, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I was amazed when I heard how the Thessalonians changed when they heard about the Lord Jesus. The Thessalonians grew up worshiping idols, just like we did. Jesus must be very important for them to change their whole way of living! or
- When other people remind me how the Thessalonian believers are waiting for God's son to return, I remember that I am also waiting for that day. Then I do not feel overwhelmed by all the bad things in the world, but I feel hopeful, because I know Jesus will one day fix everything; or
- The Thessalonians take care of each other and have good relationships with each other. Everyone respects them! I want to be like that!

Ask the person playing Jesus, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- While sin is bad, and God will destroy sin, God does not want to destroy all people. That is why I rescue people from their sins, so that they will not die but can be with God forever; or
- I love my people, but I know that my people will face many difficult things while they live. That is why I want my people to help and encourage each other, and learn from each other. Then their lives will not be as hard.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 1 Thessalonians 1:1–10 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Paul writes to the **church** in Thessalonica. The church is a group of people who believe in Jesus. The larger church throughout the world is everyone who belongs to God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **church**. Look up church in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

A **Lord** is a master over other people, who has full authority, so the Israelites used this word for God, because he has authority over the whole world. Paul often called Jesus "Lord" to show that Jesus is also God.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **Lord**. Look up Lord in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Christ refers to the special king and Savior that God had promised to send, who is Jesus.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **Christ**. Look up Christ in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Paul asks that God would give **grace** to the believers. To give grace means to give someone something good that they do not deserve. This can often mean the salvation that God gives, but here it probably means the good things, attitudes, and abilities that God gives to believers.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **grace**. Look up grace in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Paul also asks that God would give **peace** to the believers. A person who has this kind of peace has no conflict. A person who has peace has a full or complete life.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **peace**. Look up peace in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that he and other believers **pray** constantly for the Thessalonian believers. Praying is communicating with God.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **pray**. Look up pray in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

The Thessalonians work for God because of their **faith**. Faith means to rely on someone, to trust and believe that what that person says is true. The specific faith that Paul is talking about is when someone believes in Jesus. That person believes that Jesus is the son of God and trusts that Jesus has died for their sins and that God

has forgiven and accepted them. As a result, the person is committed to doing everything that Jesus has commanded.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **faith**. Look up faith in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

The Thessalonians also have **hope** in our Lord Jesus. When someone hopes for something, that person confidently expects it to happen. In this case, the Thessalonians expect that Christ will save all believers.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **hope**. Look up hope in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Paul calls the Thessalonians "**brothers**." Since God is the Father of all believers, all believers are like brothers and sisters. So Paul often uses the word for brother when Paul refers to a fellow believer. When there is more than one brother, the word can also mean brothers and sisters.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for "brother," or whether you will use the words "brothers and sisters." For more information about how Paul calls believers "brothers and sisters," look up believer in the Master Glossary. If you have already translated this phrase "brothers," or "brothers and sisters," in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Paul and his companions told the **gospel**, or the message, to the Thessalonian believers. The word gospel means "good news." The good news in the Bible is that God has made a way to save people.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **gospel**. Look up gospel in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

The **Holy Spirit** worked powerfully in Paul when Paul taught the gospel. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit is part of the Trinity—the God who is one, but who consists of three persons. God the father, God the son Jesus, and God the Holy Spirit are three different persons, but together they are one God.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **Holy Spirit**. Look up Holy Spirit in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

The Holy Spirit **convicted** the Thessalonians. To convict someone means to prove that someone is wrong. The Holy Spirit showed the Thessalonians how they were guilty and needed Jesus to save them.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **convict**. Look up convict in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

The Thessalonian believers are spreading the **Word of God** everywhere. The Word of God means everything that God tells people. Here, Word of God specifically means the gospel or the good news that Jesus has come into the world.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for "Word of God." Look up Word in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

The Thessalonian believers stopped serving **idols**. An idol is an object that people make in order to worship a god. People make an object of a god and worship that object as if it is that god.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **idol**. Look up idol in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

The believers wait for the **Son**. The Son, or the Son of God, is a title for Jesus. Jesus is called the Son of God because he has a special relationship with God the Father. God and Jesus love each other in the way that a father and a son love each other.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for the "Son of God." Look up Son of God in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated these words in another book of the Bible, use the same words that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

The Son will come from **heaven**. Heaven refers to the place where God lives. This heaven is not somewhere in this universe; it is not a place that humans can travel to.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **heaven**. Look up heaven in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Jesus saves believers from the coming **wrath**, or judgment. Wrath is the attitude that God has when God sees sin and evil. Wrath is stronger than anger, and Bible storytellers often use the word wrath when they talk about how God punishes people for those people's sins. In this context, Paul is talking about the day when God will punish people who disobey God.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for "coming wrath." Look up wrath in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

1 Thessalonians 1:1–10

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1 Thessalonians 2:1–8

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 1 Thessalonians 2:1–8 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 1 Thessalonians 2:1–8 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 1 Thessalonians 2:1–8 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In the last part of Paul's letter, Paul greeted and praised the Thessalonians for the way they responded to the good news about Jesus. Paul also reminded the Thessalonians about the way Paul and his companions, Silas

and Timothy, acted while they were in Thessalonica. In this part, Paul continues to talk about that visit. Paul defends their actions and motives, so that Paul's listeners will trust him and obey his instruction later.

In this part of the letter, Paul reminds the Thessalonians of things they know and saw. It is possible that people in Thessalonica who did not like Paul were saying untrue things about Paul, Silas, and Timothy, to trick or discourage the believers. Those people could have said that Paul and his companions were not sincere or honest, that they were greedy and selfish, that they wanted money, and that they wanted people to praise them. In that time, some religious teachers would travel around and teach new religions. Many of these teachers just wanted other people to pay them money and honor them. Paul wants to reassure the Thessalonians and show why Paul and his friends are different from other traveling teachers.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, when there is some new teaching or religion, how do people share this new teaching with people in other towns and places? How do people respond to the people who teach these new things? Pause this audio here.

Paul reminds the Thessalonians about how Paul and his companions came to Thessalonica. Before Thessalonica, Paul, Silas, and Timothy were in another town in the region of Macedonia called Philippi. The local rulers and people there had mistreated and insulted Paul and Silas. The rulers beat Paul and Silas, put them in prison, and forced them to leave. After something difficult like that, some people may have given up, but not Paul and Silas! God had helped Paul and his companions to have the courage to continue their journey to Thessalonica and preach the gospel there.

Stop here and look at a map that includes Macedonia as a group. Find the towns of Philippi and Thessalonica. Pause this audio here.

Paul, Silas, and Timothy also had courage because the message they were teaching is true! Paul and his companions did not teach this message because they were greedy or selfish. God had examined Paul and his companions and decided that he could trust these men to preach the gospel faithfully. These men are like people who have taken a test and passed. So God has given Paul, Silas, and Timothy authority because they have proven they are reliable. The way that Paul and his companions preached and acted wherever they went showed this. These men continued to preach despite the people who strongly opposed them. This is proof that they genuinely believe that this message is true and important.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Think of some important jobs in your culture where people must lead and set a good example for other people. Why is it important to have good and reliable people in these roles? How do people show that they are reliable and trustworthy people for this job? Who chooses these people? Pause this audio here.

Paul and his companions know that it is more important that they please God, not people, with what they do. God is the one who tests or knows people's hearts. In the Bible, writers use the word heart to talk about where a person's thoughts, feelings, and decisions happen. If people's "hearts" are good, then those people behave well too. Both God and the Thessalonians know that Paul and his companions behaved in the right way. God is their witness about this. People in Thessalonica knew what a witness was. A witness is a reliable person who tells the truth in front of a judge about what they have seen. Paul and his companions did not do things just so that people would praise them.

Paul and his companions could have asked the Thessalonians to treat them like important people because these men were Christ's apostles. An apostle is someone to whom Jesus Christ had given authority to teach and explain what Jesus taught. That was an important job! However Paul and his companions' goal was not to be important or have many people honor them. These men did not use their authority to order people around. Instead, Paul and his companions were gentle with good and innocent reasons for the way they acted.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, how do religious leaders act? What kind of authority and roles do those leaders have? How are people supposed to respond to those leaders? Pause this audio here.

Paul wanted to care for the Thessalonians, just like a mother cares for her baby. Paul and his companions loved the Thessalonians so much that they were happy to share the good news God gave them. Paul and his companions were happy to do all they could to help the Thessalonians.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 1 Thessalonians 2:1–8 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the parts, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has three parts.

In the first part: Paul, Silas, and Timothy told people about God's gospel in both Philippi and Thessalonica, even though people tried to stop them. Paul and his companions did this because God's gospel is true and God gave these men the task of sharing it.

In the second part: Paul and his companions are not trying to please people, but God. These men are not acting insincerely or dishonestly to get money or praise from anyone.

In the third part: Since Paul and his companions are apostles, they have authority and could have asked for things, but instead, these men were innocent, humble, and cared for people. Paul and his companions were happy to tell the Thessalonians about the gospel and help the Thessalonians however they could.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- Silas and Timothy
- The believers in Thessalonica, who are listening to someone read this letter aloud
- The people in Philippi
- God
- And Christ

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

In this passage, Paul says that "we" did these things. Remember, when Paul was in Thessalonica, Silas and Timothy were with Paul.

In the first part, Paul calls the Thessalonians "brothers," which is a friendly way to address other believers. Paul is still talking to all the Thessalonian believers, both men and women. These believers know Paul and know that what Paul says is true. Paul is just reminding the believers of these things. The believers know that Paul's visit to Thessalonica was not useless. This group of believers is the good result of Paul's teaching there! Paul had probably told the Thessalonian believers about what happened in Philippi, so Paul does not need to tell the full story. Paul points out that just like in Philippi, God caused Paul not to fear anyone so Paul could tell the good news in Thessalonica, even though people tried to stop him. Paul calls this good news "God's gospel." The good news is about Jesus, but it comes from God.

Paul and his companions also continued to teach the good news because it was true. Paul and his companions were not confused about what was really true, nor were they trying to trick anyone for bad reasons. When people have bad reasons for doing things, their reasons are impure like impure water is full of bad things. But Paul, Silas, and Timothy did not have impure motives—they did not do things for bad reasons. God knows this and has approved Paul and his companions as reliable men. God has given Paul, Silas, and Timothy the job of telling the good news.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about a time when a leader or someone with authority chose and approved people for a special job or task. How did the leader decide that these people would do a good job? Pay attention to the words and phrases you use to describe the people. Pause this audio here.

In the second part, Paul says that he and his companions were not focused on getting people to like them. Instead, the men wanted to act in such a way to please God. God is the one who knows what people really think and feel. So Paul and his companions were sincere and honest. The men did not say things they do not mean just to make people happy. Paul says they did not put on a mask to hide their greed like a person puts on a mask to hide their face, because they were not greedy. God can testify that this is true. Whatever Paul and his companions did, they did not do it so that human beings would praise them. It was more important to them that God approved them.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Paul says they did not put on a mask to hide their greed, because they were not greedy. In your language, how would you describe someone who hides what they really want? Pause this audio here.

In the third part, Paul says that he and his companions had the authority to ask for more help, or to command people to respect and listen to them. They are apostles and have the very important job to tell people what Jesus has told them to say. However, Paul, Silas, and Timothy did not want to cause the Thessalonians believers to work harder to help or honor them. Some translations say that Paul and his companions were like babies, which means they were innocent and humble. Some translations say these men were gentle.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your language, how would you describe someone who is gentle and does things for simple, good reasons? Pause this audio here.

Paul also describes how they cared for the Thessalonians. Just like a mother cares for and loves her children, so Paul and his companions cared for the Thessalonians. That is why they shared the good news with them—they wanted the Thessalonians to know God too! That is also why Paul and his companions shared their lives with the Thessalonians. To share your life means to be willing to use your time and energy to help others.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your language, how would you describe someone who cares deeply for other people, just like Paul and his companions did? Pause this audio here.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it. As you do this, you might want to have drawings, objects, or even people to represent Paul, his audience, Silas, Timothy, the people in Philippi, Jesus, and God.

Choose people, drawings, or objects to be each one of these characters. You can begin by acting out how people tried to stop Paul, Silas, and Timothy from teaching in Philippi. Those people chase Paul, Silas, and Timothy out of their town! Show how God was with Paul, Silas, and Timothy. God encouraged them and led them to Thessalonica. Remember, Paul is talking to the believers in Thessalonica about this trip. Paul reminds the believers of what Paul and his companions did and did not do. You can have Silas and Timothy act out what Paul says. If you want, you can have someone act out the bad behaviors, such as someone gathering money secretly because they are greedy. Then Paul can say, "No! We did not do these things!" Act out how a mother cares for her children. Paul can say, "We acted like this!" The person playing God can show clearly that he too knows how Paul acted and agrees with what Paul says.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 1 Thessalonians 2:1–8 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has three parts.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- Silas and Timothy
- The believers in Thessalonica, who are listening to someone read this letter aloud
- The people in Philippi
- God
- And Christ

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Paul says, "You know, my brothers and sisters, that when we visited you in Thessalonica, it was not a waste of time. You know that the people in the town of Philippi had persecuted us and insulted us before we came to you at Thessalonica. Yet in spite of that, our God helped us to have the courage to come to Thessalonica and tell you the gospel that God gave us, even though many people opposed us."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Silas and Timothy, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I remember how loud and dangerous the crowd in Philippi was. I was nervous when we came to Thessalonica that people would chase us out of their town too; or
- Even though I was worried, I knew that God's gospel was more important than staying safe. I knew God would help us; or
- Just like people believed in Philippi, I knew God would still cause people to believe in Thessalonica, even if there was trouble.

Paul says, "When we were trying to convince you, what we said was not based on incorrect thinking, nor did we want to speak for a bad reason. We were not trying to lie to anyone. Instead, we speak because God has approved us as people he can trust to teach this gospel faithfully. So we do not preach to please people but to please God. God is the one who continually examines what we think and feel!"

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing God, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I know everything a person thinks and feels. People may try to trick others or hide bad motives, but they cannot hide from me; or
- I am reliable and trustworthy. When Paul, Silas and Timothy are teaching my gospel, they are showing what I am like. I will help Paul, Silas, and Timothy so they can show people how good and reliable I am; or
- Sometimes, when people are learning a new teaching, they look at how the teachers act to see if this is a good teaching. I will choose faithful people to teach my gospel and help them as they do.

Then Paul says, "You know that we did not say nice things we did not mean, just to make you happy. You also know that we never did things because we were greedy and then tried to hide that from you like someone hides his face behind a mask. God can testify that we did not act like that. We were not trying to cause you or anyone else to praise us. Since we are apostles of Christ, we could have made you treat us as important people. Instead, when we were with you, we were innocent and humble like children. We treated you gently and cared for you, like a mother cares for her little children. We loved you so much that we were happy to tell you the good news God gave us. We were happy to do all we could to help you, because you had become very dear to us."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I hope the Thessalonians will understand how much we really do love them! We showed that when we were with them, and even now, we are praying for them and sending them reminders of our love; or
- When we teach the gospel, we do tell people to listen to us, since God has given us the truth. However, we do not order people around all the time! We want to be gentle with people, because we do not want to make their lives harder; or
- I love God, who is my father. I want to honor God and do things that make him happy!

Ask the person playing the Thessalonian believers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I met Paul when he visited, and I saw the way he acted. Paul really did act in a good way. When people say that Paul is not a good man, I will remember what Paul did, and I will not listen to those people; or
- I have met some religious teachers who say good things but act in a bad way. I did not respect those teachers, because they either were lying or did not understand what they taught. However, Paul is different from those people. I can trust what Paul says; or
- I remember how much love and care Paul, Silas, and Timothy showed to us when they were here. I felt so encouraged. I wanted to be like them and to be a part of a group of people who love each other!

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 1 Thessalonians 2:1-8 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Paul calls the Thessalonian believers "**brothers**." Since God is the Father of all believers, all believers are like brothers and sisters. So Paul frequently uses the word for brother when Paul means fellow believers. Use the same word or phrase for brothers, or brothers and sisters, as you used in previous passages.

With God's help, Paul told the Thessalonians God's **gospel**. The word gospel means "good news." The good news in the Bible is that God has made a way to save people. For more information on gospel, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for gospel as you used in previous passages.

God tests people's **hearts**. In the Bible, the authors use the word heart as special language for the place where a person's thoughts, feelings, and decisions happen.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **heart**. Look up heart in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that God is their **witness**. A witness is someone who declares the truth about something that they have seen.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **witness**. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Paul and his companions did not want people to **praise** or honor them. To praise someone means to talk about the good things that person has done.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **praise**. Look up praise in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that they are Christ's **apostles**. An apostle is someone who has received a special authority from Jesus. Jesus has chosen that person to speak on his behalf.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **apostle**. Look up apostle in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Christ refers to the special king and Savior that God had promised to send, who is Jesus. For more information on Christ, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for Christ as you used in previous passages.

Because they were apostles, Paul and his companions had **authority**. Someone who has authority has the right and the power to make decisions and judgments. The highest authority belongs to God. God can give authority to other people to make decisions or judgments on his behalf. The apostles had authority in the church, because Jesus gave it to them. Other people needed to accept the apostles' decisions.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **authority**. Look up authority in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

1 Thessalonians 2:1–8

Audio Content

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1 Thessalonians 2:9–13

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 1 Thessalonians 2:9–13 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 1 Thessalonians 2:9–13 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 1 Thessalonians 2:9–13 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

You will remember that Paul, Silas, and Timothy had visited Thessalonica, an important city in Macedonia, to share the Gospel. Paul and his companions taught in the synagogues, and many non-Jewish people, or Gentiles, became believers in Jesus. Paul and his companions worked hard while they were in Thessalonica.

Paul begins this passage by reminding the Thessalonians of his hard work while he was with the Thessalonians. Paul mentions that he and his companions worked continuously to support themselves financially. The men did this so that they would not be a burden to anyone while they preached the gospel of God to the Thessalonians. Paul wants to remind the Thessalonians that Paul and his companions did not want to gain money or fame from their work.

Stop here and share a story about someone in your community who worked very hard to help others and did not expect anything in return. Pause this audio here.

Paul then asks the Thessalonian believers and God himself to witness how Paul, Silas, and Timothy behaved rightly in all they did. Paul and his companions were holy, or acted like people who were set apart for God. These men were righteous, which means that they were right in their actions. The men were blameless, which means that they did not harm or act badly towards other believers. Paul wanted to show that both people and God saw how honest Paul was. Paul reminds the Thessalonians that he did what Paul said he would do, which proves Paul was telling the truth about his message.

Stop here and discuss these questions as a group: What happens when religious leaders in your community do, or do not do, what they teach? What do people think of these religious leaders who do the same things that they teach? What do people think of religious leaders who do not do the same things that they teach? Pause this audio here.

Paul goes on to describe how he behaved with the Thessalonian believers. Paul compares his treatment of the believers to that of a father with his own children. Paul says that he encouraged and comforted each one of the believers. Paul cared about each Thessalonian believer, and Paul wanted each one to grow spiritually closer to God.

Stop here and discuss these questions as a group: In your culture, how do fathers typically guide and encourage their children? How is this similar to or different from how Paul describes his relationship with the Thessalonians? Pause this audio here.

The goal of Paul's ministry among the Thessalonians was for them to walk in a manner worthy of God. In other words, Paul wanted the Thessalonian believers to act in a way that showed how wonderful God is. God called these believers to be a part of his kingdom. God wanted the believers to understand and be a part of his glory, or majesty. When people are a part of God's kingdom, that means that the people belong to the community where God rules as king. It is like being a citizen of God's country. In God's kingdom, people follow God's ways to live and treat others. They choose to let God be in charge of their lives.

When people "share in God's glory," they get to be part of God's greatness and goodness. God invites people to become more like God—to show love, be truthful, help others, and do what is right. When people live this way, they reflect God's character, like a mirror shows an image. It is like God sharing his wonderful qualities with his people and allowing his people to join in displaying these qualities to others.

Stop here and share a story about a time when you got to be a part of someone else's fame or greatness. How did you get to show other people the goodness or greatness of that person? Pause this audio here.

Finally, Paul says he is very thankful to God because the Thessalonians accepted the message about God. When the Thessalonians heard the message from Paul and his companions, the Thessalonians did not just hear it as words from people. Instead, the Thessalonians understood that these were actually God's own words. Paul emphasizes that this word, or message, truly affects the actions of people who believe it.

Stop here and share a story about a time when a message or teaching had a powerful impact on someone in your community. How did it change their life? Pause this audio here.

This passage highlights several important themes, especially what happens when people truly believe and accept God's message. Paul's relationship with the Thessalonians serves as a model for godly leadership and discipleship.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 1 Thessalonians 2:9–13 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the parts, characters, and setting of this passage. Then, the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has two parts.

In the first part: Paul reminds the Thessalonians of his and his companions' behavior while they were in Thessalonica. Paul recalls the men's hard work, their blameless behavior, and how they treated the believers.

In the second part: Paul is thankful for how the Thessalonians received the message of God, accepting it not as a human word but as God's word, which truly affects the lives of believers in Jesus.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- Timothy
- Silas
- The Thessalonian believers
- And God

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

This passage is part of a letter Paul writes to the church in Thessalonica. Paul is recalling events that happened in the past when Paul and his companions were with the Thessalonians. Paul shares memories with the Thessalonians in a friendly way as he reminds them of their time together. Throughout this story, Paul talks about himself and his companions, Silas and Timothy.

Stop here and share a story about a time when someone worked hard to help your community. How do you describe that person's efforts and the impact they had? Pause this audio here.

Paul addresses the believers as "brothers," which in this context includes the women. Some translations say "brothers and sisters" to show that Paul is talking to everyone in the church.

Paul uses the phrase "night and day" to show how he was dedicated to work and teach well. When the Thessalonians remember Paul's time with them, the Thessalonians would recall seeing Paul work for many long hours to support himself, yet still make time to teach them about Jesus. Paul was not just working a little bit—Paul was trying to take care of his own needs without burdening the church with those needs. When Paul mentions both "night and day," Paul reminds the Thessalonian believers that Paul did not just show up occasionally to teach—Paul lived among them, worked hard with his own hands, and spent time teaching them. This image of constant work helps the Thessalonians understand Paul's commitment to both support himself and share the gospel.

Paul and his companions showed they were trustworthy by living in a holy, righteous, and blameless way. These words tell us how hard they worked to do what was right and follow God's way of living.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Describe someone in your community who acts honestly and rightly with God and with people in the community. Pay attention to the words you use to describe that person. Pause this audio here.

Paul uses words that describe family members to describe his relationship with the Thessalonians. Paul compares himself and his companions to a father with his children. Like a caring family member, Paul and his companions showed the new believers love, helped guide them, and took care of them.

Paul says that he, Silas, and Timothy have been exhorting, or encouraging, the believers. These men have been comforting the believers, or reminding them that God loves them. And the men have been urging, or asking, believers to live like Jesus. Paul and his companions show how they helped take care of people and taught them how to grow in their faith, like caring teachers or guides.

Stop here and describe how leaders or respected elders in your community guide and encourage others. How do they encourage people? How do they guide people? How will you talk about the way Paul and his companions encourage, comfort, and urge the believers in Thessalonica? Pause this audio here.

Paul then praises the Thessalonians for how they received the message, or God's Word. God chose the Thessalonians for salvation. The Thessalonians believed the truth of God's Word when they heard it and they "walked worthy of God." When people walk worthy of God, it is like they live in a way that honors God and reflects God's character. This makes the Thessalonians different from other people who believed lies that humans might tell them. The Thessalonians did not just hear Paul's message like they would hear any other human's message. Instead, the Thessalonians accepted that the words that Paul spoke were God's Word, or the truth about God. Paul says that God's word is "at work" in the believers. God chose the Thessalonians as the first group of believers in their city. Although Paul does not say this here, we know that the Holy Spirit helped make the Thessalonians believe that if they followed and obeyed God's Word, God would change their lives. Paul thanks God for how the Thessalonians trusted that this truth would change them.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, how do people show that they have accepted an important message or teaching? What changes might you expect to see in their lives? Pause this audio here.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it. As you do this, you might want to use drawings, objects, or even people to represent Paul, Silas, and Timothy working hard at tent-making. Show them teaching God's message during this time too. Show the Thessalonians listening and seeing how Paul and his friends lived. Show how Paul and his friends cared for the Thessalonians like a loving family. Show Paul working "night and day" to support himself while sharing God's truth. Show that the Thessalonians accepted this teaching as God's real message, not just as human words.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 1 Thessalonians 2:9–13 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has three scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- Timothy
- Silas
- The Thessalonian believers
- And God

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then, continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Paul begins by reminding the Thessalonians of his hard work in Thessalonica. Paul worked night and day so that he would not be a burden to anyone while he proclaimed the gospel of God to the Thessalonians.

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I feel proud of my hard work and dedication to the Thessalonians; or
- I am remembering how exhausting it was to work and preach at the same time, but it was worth it; or
- I want the Thessalonians to understand the depth of my commitment to them.

Paul includes Silas and Timothy when he writes, "We behaved in holy, righteous, and blameless ways." Paul wants both God and the Thessalonians to remember how they lived and worked together.

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I feel confident that I was honest with God and the Thessalonians; or
- I hope the Thessalonians remember how hard I tried to set a good example for them.

Paul describes how he behaved with each of them as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, supporting, and urging them to walk in a manner worthy of God.

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I feel a deep sense of responsibility for the spiritual growth of the Thessalonians; or
- I hope they understood that my strong words came from love, like a father loves his children.

Finally, Paul shows his gratitude that when the Thessalonians received the word of God from him, they accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God.

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I feel joy and relief that the Thessalonians recognized the true source of my message; or
- I thank God for the way he helped the Thessalonians behave based on what they know about God.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 1 Thessalonians 2:9-13 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

The passage mentions Paul's **labor** and **toil**. These terms are similar and emphasize the hard work Paul and his companions did. Labor refers to the hard physical work or effort, while toil emphasizes how tired someone is when they do this hard work.

Stop here and discuss as a group what words or phrases you will use for **labor** and **toil**. If you have already translated these words in another book of the Bible, consider using the same words you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Paul said that they preached the **gospel of God**. The word gospel means good news and refers to the message about Jesus Christ. "Gospel of God" emphasizes that this message comes from God himself. Look up gospel in the Master Glossary for more information and use the same word for gospel or good news that you have used previously.

Paul describes their behavior as **holy** and **righteous** and **blameless**. These three terms are similar but have slightly different emphases. Holy refers to being set apart for God, pure, and morally upright. Righteous means being in right standing with God, doing what is right and just. Blameless means being free from accusation or fault. When someone is blameless, they are not guilty of wrongdoing.

Stop here and discuss what words or phrases you will use for **holy**, **righteous**, and **blameless**. For more information on holy and righteousness, refer to the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

The Thessalonians watched how Paul, Silas, and Timothy lived and acted. Paul asks the Thessalonians to **witness**, or tell others, what they saw. A witness is someone who has personally seen or experienced something and can testify about it. In this context, Paul is emphasizing that the Thessalonians have seen themselves how he and his companions behaved in Thessalonica. If you have already translated witness in another passage, consider using the same word you have used there. Consider how you use this term in legal or formal settings in your culture.

Paul says that he treated the Thessalonians like a father treats his children. Paul says that Paul and his companions have been **exhorting**, or **encouraging**, the believers. These men have been **comforting** the believers, or reminding the believers that God loves them. And they have been **urging** or asking believers to live like Jesus.

Stop here and discuss what words or description you will use for **exhorting** or **encouraging**, **comforting**, and **charging** or **urging**. Consider how these terms might be used in your culture in the context of when a parent instructs their children. Pause this audio here.

Finally, Paul tells the Thessalonians that God calls them into **God's kingdom** and **glory**. The kingdom of God refers to when God rules, both now and in the future. Glory refers to God's greatness, splendor, and honor.

Stop here and review the words or phrases you have used for kingdom of God and glory. Look up these terms in the Master Glossary for more information.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage as a group in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

1 Thessalonians 2:9-13

Audio Content

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- [FIA Step 1](#)
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1 Thessalonians 2:14–16

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 1 Thessalonians 2:14–16 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 1 Thessalonians 2:14–16 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 1 Thessalonians 2:14–16 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

Paul has just thanked God that the Thessalonians accepted the true message about Jesus. Now Paul talks about what has happened because the Thessalonians accepted that message. The Thessalonians suffer just like the believers in Judea. Paul reminds the Thessalonians that they were not the first to suffer. Before the churches, people killed Jesus and the prophets, and now people persecute Paul! But God sees what people do and treats them in a just way.

Because the Thessalonians are believers now, the Thessalonians are like the other churches or groups of believers. The Thessalonians' own people persecute the Thessalonians, or treat the Thessalonians cruelly and unfairly. In the same way, the people in Judea persecute the Judean churches. Judea was a province in southern Israel that included the city of Jerusalem. This was the Jewish people group's homeland. Most Thessalonian believers were Gentiles, or non-Jewish people, while the believers in Judean churches were mostly from the Jewish people group. The region of Judea was far away from Thessalonica, but Paul shows how the churches in these two cities are similar. Even though the believers live in different areas and belong to different people groups, they still experience the same thing because they believe in Jesus.

Stop here and look at a map of Israel and Greece as a group. Find the region of Judea and the town of Thessalonica. Pause this audio here.

The Thessalonian believers may be surprised or worried that their own people persecute the believers. But Paul shows that it is not new or surprising that people from the believers' own people group would persecute believers. To show this, Paul talks about what Jews who are not believers have done throughout history. Although Roman soldiers physically killed Jesus, the Jewish people who gave Jesus to the Romans are responsible for Jesus's death. Long ago in the past, some of the Jewish people killed the prophets, or the people who gave messages from God to the people. Now, some Jews continue to persecute and attack Paul. Jesus, the prophets, and Paul were all a part of the Jewish people group.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, what kind of people bring messages from God or gods to the people? How should people treat those messengers? Pause this audio here.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, how should people from the same people group treat each other? What would you think or feel if someone in your people group hurt you or treated you in a disrespectful way? Pause this audio here.

Paul says the Jews displease God and oppose everyone. One way the Jews do this is that they try to stop Paul when Paul teaches the good news about Jesus to the Gentiles. The Jews were jealous and angry about the gospel, which allowed Gentiles to become God's people without following the Law. The Thessalonians have seen the Jews do this in Thessalonica. Remember that while Paul was in Thessalonica, some Jews started a riot against Paul to force Paul to leave the city so Paul could no longer teach the Gentiles.

When the Jews act in this way, the Jews sin, or disobey God. Paul compares the way that the Jews continue to sin to the way that someone adds more and more things to a pile. Because the Jews have continued to sin greatly for a long period of time, God shows his wrath to the Jews. God's wrath or anger is the emotion that God feels when God sees someone sin or disobey him. Wrath is God's hatred of sin because God is holy, or pure, and just. Everyone who sins deserves that wrath. God has been patient and has not immediately punished people when people sinned. But the Jews have reached God's limit. God has chosen a time to show his wrath and to punish the Jews.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, what do people believe will happen to people who disobey God or a god? When does this happen?

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 1 Thessalonians 2:14–16 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the parts, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has two parts.

In the first part: Paul tells the Thessalonians that they suffer just like the churches in Judea suffer.

In the second part: Paul talks about the Jewish people group and the ways these people have sinned throughout history.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- Thessalonian believers
- Thessalonians who are not believers
- The churches or groups of believers in Judea
- God
- Christ Jesus
- The Jews who are not believers
- The Jewish prophets
- Believers with Paul
- And the Gentiles

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

Paul has talked about how much he cares for the Thessalonian believers. Paul continues to show this when Paul begins the first part of this passage and calls the Thessalonians brothers and sisters. Paul knows the Thessalonians truly accepted the message about Christ because the Thessalonians imitate the believers in Judea. Paul does not mean the Thessalonians choose to imitate the believers in Judea. Paul means the Thessalonians are like the Judean churches because people persecute the Thessalonians just like the Jews persecute the believers in Judea.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Think about two people you know who have gotten sick in the same way. How would you talk about the way one person is like the other person even though they did not choose to be the same? Pause this audio here.

Paul refers to the churches in Judea to talk about the believers in Judea. In that time, the word for church could mean gathering. Paul first says that the churches in Judea belong to God to show how the churches are different from other gatherings. Then Paul says the churches belong to Christ Jesus to show that the churches are also different from the Jewish groups of people who worship God but who do not worship Christ.

In the second part, Paul speaks strongly about the Jews. Paul is frustrated that these people from Paul's own people group hurt the believers. Paul is not talking about all Jews, but only those Jews who were a part of the bad things Paul mentions. Long ago, some of the Jews killed the prophets. Then, a few years before Paul sends this letter, some other Jews caused people to kill the Lord Jesus. "And now, some of the Jews drive us out," Paul says. When Paul says "us," Paul probably means Paul, Silas, and Timothy. Some translations say, "the Jews persecute us," because the way the Jews drove Paul and the others out of the city was an example of the way the Jews persecuted them.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: As an activity, talk about the way that members of your people group have acted in a bad way in your people's history. How do you show that you are referring to certain members of the group and not every single person in the people group? Pause this audio here.

Paul explains that the way the Jews act does not please God. The Jews oppose all people, especially in the way the Jews try to stop Paul from teaching the gospel to Gentiles. Because the Jews had continued to sin greatly for a long period of time, God has finally shown his wrath to the Jews. It is not clear if Paul is talking about something that has already happened or will soon happen. In the original language, people talked about things they were very sure about as if those things had already happened. Paul is so certain of God's punishment that Paul talks about that punishment as if it has already happened. It is true that the Jews had suffered several difficult and hard things recently, such as a lack of food as well as a riot and massacre in Jerusalem. But Paul could also be talking about how God will one day punish the Jews for what they have done.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your language, how do you talk about something you are very certain will happen? Discuss how you have heard this passage before in your community and how you want to translate this here. Pause this audio here.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 1 Thessalonians 2:14–16 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has two scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- Thessalonian believers
- Thessalonians who are not believers
- The churches or groups of believers in Judea
- God
- Christ Jesus
- The Jews who are not believers
- The Jewish prophets
- Believers with Paul
- And the Gentiles

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

My brothers and sisters, your experiences show that God's message works among you. Your experiences have been like those of God's churches, which are in Judea and belong to Christ Jesus. Your own people persecuted you in the same way the Jews persecuted the churches in Judea.

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing the Thessalonian believers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I do not want other believers to suffer, but I am relieved to learn that this is not surprising for believers. I thought at first that we were doing something wrong; or
- The believers in Judea experience the same things we do. We probably feel a lot of the same things. When I feel overwhelmed, I will remember to pray for the believers in Judea too.

It was people from the Jewish people group who killed the Lord Jesus. Other Jews killed some of God's prophets. And it was also Jews who chased us out of many places where we preached. When the Jews do this, the Jews do not please God. The Jews oppose everyone as they try to stop us when we tell the Gentiles how God can save the Gentiles. Just like people add things to make a pile, the Jews continue to sin more and more. The Jews have reached God's limit. And now, at last, God is angry with the Jews and punishes them.

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am sad that people from my own people group do not accept the truth about God; or
- I am frustrated and angry that the Jews try to stop us when we tell others about the truth. Not only do those Jews not believe, but the Jews want to stop other people so those people cannot have a good relationship with God either! or
- I am thankful that God sees what happens and will make everything right.

Ask the person playing God, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- The way people sin and hurt each other makes me angry. I do not want people to hurt each other and themselves; or
- I am fair and will not let people do bad things without consequences; or
- I am also merciful. I care for people and want to save them. I do not always immediately punish people. Instead, I will give people a chance to believe in Jesus to forgive their sins. I will set a limit, though, in a fair and just way.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 1 Thessalonians 2:14–16 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Paul calls the Thessalonian believers "**brothers**." Since God is the Father of all believers, all believers are like brothers and sisters. So Paul frequently uses the word for brother when Paul means fellow believers. Use the same word or phrase for brothers, or brothers and sisters, as you used in previous passages.

Paul talks about the **churches** which belong to Christ Jesus. The church is a group of people who believe in Jesus. The larger church throughout the world is everyone who belongs to God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. When Paul talks about churches in Judea, Paul means the groups of believers in different cities in Judea. For more information on church, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for churches as you used in previous passages.

Christ refers to the special king and Savior who God had promised to send, who is Jesus. For more information on Christ, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for Christ as you used in previous passages.

The **Jews** persecute the churches in Judea. Jews refers to the people who are descendants of Jacob. The Jewish people are from the region of Judea. When people use the word Jews, they often think especially about the people who want to keep the covenant that God has made with Jacob's descendants.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **Jew**. Look up Jew in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Paul calls Jesus "**Lord**." Paul often called Jesus Lord to remind people that Jesus is God too. For more information on Lord, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for Lord as you used in previous passages.

Some Jews killed the **prophets** long ago. A prophet is a person who gives messages from God to the people. Most of the time, these messages were warnings to the people to stop disobeying God. Because people often did not like to hear these messages, people sometimes mistreated prophets or even killed the prophets.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **prophet**. Look up prophet in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

The Jews try to stop Paul when Paul preaches the gospel to the **Gentiles**. The word Gentile refers to all people who were not Jews. The Jews had to cooperate somewhat with the Gentiles, but the Jews were not friendly with the Gentiles.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **Gentile**. Look up Gentile in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

The Jews continue to **sin**. Sin is an act of rebellion against God. God has made good laws, and if people follow these laws, then people will be able to live together in peace. But people are constantly breaking God's laws, and when people do this, they sin.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **sin**. Look up sin in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

God shows his **wrath** to the Jews. Wrath is the emotion God has when God sees sin and evil. God is holy and just. Wrath is stronger than anger, and wrath involves how God punishes people for their sin. However, whenever God shows his wrath, God always shows his mercy, especially when God deals with his chosen people. Use the same word for wrath as you have used in previous passages, and remember that wrath is in the Master Glossary.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

1 Thessalonians 2:14–16

Audio Content

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- [FIA Step 1](#)
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1 Thessalonians 2:17–3:5

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 1 Thessalonians 2:17–3:5 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 1 Thessalonians 2:17–3:5 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.

5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 1 Thessalonians 2:17-3:5 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this passage, Paul shows his deep love for the Thessalonian believers. Paul wants to see the Thessalonians again. Paul sent Timothy to visit the Thessalonians to see if the believers were still strongly following Jesus. Paul waited anxiously for Timothy to bring back news about the Thessalonians, because Paul cared about the Thessalonians like a father cares about his children. Paul wanted the believers' faith to grow stronger each day.

Stop here and share a story about a time when you had to unexpectedly leave someone you cared about. Pause this audio here.

Paul tells the Thessalonians about how he felt after he left their city. Earlier in his letter, Paul acted like a parent to the Thessalonians. Now Paul shows his sadness when he compares himself to a child without parents. Paul cannot see the Thessalonian believers face to face, but Paul still loves them. Paul tried many times to visit the Thessalonians again.

Paul continues to tell about his strong desire to see the Thessalonian believers again, and Paul tried more than once to return to Thessalonica. Paul says Satan stopped him and Silas from visiting the Thessalonians. We do not know how Satan stopped Paul and Silas from coming back, but Paul wants the Thessalonians to know that only Satan himself could keep Paul from visiting the Thessalonians.

Stop here and discuss these questions as a group: Think about times when you cannot be with people you care about. What do you do to stay connected with them? Pause this audio here.

Paul and Silas faced barriers that stopped them from sharing God's message with the Thessalonians. What kinds of barriers might stop people from sharing God's message today? Pause this audio here.

Paul shows great love for the Thessalonians. Paul calls the Thessalonians his hope and joy. You may remember that the Greek people in that time used to run athletic races. The person who ran the race would receive a special crown that people made out of olive branches to show that they had won the race. Paul says the Thessalonians are like this crown, or prize, that a runner wins when he has won a race like this. Paul is very proud of his Thessalonian friends. Paul will be happy because of their faith when the Lord Jesus comes. Paul talks more about the Lord Jesus's return later in this letter.

Stop here and share about someone in your community who brings you joy and hope because they follow Jesus. Pause this audio here.

Now Paul explains why he chose to stay alone with just Silas in Athens. Paul missed the Thessalonians so much that he stayed alone so he could send Timothy to visit them. Paul describes Timothy as a brother who works with God to share the message about Jesus. Paul sent Timothy because he trusted Timothy to help the Thessalonians even though Paul could not go himself. Paul tells how he and Silas could not wait any longer without knowing how the Thessalonians were doing.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Who are some people in your community who strengthen and encourage others in their faith? How do they do this? Then share about a time when you were worried about someone's spiritual condition. How did you handle that concern? Pause this audio here.

Paul taught the Thessalonians earlier that followers of Jesus would face hard times because they believed in Jesus. Now these hard times came, just as Paul said they would. Paul explains why he sent Timothy to help them. Paul knew Satan caused the hard times the Thessalonians faced. Paul calls Satan "the tempter," because Satan works to tempt believers to turn away from God. Paul worried that Satan might tempt the Thessalonians

to stop following Jesus. Paul had worked very hard when he taught the Thessalonians about Jesus. Paul feared all his work would be useless if Satan succeeded in turning the Thessalonians away from God.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Tell a story about a time when you worked very hard, but later you realised that you had worked so hard and nothing good happened from it. Your work was useless.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 1 Thessalonians 2:17-3:5 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the parts, characters, and setting of this passage. Then, the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has three parts.

In the first part: Paul, Silas, and Timothy tell the Thessalonians how much they missed the Thessalonians. Paul and his companions left the Thessalonians suddenly. Even though they live physically apart, Paul and his companions still feel close to the Thessalonians in their hearts. The men have tried very hard to visit the Thessalonians again.

In the second part: Paul explains that Satan prevents Paul and his companions from returning to Thessalonica. Paul wants to return because the Thessalonians bring him joy. Paul looks forward to showing pride in the Thessalonians when Jesus returns.

In the third part: Paul and Silas could not wait any longer to hear news about the Thessalonians. Paul and Silas chose to stay alone in Athens and send Timothy to Thessalonica. Timothy went to strengthen and encourage the Thessalonians in their faith, because Paul knew the Thessalonians faced troubles. Paul had warned the Thessalonians earlier that believers would face troubles. Paul worried that Satan might tempt the Thessalonians. Paul feared that his work might become useless.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The Thessalonians
- Satan
- Timothy
- And Silas

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

At the beginning of this part of Paul's letter, Paul shifts his focus to talk about why he cannot be with the Thessalonians right now. Paul wants to explain to the Thessalonians why Paul wants to hear how they are doing, so first Paul explains why he cannot come and ask them himself. Enemies forced Paul, Silas, and Timothy to leave Thessalonica suddenly. Paul and his companions went to Athens. Paul and the men wanted to return to Thessalonica, but they could not. They worried about the new believers in Thessalonica. The people of Thessalonica persecuted the believers. Paul and his team knew the believers needed encouragement. They decided to send Timothy to help the believers stay strong in their faith.

Paul uses caring words to show his deep love for the Thessalonians. Paul says that he feels like a child who has lost his parents, because Paul is not with the Thessalonians. In other words, Paul feels lost and alone. Paul wants to show how much he cares for the Thessalonians even though he is not with them.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell about a time when you had to stay away from people you care about, but you wanted to see those people very badly. How did you feel? How did you talk about this? How will you talk about the way Paul feels like a child without parents, or alone? Pause this audio here.

Paul explains that even though they cannot meet in person, the Thessalonians remain close to the hearts of Paul, Silas, and Timothy. In other words, Paul thinks about the Thessalonians a lot. Paul even calls the Thessalonian believers "brothers," or "brothers and sisters," because they are like members of Paul's family. Paul and his team have tried very hard to return to Thessalonica.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What words do people in your language use to describe how they miss someone very much? How will you talk about the Thessalonians being always in Paul's heart or thoughts? Pause this audio here.

In the second part, Paul explains why they have not returned to Thessalonica. Satan blocks their way. Paul wants to return because the Thessalonians bring Paul joy and pride. Paul says this like a question when he says, "What is our hope, joy, and crown of glory that we will present to Jesus when he comes?" Paul is really saying that he believes in good things from the Thessalonians, so Paul is joyful when he thinks about the Thessalonians. Paul looks forward to presenting the Thessalonians to Jesus when Jesus returns. The Thessalonians will become like a prize, or a crown, that Paul will proudly show to Jesus.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell about a time when you felt proud of someone else's success or growth. How did you show that you were proud of that person? How will you talk about the Thessalonians being Paul's prize, or crown, that Paul can show to people? Pause this audio here.

In the third part, Paul now shifts focus to explain that Paul and his companions could not wait any longer without knowing how the Thessalonians lived. Paul uses strong emotional language to show how much Paul wanted to know how the Thessalonians were.

Stop here and discuss as a group: How will you describe that Paul could not wait any longer to hear news from the Thessalonians? Pause this audio here.

Paul and Silas decided to stay alone in Athens, but they sent Timothy to visit the Thessalonians. Timothy went to strengthen the Thessalonians' faith and encourage them. Timothy served as their brother in Christ and God's worker to help proclaim the good news about Jesus. Timothy could also help the Thessalonians stay strong when they faced troubles. Paul says that he wants the Thessalonians' faith to not move around or shake when troubles come. The Thessalonians should continue to obey Jesus strongly, without doubting.

Stop here and look at the map of the area which shows the distance between Athens and Thessalonica. Pause this audio here.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How do you talk about strongly following someone when it is hard and troubles come? How will you talk about how Timothy will make the faith, or belief, of the Thessalonians strong and unshakeable? Pause this audio here.

Paul had told the Thessalonians earlier that all believers will definitely face troubles, especially because they believed in Jesus. Paul uses language that makes people think about having much suffering. Paul makes it clear that the troubles or persecution will definitely come.

Stop here and discuss how you will talk about Paul explaining that troubles will definitely come. People cannot avoid these troubles. Pause this audio here.

Paul gives the example that he himself faced troubles, just like he said he would. Just like Paul faced troubles, Paul knew that the Thessalonians would face troubles, and Paul worried that Satan might tempt the Thessalonians to give up their faith. In fact, Paul calls Satan "the Tempter." Paul feared that all of his, Silas, and Timothy's hard work in Thessalonica might become useless if the Thessalonians stopped believing in Jesus and following Jesus.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it. As you do this, you might want to use drawings, objects, or even people to represent Paul, Silas, Timothy, the believers in Thessalonica, and Satan. Consider drawing a map to show the distance between Athens and Thessalonica. Show how Satan blocks Paul from returning. Show Timothy traveling to encourage the believers.

*Embodying the Text**Embodying the Text*

Listen to an audio version of 1 Thessalonians 2:17–3:5 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has three parts.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The Thessalonians
- Satan
- Timothy
- And Silas

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then, continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Paul says, "My brothers and sisters, when we left you, we felt like children separated from their parents. We had to leave you suddenly. Even though we cannot see you, we keep you in our hearts. We have tried very hard to return to see you. I, Paul, have tried many times to come back."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- My heart aches, because I miss the Thessalonians so much; or
- I feel like a lost child without being able to see the Thessalonians; or
- I want the Thessalonians to know that physical distance has not changed my love for them.

Paul says, "Satan keeps blocking our way back to you. But you are our hope and joy! You will be our crown of pride when Jesus our Lord returns. You truly bring us such joy!"

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Satan, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I will keep these leaders away from the new believers; or
- I want to weaken their faith by keeping them separated; or
- I will use every method I can to prevent Paul from returning.

Ask a person playing one of the Thessalonians, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- We miss Paul and want him to return; or
- We feel encouraged that we bring Paul such joy; or
- We wonder what Paul means about being his crown when Jesus returns. We hope we continue to make Paul proud of us!

Paul says, "We could not wait any longer to hear news about you. We chose to stay alone in Athens and send Timothy to you. Timothy is our brother and works with God. We sent Timothy to strengthen your faith and encourage you."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Timothy, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I feel honored to carry out this important mission; or
- I want to help these believers stay strong in their faith; or
- I know God will help me encourage the Thessalonians.

Paul says, "We knew you would face troubles. We had warned you that believers would face persecution. This has now happened. I worried that Satan might tempt you. I feared our work might become useless if you stopped believing."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I feel anxious about the persecution the Thessalonians face; or
- I hope Timothy's visit will strengthen the Thessalonians' faith; or
- I fear Satan might use these troubles to shake the Thessalonians' trust in God.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 1 Thessalonians 2:17-3:5 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Paul calls the Thessalonians **brothers and sisters**. Since God is the Father of all believers, all believers are like brothers and sisters. Paul frequently uses the word for brother when Paul refers to fellow believers. When there is more than one brother, the word can mean brothers and sisters. Use the same words or phrases for "brothers," or "brothers and sisters," as you used in previous passages.

Satan blocks Paul from returning to Thessalonica. Satan is God's enemy who opposes God's work and God's people.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **Satan**. Look up Satan in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you used there. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that the Thessalonians are his **hope**, joy, and crown when the **Lord** Jesus comes. Use the same words for hope and Lord as you have used in previous passages, and remember that hope and Lord are in the Master Glossary.

Paul sends Timothy to the Thessalonians because Timothy is a co-worker who spreads the **gospel**, or **good news** of **Christ**. Use the same words for gospel, or good news, and Christ, as you have used in previous passages. Remember that gospel and Christ are in the Master Glossary.

Paul wants to strengthen the believers' **faith**. When someone has faith, that person trusts God and believes God's message is true. Look up faith in the Master Glossary for more information. Use the same word for faith as you have used in previous passages.

The believers face **persecution**. When people persecute you, they treat you cruelly and unfairly. People may beat you, exclude you from society, speak lies about you, or take you to court.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **persecution**. Look up persecution in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you used there. Pause this audio here.

Paul mentions that Satan might **tempt** the believers, and Paul calls Satan "the Tempter." When someone tempts someone, they try to make someone do something wrong or stop believing in something.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for tempt and for "the Tempter" as a title for Satan.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage as a group in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

1 Thessalonians 2:17–3:5

Audio Content

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- [FIA Step 1](#)
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1 Thessalonians 3:6–13

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 1 Thessalonians 3:6–13 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 1 Thessalonians 3:6–13 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 1 Thessalonians 3:6–13 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In the previous part of this letter, Paul talks about how he sent his coworker Timothy to strengthen and encourage the Thessalonians in their faith. The Thessalonian church was suffering because of their enemies. Also, some people in the church had recently died. Paul was worried that these things were making the Thessalonian believers lose their faith, or stop trusting in Jesus. Timothy left Paul and his team, who remained in Athens, in order to go and strengthen the church in Thessalonica and to find out how they were doing, because Paul loved the Thessalonians very much.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What things do you do to show your friends and family that you love them? Pause this audio here.

Timothy now returns to Paul and his coworkers. Timothy brings them a report of good news about the faith of the Thessalonians. The good news could be a written letter or words that Timothy speaks. The church in Thessalonica had many enemies around them. These enemies wanted to make life very hard for the followers of Jesus. Also, some people in the church had died, and the believers were not sure about the people's eternal future. Despite all that they are suffering, they continue to remain strong in their faith.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Share a story where you or someone you know suffered and experienced many difficulties. What things brought joy, comfort, and strength during that time? Or what helped you remain strong during that time? Pause this audio here.

Paul and his coworkers loved and cared very much for the followers of Jesus in Thessalonica. Paul and his coworkers had brought the message of Jesus to that city. Paul and his coworkers had seen different kinds of people decide to follow Jesus, but they had also seen the trouble the church's enemies caused. Paul wants to return, because the enemies in Thessalonica had forced Paul to leave before he could finish teaching the church there. When Paul and his coworkers hear Timothy's good news, they are filled with relief. The report itself brings so much joy into the life of Paul and his coworkers. Paul and his coworkers even stand in the presence of God and give thanks to God for the joy that the Thessalonians bring to Paul and his coworkers. Paul talks about standing in the presence of God in the same way that the Jewish people stood in God's presence when they made sacrifices of thanksgiving. Paul and his coworkers are so happy that they pray all the time for a chance to see the church again. Remember that Paul had not finished instructing the believers in Thessalonica, and the believers lacked some important teachings about the Christian faith. Paul wants to return and finish his instruction.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Share a story about when you were separated from someone you loved, but you had an important thing to tell that person. How did you feel about that time apart? Pause this audio here.

Now Paul and his coworkers pray that God would bring them back to the Thessalonians. Paul also asks God to help the believers love each other more and more, just like Paul and his coworkers grow in their love for the Thessalonians. Paul wants to prepare the Thessalonians for the future time, when Jesus will return to the Earth along with all his holy armies, or the people who belong to Jesus. Paul wants the church to stand strong in their faith, with pure lives that they completely devote to God. Paul asks God to make the believers strong in this way, so that they will be ready for that day when Jesus comes back to Earth.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What kinds of important events do people celebrate in your community? How do you prepare yourself for those events? Pause this audio here.

Finally, Paul prays that the Thessalonians would stand strong in the presence of God the Father. Remember that Paul had just been in the presence of God giving thanks for the Thessalonians. Paul wants the believers to know that God can see how they strongly follow Jesus, and that such strength is also a way that they honor and praise God.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 1 Thessalonians 3:6-13 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the parts, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has two parts.

In the first part: Paul and his coworkers have just received good news from Timothy about the faith and love of the church in Thessalonica. Paul and his coworkers explain how this news has encouraged them despite the things they are suffering. Paul and his coworkers continue by emphasizing their joy and how their joy has made them thank God so much that they do not have enough words to speak.

In the second part: Paul and his coworkers pray for God to send them to the Thessalonians. Paul and his coworkers also ask God to show favor to the Thessalonians by asking that the Thessalonians would love one another and love outsiders.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- Silas, Paul's coworker
- Timothy, Paul's coworker
- Thessalonians
- God the Father
- Jesus
- And "holy ones"

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

In the first part, Timothy has just returned to Paul and Silas, Paul's other coworker, with a message from the church in Thessalonica. Timothy has told Paul and Silas that the Thessalonians have not forgotten them and that the Thessalonians really want to see them all again. Paul says that he and his coworkers want to see the Thessalonians just as much as the Thessalonians have told Timothy they want to see Paul and his coworkers. Even in suffering, Paul and his coworkers say that because of this report they are encouraged by the faith of the Thessalonians. Paul and his coworkers say that the source of this new life, in the middle of suffering, is the news that the Thessalonians are standing firm in their faith in the Lord. Like a soldier who must face the enemy with confidence, the believers must not run from the enemy but fight. The believers fight because they believe in the Lord and are not quitting. The believers faithfully follow the teachings of Jesus and only Jesus. The believers do not allow fear or temptation to pull them away from Jesus. Paul often tells the churches to stand firm.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Consider how you might use the same word or phrase Paul uses, "standing firm," to tell someone that they are staying faithful to the Lord. Pause the audio here.

Paul and his coworkers ask a question without expecting an answer because they want to show that they are happy that the Thessalonians have so much faith. Paul and his coworkers ask, "What thanks can we give to God for you?" Paul and his coworkers use this question to say that they cannot thank God enough for the joy they have because of the Thessalonians.

Stop here and discuss this question as a team: How do you emphasize something you want to say, and how does it compare to how Paul and his coworkers emphasize what they say in this passage? Pause the audio here.

In this same question, Paul shows his great love for the Thessalonians when Paul tells them that he and his companions pray for the Thessalonians day and night. This means that Paul prays for the Thessalonians regularly. And this leads to Paul sharing what he prays for the Thessalonians in the next part.

Stop here and discuss this question as a team: Who do you pray for regularly? What do you pray about for them? What are ways that you would say you pray for someone all the time? Pause this audio here.

Now in part two, Paul and his coworkers begin to pray. Paul and his coworkers pray for an opportunity to go and see the Thessalonians, and they pray for God's future favor on the Thessalonian believers. This is probably what Paul and his coworkers have been praying continually for the believers. Paul and his coworkers pray that the love of the Thessalonians for each other and people outside the church would grow and increase. And Paul and his coworkers want this to happen because this will lead the Thessalonians to have holy hearts before God when Jesus comes back with his holy ones, or saints. This means that Paul and his coworkers believe that their love towards others makes them pure and holy and better able to serve God well.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Here, Paul says that he prays for the Thessalonians because he wants the Thessalonians to love each other more and more. Then the Thessalonians will have holy or devoted hearts, which means that they will completely follow God. Here, Paul is explaining *why* he wants the Thessalonians to love each other more and more. In your language, how do you explain the purpose for something you have just said? Pause this audio here.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

An example of a visual picture of the first scene would be to use people or objects. Start with two groups of people or objects. One would represent Paul and his coworkers and the other the Thessalonians. Begin the story by showing the suffering and death of some people in Thessalonica. Show Paul's concern for these people. Show Timothy moving from Paul to the Thessalonians to check on the Thessalonians. Show Timothy returning to Paul with a message or report. Show Timothy with objects to represent the Thessalonians' faith and love, the Thessalonians' memory of Paul and his coworkers, and the Thessalonians' desire to see Paul and his coworkers. Do this by having that which represents Paul and his coworkers look in the direction of the Thessalonians to show that they want to be together. Show Paul and his coworkers suffering but still rejoicing as they look at the Thessalonians because they see the Thessalonians' faith. Show a couple of people or objects that represent God the Father and Jesus Christ, and have Paul and his coworkers ask the Thessalonians, "What thanks can we give to God for you?" as they try to show all the thanks to God as they pray. Next show Paul and his coworkers in the presence of God the Father and Jesus Christ, show them rejoicing over the Thessalonians, and show Paul and his coworkers praying a lot before God the Father and Jesus Christ.

When you transition to the second scene, show Paul and his coworkers before God the Father and Jesus the Lord. Show Paul and his coworkers praying for an opportunity to go to the Thessalonians and asking God to make the Thessalonians love each other and all people more and more. Show the Thessalonians act out activities that show love in their culture. At the same time that the Thessalonians show love to each other, show the Thessalonians' heart as pure, completely devoted to following God. Perhaps you can do this by moving the people or objects who represent the Thessalonians closer together. Then, as they move closer together to show that they love each other, the whole group moves closer to God at the same time! Show Jesus coming with his holy ones, and then everyone standing before God the Father. Show God smiling, or showing pleasure, when he looks at the Thessalonians.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 1 Thessalonians 3:6-13 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has two parts.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- Silas, Paul's coworker
- Timothy, Paul's coworker
- Thessalonians
- God the Father
- Jesus
- And "holy ones"

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

As you act out the following scene, try to do the things that Paul describes. For example, have someone play the role of Timothy and enter with his "report."

In part one, Timothy returns to Paul with good news from the city of Thessalonica. Although there is some trouble in the church, the Thessalonians are still filled with faith in Jesus and love for one another. Not only this, but the Thessalonians remember Paul and his coworkers with love, and the Thessalonians want to see these men.

Paul and his coworkers have also been suffering. They too have wanted to see the believers in Thessalonica, and this news brings Paul and his coworkers great joy. The faith of the Thessalonians is such good news that it feels like it brings new life to Paul and his coworkers.

Pause the drama.

Ask Paul or his coworkers how they feel when they receive the news from Thessalonica. You might hear things like:

- I am so happy about this news; or
- I am relieved that the Thessalonians' faith is strong.

Ask Timothy how it feels to be the messenger who brings the good news. You might hear responses like:

- I feel thankful to be the messenger; or
- I get to share in the happiness of my friends.

Paul tells the Thessalonians that he and his coworkers pray for the Thessalonians continually. When Paul and his coworkers come into God's presence, Paul cannot thank God enough for the joy they feel about the Thessalonians. Paul tells the Thessalonians that he is praying for an opportunity to return and finish the teaching he began when Paul and his coworkers were still in Thessalonica.

Pause the drama.

Ask someone playing the Thessalonian church, "What are you feeling or thinking about these prayers?" You might hear responses like:

- We feel amazed that Paul also remembers and cares about us; or
- We miss our friends and teachers so much.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling towards the church?" You might hear responses like:

- I really want to be with my friends; or
- I feel committed to pray to God for my brothers and sisters.

In part two, Paul prays a blessing for himself and for the Thessalonian church. Paul prays that God will lead Paul and his coworkers back to the believers in Thessalonica. Paul prays that the love of the Thessalonian church for one another grows, just as the love that Paul and his coworkers have for the church grows and grows. Finally, Paul prays that this love will give the believers pure and holy lives. The believers will be ready to stand in the presence of the Lord Jesus when he returns to Earth with his holy ones, or saints.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 1 Thessalonians 3:6-13 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Timothy has gone to Thessalonica because Paul and his coworkers are concerned about the faith of the believers there. Timothy has now returned with his report. It is important to remember that even though there are hard things happening in the church in Thessalonica, the report Timothy brings is mainly one of **good news**. This is the same word Paul uses for someone who preaches about the life of the Lord Jesus and Jesus' kingdom, but Paul uses it here for Timothy's report about the health of the church. If needed, look up good news in the Master Glossary for more information. Be sure to focus on the details of this good news in your translation.

Timothy's report mentions the **faith** and love of the Thessalonian believers. Later, it is the faith of the believers that comforts Paul. The faith of the Thessalonian church is their trust in Jesus as the Christ, who died and then rose from the dead. Use the same word or phrase for faith as you used in previous passages. Look up faith in the Master Glossary for more information.

When Paul describes his longing to see the Thessalonian church, he calls them his **brothers**. Paul often uses this word for believers in the church. It can refer to both brothers and sisters. The word shows how Paul considers the believers like very close family members. Use the same word or phrase for brothers or "brothers and sisters" as you used in previous passages.

Paul and his coworkers are filled with joy to hear the report about the Thessalonians. Paul even says that they now feel truly alive because of this news. In other words, Paul and his coworkers feel like they have new strength in their own lives because the Thessalonians stand strong in the faith. Paul says especially that they are standing strong in the **Lord**, or master. Use the same word or phrase for Lord as you used in previous passages, and remember that Lord is in the Master Glossary.

After this, Paul then says a **prayer**. Paul does not pray directly to God, but states the prayer as a desire for God to do something. Paul prays to God as **our Father**, and he prays also to **our Lord Jesus**. For the words Father and Lord, use the same word or phrase you used in previous passages.

Stop here and refer to pray in the Master Glossary for more information. What word or phrase will you use for pray? Use the same word for pray as you have used in previous passages. Pause this audio here.

Paul prays for God to bring Paul and his coworkers to the Thessalonians. Paul also wants God to make the believers to grow to love each other more and to obey God more. Paul asks God to make the believers' **hearts** strong so that they will be ready for Jesus when Jesus comes again. Jesus and many of the prophets of the Old

Testament tell about a day when the Lord will come to rescue his people and judge his enemies. For Paul, the heart controls the decisions and the emotions of a person. A person with a strong heart is courageous and confident in what they believe. Use the same word for heart as you have used in previous passages, and remember that heart is in the Master Glossary.

God will make the believers **holy**, or set apart for himself, and **blameless**, or not guilty of any wrongdoing. On that day, the Lord Jesus will return to Earth from heaven, and his people, or a great heavenly army, will come with him. Paul calls this heavenly army the Lord's **holy ones**, or **saints**. Sometimes these holy ones are the Lord's holy angels. Sometimes they are the Lord's saints, who are the holy people of Jesus. In Paul's letters to the Thessalonians, it is possible that Paul is remembering the teachings of the Old Testament, and is thinking of heavenly beings like angels. However, what is most important is to remember that those who come with the Lord Jesus are holy, or set apart especially for God. For example, we might call them the Lord's holy armies, or his holy followers.

Stop here and discuss as a group how you will talk about the Thessalonians being holy and blameless, and the Lord Jesus coming with his holy people. For more information on holy, saints, and blameless, refer to the Master Glossary.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

1 Thessalonians 3:6-13

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (16359733 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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1 Thessalonians 4:1–8

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 1 Thessalonians 4:1–8 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 1 Thessalonians 4:1–18 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 1 Thessalonians 4:1–8 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

Paul is finishing a long portion of his letter to the Thessalonians. Paul has told the Thessalonians how much he loves them because they have a strong faith in Jesus and a strong love for each other. Still, Paul wants to tell the Thessalonians that they need to have holy lives. The Thessalonians should be completely obedient to all the

commands of God. The following part of Paul's letter tells us that Paul is confident that the believers want to have lives that show love to God. At the same time, Paul wants to be sure that the Thessalonians should love each other in a holy and appropriate way, the way it should be among believers.

During the time that Paul and Silas lived in Thessalonica, they taught the believers how to live a life that is pleasing to God. Paul reminds the believers of these teachings here. Paul tells the believers to walk in a way that pleases God. In ancient times, students learned from their teachers by walking with them as the teachers traveled from town to town. As they walked together, the students learned how to live and behave like their teachers. In the same way, Paul urges the believers to walk in the way of God, or to live and behave like God does.

In fact, Paul tells the believers that they are already walking in the way of God, and Paul wants them to do this more and more. Paul reminds the believers that the authority of Paul's teaching came from Jesus himself. Remember that after Paul believed the good news, it was the Lord Jesus who sent Paul to teach the churches and lead them in the way of Jesus.

Stop and discuss the following question with one another: How do teachers in your community pass on important lessons and instructions to their students? Pause the audio here.

God wants people who are completely devoted to himself. Even before Jesus came, God called his people a holy people. God commanded and wanted his people to be holy, just as God himself is holy. When someone is holy, they do many things, but here, Paul says that they must stay away from sinful sexual desires and actions. In other words, God created sex to be the gift of sexual union that a husband and wife share with one another in love. Any sexual activity that takes place outside a loving marriage is sinful.

Stop and discuss the following question: In your culture, what are appropriate and honorable ways that men and women show love or honor to one another? Pause the audio here.

It is God's command that the believers have self-control over their bodies. The word Paul uses here is not the normal word for "body" but means "object," or "container." Paul probably uses this word as a way to speak with honor about how believers should control the sexual parts of their bodies.

Paul tells the Thessalonians not to follow their sinful desires like the Gentiles do. Jews who are not followers of Jesus still know who God is and how God wants them to live, because God has revealed it to the Jews in the law of Moses. However, most Gentiles, or non-Jews, did not know God or God's laws. At that time, the Gentile culture had a bad reputation for terrible sexual sin. Many Gentiles even encouraged people to satisfy all their sexual desires, no matter what they were. Paul did not want the love of the Thessalonians to turn into sinful behavior. So Paul says that the believers should not hurt their brother or sister because of sexual sin. Paul tells them that God will be angry and will justly punish this kind of behavior.

Stop and discuss the following: Tell a story about a time when someone in your community wronged another person in the community. What happened? Similarly, tell a story about when someone punished a person for a crime. What words do you use to communicate that the person who punished the wrongdoer is angry? Pause this audio here.

Paul says that he has taught these things before, when Paul and Silas were with the church. Paul reminds the believers once again that God wants them to have a holy life. Jesus and all his disciples taught that believers must have a life that is completely devoted to God. When we love each other well and live a holy life, we show that we belong to God. Any person who does not follow this instruction is completely rejecting the commands of God and not just the teachings of Paul.

Stop here to pray as a group. Sexual sin in the church can hurt many people, but most of all, when people sin sexually, they are rejecting God. God loves his people very much, and God is a Father who wants to protect his children. God's anger is great against anyone who wants to hurt his children. Pray for holy lives among the believers, and pray for healing from past sin.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 1 Thessalonians 4:1–8 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the parts, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has two parts.

In the first part: Paul urges the Christians in Thessalonica to grow more and more as followers of Jesus, just as Paul taught them to do.

In the second part: God desires a holy life from the Thessalonian Christians. In particular, God wants the believers to stay away from all sexual sins.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul and his coworkers
- The Thessalonian believers
- God
- The Lord Jesus
- And the Holy Spirit

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

You will remember that before this portion of Paul's letter, Paul has told the Thessalonian believers in the church how much he loves them. Timothy has returned with a good report about their lives and how they follow Jesus. But the believers also have some questions. Paul is going to answer these questions, but first he wants to give some final instructions to help the believers become better followers of Jesus. So Paul tells the believers that he has one last very important thing he wants to talk about before he answers their questions.

Discuss the following question: How do you tell someone that you have one last very important thing you need to discuss before you move on to the next topic? Pause the audio here.

Now, as Paul begins to give them some instructions, Paul speaks strongly to the believers in Thessalonica. Paul wants the believers to live a life that is pleasing to God. This is something that Paul has taught the believers before, and that he knows they are already doing. Still, Paul asks them and urges them to live this way. Paul even says the believers should do this in the Lord Jesus. In other words, Paul's request comes with the authority of the Lord Jesus.

Discuss the following question: How do you speak strongly to one another when you want each other to do the right thing? How do you show that you have authority from someone else to say those things? Pause the audio here.

Next, in the second part, Paul reminds the church that God wants them to have holy lives. Paul says that this is the will of God. While a holy life includes many important things, Paul speaks here about the sexual purity of the Thessalonians. Paul says that holiness in our sexual behavior includes three actions. First, the Thessalonians should keep away from all sexual sin. Second, the Thessalonians should have self-control over their bodies. Third, the Thessalonians should not sin against another believer through sexual relations. The Thessalonians should have holy lives that honor one another. The Thessalonians should not follow their wild and uncontrolled sexual desires. This lack of control is the way the unbelieving Gentiles behave. The believers must be different from those who do not know God.

Discuss the following question: What words do you use to show the difference between someone who has self-control over themselves and someone who does not, especially as it relates to sexual purity and sexual sin? Can you use any of those words here? Pause the audio.

When Paul tells the Thessalonians that they should not sin against another believer through sexual relations, Paul means the Thessalonians should not hurt one another or take advantage of one another in a sexual way. Paul reminds the Thessalonians that God will bring punishment to those who sin in these ways. All these instructions the Thessalonians have already heard. Even when Paul was with them in Thessalonica, Paul and his coworkers gave the believers strong warnings about these kinds of sexual sins.

Paul sums up all these teachings by saying that God himself has told the Thessalonian church to live holy lives and not lives that are unclean or impure. Paul says this to emphasize the authority of these instructions. Paul says that anyone who rejects these instructions rejects God himself. These instructions come from God, so this is the real reason that any person who rejects the instructions is really rejecting God. God himself is holy, and God places his Holy Spirit into those who want to follow Jesus and please Jesus.

Discuss the following question: What are some ways to say that one thing is the real reason or cause for a second thing that comes afterwards? For example, "The storms were very bad yesterday. This is the real reason that the damage is so great today." Pause the audio here.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 1 Thessalonians 4:1–8 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has two parts.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul and his coworkers
- The Thessalonian believers
- God
- The Lord Jesus
- And the Holy Spirit

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

In part one of this passage, Paul begins the last portion of the letter that includes general encouragement before moving on to specific concerns. Paul and his coworkers strongly ask the brothers and sisters in Thessalonica

to live a life that pleases God, but Paul also says that many of the believers are already doing this. Paul reminds the believers that when they were together, Paul and his coworkers gave these same instructions.

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "How do you feel writing this letter to the Thessalonians?" You may hear:

- I love the Thessalonians like a father or teacher; or
- I am proud of the Thessalonians for their obedience, but I am also concerned at the same time.

Ask the people playing the Thessalonians, "What do you think when you receive these instructions?" You may hear:

- I remember Paul's time with us. I remember what Paul taught; or
- I am wondering what Paul is going to tell us since he has just spoken so strongly.

In part two of the letter, Paul tells the Thessalonians that God's desire for them is that they have a holy life. Paul tells the Thessalonians to stay away from sexual sin, to control their bodies, and to not sin against their brother or sister in these things. Paul reminds the Thessalonians that God will punish those who disobey these things. Again, Paul says that Paul and his coworkers have warned the believers about this before.

Pause the drama.

Ask the Thessalonians, "How do you feel, or what do you think, about what God has said to you?" You may hear:

- I think this must be a very important command, because Paul said that this is God's will; or
- I feel a little fear because God is going to punish anyone who does not do what he has told them to do; or
- This is really hard to do!

Paul finishes this second part by explaining that God will bring this punishment because God has commanded us to live holy lives. And because God gave these commands, not Paul, anyone who refuses to obey is rejecting God. It is God himself who gives his Holy Spirit so that we can have holy lives.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Paul and his coworkers have just prayed that the Thessalonians would love each other and all people, because it will make them holy and blameless before God. Here, Paul and his coworkers begin to describe in detail what that looks like. Paul reminds the Thessalonians, his "**brothers and sisters**," what Paul and his coworkers have already commanded the believers to do by the authority of the **Lord** Jesus. Use the same words and phrases for brothers and sisters, and for Lord, or master, as you have used in previous passages. Lord is in the Master Glossary.

Then Paul and his coworkers show the Thessalonians the will of God, beginning with their **sanctification**, or **holiness**. God sanctifies someone when he makes that person holy as they obey God. You can just say that God wants to make all believers holy.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **sanctification**, or **holiness**. Look up sanctification and holy in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated these words in another book of the Bible, use the same words that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Paul and his coworkers continue by focusing on a particular area of sanctification. Paul talks about **fornication**, or **sexual immorality**, which is when someone has sexual relations outside of marriage. Paul and his coworkers see sexual immorality as a problem in Thessalonica.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **sexual immorality**. Refer to immorality in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

To make even more clear what Paul and his coworkers are talking about, they say that the Thessalonians must control their **body**, or **vessel**. This is a polite way to speak about the male sexual organ.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **body**, or **vessel**. Some translations just use the word for a person's body. Pause this audio here.

Paul and his coworkers contrast this holy self control with the **lustful passion** of the **Gentiles**, or non-Jewish people who did not know God. Use the same word for Gentiles that you have used in previous passages, and refer to Gentiles in the Master Glossary for more information. Many Gentiles did not see any reason to restrain or deny their strong sexual desires. These people would give in to every sexual desire without limits because their culture's teaching said they could.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **lustful passion**, or strong sexual desires. If you have already translated this phrase in another book of the Bible, use the same words that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Paul and his coworkers then warn that the Lord, referring to Jesus Christ, will act as an **avenger**. An avenger takes the side of the victim and makes sure that people who **sin** in this way will be justly punished. Use the same word for sin that you have used in previous passages, and refer to sin in the Master Glossary for more information.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **avenger**. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that God calls us to holiness, not to **impurity**. Someone is impure when they are not holy, or do not fully follow God. When Paul talks about being impure, Paul often means to be sexually immoral. For more information about purity, refer to pure in the Master Glossary.

God gives us his **Holy Spirit**. Use the same word or phrase for Holy Spirit as you have in previous passages, and refer to the Master Glossary for Holy Spirit if needed.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

1 Thessalonians 4:1–8

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (12069019 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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- [FIA Step 1](#)
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- [FIA Step 6](#)

1 Thessalonians 4:9–12

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 1 Thessalonians 4:9–12 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 1 Thessalonians 4:9–12 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.

5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 1 Thessalonians 4:9–12 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

Paul is instructing the believers to live in a certain way so that they please God. After warning the believers how not to behave in the last section, Paul now tells the believers how they should behave. The believers are already showing love to one another and Paul encourages them to do so even more! The believers should also behave in an orderly way so that even non-believers will respect the believers.

In this section, Paul praises the believers for the love they show to other believers. Since everyone who believes in God is part of God's family, believers should love each other like family members do. The Thessalonian believers are already doing this. Paul says the Thessalonian believers love so well that Paul does not even need to write and tell the believers to love. The believers are loving well because God himself taught the believers how to love, probably through the Holy Spirit and his Scripture.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, how do family members show their love for each other? What do people expect family members to do to care for each other? Pause this audio here.

Paul emphasizes that the Thessalonian believers love all the other believers throughout the region of Macedonia. The city of Thessalonica is a port city, which a lot of travelers pass through, so the believers may have been showing hospitality to any believers who came to town. The Thessalonians may have also sent gifts or supported believers who were telling other people the good news about Jesus.

Stop here and look at a map that includes Macedonia as a group. Find the city of Thessalonica. Pause this audio here.

Yet Paul still urges the Thessalonians to continue to love each other more and more. One way the believers should love is they should try hard to live quiet or orderly lives. In this context, believers live an orderly life by not causing trouble for each other. Believers should focus on their own work and lives, instead of gossiping or interfering when people do not ask or want them to. Every believer who is able should not be lazy, but should work to get money or food to support themselves and their families. They should not expect fellow believers to do this work for them.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, who is supposed to work to earn money for themselves and their families? What kind of people do not need to work or should let others take care of them? Pause this audio here.

Paul reminds the believers that this is not a new instruction. Paul had already taught this to the believers while Paul was in Thessalonica. Paul urges the believers to live in this way so that outsiders, or those who do not believe in Jesus, will respect the believers. Not everything that believers do will please non-believers. But Paul is saying that believers must behave and work in ways that everyone recognised as the correct way to behave. No one would respect a lazy person, so the believers should make sure they are not lazy, or not working like they should.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, what are ways of living that most everyone respects? Think of some people that you respect because of the way they live. What do those people do? Now think about ways of living that people do not respect. What do people who are lazy do? What do people who others do not respect do? Pause this audio here.

The believers should also try to work so that they do not depend on others for food. It is possible that some people in the Thessalonian church were not working but were living off money or food from fellow believers. These believers who are not working, even though they can, are not showing love to other believers, because those other believers have to work even harder now to support more people.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 1 Thessalonians 4:9–12 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the parts, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has two parts.

In the first part: Paul says the believers already love other believers because God himself taught them how to love. The Thessalonian believers love their fellow believers all throughout Macedonia.

In the second part: Paul urges the believers to continue to love even more. The believers should show this love through the way they focus on their own work and do not cause trouble for others. This way, even the unbelievers will respect the believers and the believers will not have to depend on others.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The Thessalonian believers
- God
- The believers all throughout Macedonia
- And unbelievers

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

In this section and the last section, Paul is reminding the believers of instructions he has already given to them. Paul knows that most of the believers are doing these things and he wants to encourage them to keep doing these things. However, there are probably a few people who are not loving like they should and are causing trouble for other believers. Paul emphasizes that God wants believers to behave in an orderly and right way, so that the believers have peace and so unbelievers can respect believers.

In the first part, Paul says he does not need to write to tell the believers to love each other in the same way that brothers or family members love each other. Though Paul is writing to the believers about their love, and will give them instruction, Paul is emphasizing that the believers are already loving well, so Paul does not have to tell the believers to start to love each other.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Talk to another member in the group about something you both know how to do, such as walking or cooking. However, you want to encourage that person to do something better or do more of a certain part of that task. How do you politely begin to talk about this subject? How do you show that you know that this task or action is not new or strange to the other person? Pause this audio here.

These believers are loving well because God himself taught the believers to love each other. Paul did not say how God taught the Thessalonians to love one another. The Thessalonians may have learned from Jesus' teaching, or from the Holy Spirit. The important thing was that the teaching ultimately came from God himself.

Paul knows how the Thessalonians act with other believers. The Thessalonian believers do not just love the other believers in their own city. The Thessalonian believers show love to all believers in Macedonia. Any time they can, the Thessalonian believers show love by helping or caring for another believer, no matter where the other believer came from or how different they may be.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your language, what words or phrases do you use to describe the love that family members have for each other? Pause this audio here.

Paul has probably heard reports from traveling believers about how the Thessalonian believers act. However, Paul has probably also heard a few things that he wants to correct in part two. Though Paul knows that the Thessalonians already love their fellow believers, Paul wants the Thessalonians to do so even more. For some people, this will mean they should continue to do more of what they are already doing. For some people, they may have to change their behavior.

Paul focuses on a few ways to show love. The believers must make it their ambition, or goal, to live a quiet life. Paul then explains what he means by a quiet life. Paul does not mean that the believers should not talk or make a lot of noise, but that they should not talk badly about others or cause trouble. The believers should mind their own business, which means they should live in an orderly way. The believers should do everything they are responsible to do. Paul says the believers should work with their hands. Paul does not necessarily mean that they have to do physical labor, but Paul means that each person should work hard at something in order to earn money for themselves.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Describe someone you know who lives the kind of life Paul has described, who focuses on their work and does not cause trouble for others. Then discuss how you will talk about this way of living. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that the believers should do this for two reasons. The believers' daily lives, or the way they behave every day, will cause the outsiders, or unbelievers, to respect the believers. The unbelievers will see that the believers work hard and show care for each other, which was the correct way to behave for many people at that time. If the unbelievers respect the believers, the unbelievers may respect God, who teaches the believers to act in this honorable way.

When the believers live this way, it will also help create peace among the believers. If believers who can work do work, then they can support themselves instead of making other believers work hard to support them. Then no one will be resentful or angry at the lazy believers. Also, the believers can then focus on supporting the people who are not able to work.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 1 Thessalonians 4:9–12 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has two parts.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The Thessalonian believers
- God
- The believers all throughout Macedonia
- And unbelievers

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Paul said, "Now we do not need to write anything more to you about how you should love your fellow believers in God's family, because God himself taught you to love one another. And indeed you love all your fellow believers who are everywhere in Macedonia."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- God is the best teacher to learn from, because his way of behaving is the best! I am so thankful God teaches us believers how to love; or
- Other people are telling me about what the Thessalonian believers are doing and I am proud when I hear how they love others. The believers are acting like Christ! or
- I am encouraged when I hear that the believers are loving and taking care of one another. I know many of the believers throughout Macedonia, and I care for them. I want the believers to be safe and live in peace with other believers.

Ask the person playing the believers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I have been working hard to follow God's instructions to love, and I am encouraged when Paul says that we are loving well—we must be learning well! or
- I am so amazed that God himself is teaching us how to love! He is the God of the whole world, and he still takes time to teach us things that we need to know; or
- Because God has shown so much love to us, I want to love the people around me!

Then Paul said, "However, my fellow believers, we urge you to love one another more and more. And we also urge you to try earnestly to behave in a way that will not trouble others. Focus on your own work and work to support yourselves. When we were with you, we instructed you to do these things so that those who do not believe in Christ will see how you behave every day and will respect you. Then also you will not need to depend on anyone else to give you food and drink."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- We can always show more love, so that we act more and more like Christ. I do not want the Thessalonians to think that they should stop learning or finding good ways to show their care and love for each other; or
- Some people may not realize that when they are lazy, they are not showing love to others. Those people are causing more work and trouble for others, which is not kind or caring; or
- I do not want the believers to become bitter or angry with each other. I want the believers to have peace.

Ask the person playing the believers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am thankful that we have other believers to encourage, teach, and help each other learn to love better. This would be a lot harder if I was figuring out the right way to live on my own! or
- I am surprised! I did not realize how I was hurting other believers when I did not work. I still do not want to work, but I understand that I must; or
- I am thankful that Paul is sending this instruction. I had been working hard to support other believers as well as my family, and I was exhausted. If more people work, then we will not be overwhelmed.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 1 Thessalonians 4:9–12 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Paul calls the believers "**brothers**." Since God is the Father of all believers, all believers are like brothers and sisters. So Paul frequently uses the word for brother when Paul refers to a fellow believer. When there is more than one brother, the word can also mean brothers and sisters. Use the same words or phrases for brothers, or brothers and sisters, as you used in previous passages.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

1 Thessalonians 4:9–12

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (10238980 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
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- [FIA Step 4](#)
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1 Thessalonians 4:13–18

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

So far in Paul's letter to the Thessalonians, Paul has told the Thessalonians many things that they already know, and that the Thessalonians are already doing. The Thessalonians are loving one another well. The Thessalonians are being faithful to Jesus. The Thessalonians have holy lives. Now, Paul is going to teach the Thessalonians something that they may not know. Or, if Paul did teach it to them, the Thessalonians still have questions about it.

Remember that when Paul and his coworkers were with the Thessalonians, dangerous men from the Jewish religion forced Paul and his coworkers to leave before they finished their work in Thessalonica. The Thessalonians continued to suffer because of their enemies. Some people in the Thessalonians' church had died. It seems that the Thessalonians were worried about what would happen to their loved ones who died before Jesus returned to the earth. Will they stay in the grave? Will they come back to life, but only after Jesus gains victory over his enemies? Paul is now going to teach the believers what will happen when Jesus returns.

First, Paul uses a special phrase for the believers that have died. Paul says that these believers "have fallen asleep." Paul says this three times in his teaching here. Paul wants the Thessalonians to know that although these believers have died, the believers will one day wake up when Jesus returns to earth.

Discuss the following question with one another: How do you speak in a loving way about friends and family who have died? Pause the audio here.

Paul wants the Thessalonians to have hope about their friends and family who follow Jesus. Paul compares the Thessalonian believers to people who have no hope. In the culture of that day, people had a very negative view of death. People did not believe in a resurrection of the body, nor did they think there was a kingdom in heaven that was open and available for everyone.

Paul goes on to tell the Thessalonians that the believers believe that Jesus died, and then rose from the dead. This is one of the ways that Paul talks about the good news of Jesus. Although Jesus had done nothing wrong, the enemies of Jesus beat him and hung him on a wooden cross until he died. Then, three days later, Jesus rose from the dead to show how he had power over even death. It is important to remember that because of Jesus, Jesus' people do not experience death in the same way as other people do. In fact, when Jesus returns to earth, Jesus will bring the believers who have already died back with him. These believers are not dead forever but are only asleep.

Discuss the following question with one another: How do people in your community speak about life after death? What ways do your people speak about resurrection? Pause the audio here.

Paul and his coworkers now pass on an important teaching that they received from the Lord Jesus. We do not know if the teaching is something that the first apostles passed on to Paul, or if it is something that Jesus said directly to Paul. We do know that the teaching comes with the authority of Jesus himself. The teaching is this: any believer who has died will come back to life and see Jesus when he returns to earth as king and judge. Believers who have died are with Jesus now, but we cannot be sure what state these believers are in, whether physical or spiritual. Paul is teaching that one day these believers will again have a physical body, and in that body they will join the believers who have not yet died. The believers who are still alive will not have to wait until after the return of Jesus to see their friends and family who have already died. The believers will all be there to see the return of Jesus together.

Discuss the following question with one another: How does your culture welcome special and important people into your home and community? What acts of honor or celebration do you have? How do people prepare? Pause the audio here.

Finally, Paul did not suggest to the Thessalonians that Paul expected to be alive when Jesus returned. Immediately after this teaching, Paul reminds the Thessalonians that no one knows when the day that Jesus returns will be. Rather, Paul wants to emphasize that all followers of Jesus, both the living and the dead, will be alive on the day that Lord Jesus returns and will be with the Lord in his great and final victory. Because the Thessalonian believers can all hope for such a day, the believers should comfort one another with this teaching.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the parts, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has two parts.

In the first part: Paul and his coworkers teach the Thessalonians that they should have hope for the believers who have died before Jesus returns to Earth. Because of the resurrection of Jesus, we can be confident that anyone who dies as a believer will be alive again to see Jesus' return.

In the second part: Paul then describes the event of Jesus' return to Earth. Jesus will descend to Earth with great authority, the dead believers will rise from the grave, and all of the church will go to meet the Lord Jesus as he returns to the Earth. As believers, Jesus' return gives us much comfort, and so we should talk about these things with one another.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul and his coworkers
- The believers in the Thessalonian church who have already died
- The believers in the Thessalonian church who are alive
- Unbelievers
- God
- And the Lord Jesus

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

In the first part of our passage, Paul and his coworkers explain to the Thessalonians that they have an important teaching to pass on. Paul calls the believers "brothers and sisters" to remind them that this teaching will be a comfort for them. This teaching will also help the believers to correctly understand what will happen when Jesus returns. Paul emphasizes the importance of his teaching with two negative statements. Paul and his coworkers do not want the Thessalonians to lack knowledge or information. In other words, Paul and his coworkers want to be completely sure that the believers have this knowledge in their minds.

Discuss the following question with one another: How would you emphasize that Paul really wants his brothers and sisters to understand his teaching? In your language, do you have a way to make an important point using negative words? Can you use that here? Pause this audio here.

Paul's important teaching is about those who have fallen asleep. Paul uses this phrase to mean those believers who have died. Paul could be describing death as sleep because Paul wants to be gentle in his speech. Or maybe Paul is suggesting that it will be like a person who wakes up when they come back to life in the last days.

Discuss the following question with one another: What are the different expressions you use to talk about death? Do you have a gentle way to talk about someone who has died? Can you use that here? Pause this audio here.

The teaching in this part is very important because it helps the Thessalonians to grieve or mourn the death of the believers in the church. Paul wants the Thessalonians to grieve with the hope of the truth of the resurrection. In other words, the Thessalonians confidently expect that believers will rise from the dead one day. This hope, or expectation, will help the Thessalonian believers to grieve in a different way from the unbelievers, who do not have any such hope. Once again, Paul uses two negative words—"not grieve" and "no hope"—to show how important it is to remember what Paul is teaching about the resurrection.

Paul then reminds the Thessalonians that Jesus died on the cross and then rose from the dead. This is important for the Thessalonians to understand because God is going to bring the dead believers back to life through this same Jesus—that is, through the mighty power of Jesus.

Paul knows this to be true because it is a word from the Lord. This means that this teaching comes directly from Jesus, and that it comes with Jesus' authority. Many times in this story, Paul uses the title "Lord" to emphasize the authority of Jesus. This is not a teaching that Paul invented himself, but this teaching accurately describes what the return of Jesus will be like. The point of the teaching is simple. When Jesus returns to Earth, some believers will already be dead, and some will still be alive. Those believers who are still alive will not see Jesus before those believers who are dead see Jesus. Instead, the believers who have died will rise from the dead so that they may also see the return of Jesus along with the believers who are still alive.

Now, in the second part, Paul describes the return of Jesus in greater detail. In Paul's teaching, Paul himself joyfully waits for this return. Paul says that the Lord Jesus will come down to Earth from heaven. It will be a great event, as if a great king or chief returns to his native land after many years away. Paul describes three different loud noises that accompany this return. First, the Lord will give a powerful command. This is like a word that a commander gives to his army, so that when the soldiers hear, they respond immediately. Second, there will be a cry like the voice of the chief of all angels. The Bible sometimes describes angels as a heavenly army, with a chief commander over them. Third, there will be a sound like a loud trumpet blast. We do not know who blows the trumpet, but the trumpet belongs to God the Father. This trumpet sound Paul describes was the sound that often announced an army as it approached a city, or announced a great celebration.

These three sounds may represent three different sounds we will hear when Jesus returns, or they may represent one sound that Paul is just expressing in three different ways. We also do not know if we will hear actual commands or actual trumpets. The main thing to remember is that all three sounds show how important it is that Jesus will return. Jesus' return will be important for all believers, but it will also be important for all human history. Jesus' return is something so wonderful that we have never seen or heard anything like it before.

Stop here and look at a picture of a trumpet. If possible, listen to the sound of a trumpet. Pause this audio here.

Discuss the following question with one another: How could you express these three sounds—a powerful command, a voice of a chief angel, and a loud trumpet—in your own words? Pause this audio here.

When Jesus comes down from heaven, Paul says that the dead in Christ will rise from the dead. Paul is speaking about all people who have trusted in Christ and who now belong to Christ. These believers in Christ who have died will now rise from the dead. Then, any believers who were still alive at the return of Christ will join with them. Then, we know that someone will gather up all the believers in one place, though whether it is the Lord Jesus or God the Father, we do not know. We do know that once all the believers are together, they will all go up into the clouds and into the air and meet the Lord.

This second part ends with a promise. Paul says that after all those believers who died have come back from the dead, everyone who believes in Jesus will be with Jesus forever. This does not mean that we will always be physically next to Jesus. Rather, it means that Jesus will always be present among the people of God.

Finally, Paul and his coworkers tell the Thessalonians to comfort and encourage one another with these words. These words are the message about the death, resurrection, and return of Jesus, and the hope these things bring for those who die as believers.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has two parts.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul and his coworkers
- The believers in the Thessalonian church who have already died
- The believers in the Thessalonian church who are alive
- Unbelievers
- God
- And the Lord Jesus

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

In part one, Paul tells the Thessalonian church about the important teaching that Paul does not want the believers to forget. The teaching is about what will happen to dead believers when the Lord returns to the Earth. This teaching is important because it will help the believers who are still alive to have hope that they will see the Lord's return along with their dead brothers and sisters. Then, when someone in the church dies, the believers will not grieve in the same way that unbelievers do.

Pause the drama.

Ask the people playing the Thessalonians, "How do you feel about those brothers and sisters who have died in your church?" You may hear:

- We feel sadness and loss; or
- We feel confused. What will happen?

Ask the people playing the unbelievers, "How do you feel about losing someone you love?" You may hear something like:

- We feel sadness and loss; or
- What difference does it make to believe in Jesus when those who you love still die?

The important teaching is that when the Lord returns, God will return the dead believers to life. Then the believers who died will be able to witness the return alongside the believers who are still alive. The Thessalonian believers can be sure of this because Jesus died and came back to life. And because Jesus came back to life, Jesus will bring back to life all those who have trusted in him.

Pause the drama.

Ask the people playing the Thessalonians, "What are you thinking when you hear about this important teaching?" You may hear:

- I am thinking about how Jesus rose from the dead; or
- I believe that Jesus really has the power to raise us from the dead!

Ask the person playing Paul, "How does it feel to share this message with the Thessalonians?" You may hear:

- I want the believers to have hope; or
- I feel excited when I remember what is going to happen in the last days.

In part two, Paul describes the event of Christ's return and what will happen. The Lord will announce his return in great and powerful ways. After this, the believers who have died will come back to life. Then, those believers who are still alive will meet together with their brothers and sisters. Together all of the believers will meet with the Lord in the clouds. From then on, all of the believers will always be together with the Lord. Paul ends the scene when he tells the Thessalonians to comfort one another with this message.

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing the Lord, "How does it feel to return to Earth to all these shouts and proclamations?" You may hear:

- I feel excitement and joy; or
- I feel triumph! I love my church. I have defeated the enemy.

Ask the people playing the Thessalonians who have come back from the dead, "What are you feeling?" You may hear:

- I feel surprise and joy; or
- I feel relieved. I cannot believe I am alive to see this!

Ask the people playing the Thessalonians who were still alive when Jesus returned, "What are you thinking or feeling?" You may hear:

- I am so happy that my brothers and sisters are here; or
- I cannot imagine what this will be like.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Remember that Paul has been telling the Thessalonians how they are loving one another well and standing strong in their faith. Paul now wants to give the Thessalonians some additional teaching, so that death does not bring to the believers the same kind of grief that it brings to unbelievers.

Paul begins by addressing the Thessalonians as **brothers**, meaning brothers and sisters in the faith. Use the same word or phrase for brothers, or brothers and sisters, as you used in previous passages.

Paul teaches what happens to these dead believers when Christ comes back to Earth. Paul and his coworkers want the believers to have **hope**. When someone hopes, it means the person expects something in the future to happen. Paul wants the Thessalonians to expect that they will share in that great event with their brothers and sisters who have already died. For more information on hope, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for hope as you used in previous passages.

Paul's teaching comes directly from the **Lord**, and it carries the Lord's authority. It is also the Lord who will come down from heaven and come to the Earth. Use the same word or phrase for Lord as you used in previous passages. For more information on Lord, refer to the Master Glossary.

In addition, we can see in this story that the Lord comes to Earth from **heaven**. This is the place where the Lord Jesus now lives until he returns to Earth. Use the same word or phrase for heaven as you used in previous passages, and see the Master Glossary for more information about heaven.

When the Lord comes to Earth, there will be great announcements of his coming. There will be loud, commanding shouts. There are also two additional sounds that Paul describes. The first is the voice of an **archangel**. The archangel is a special **angel** who is the chief or commander over other angels.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **archangel**. Look up angels in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there, but remember that this angel was a chief angel. Pause this audio here.

Second, Paul describes the blast of a **trumpet**. This is an instrument that someone blows into, like a horn. People used trumpets to announce a special event, and armies used trumpets to announce when they were coming close to a city. Both angels and trumpets are present when Jesus returns to Earth.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **trumpet**. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Listen to the sound of a trumpet. Look at the picture of a trumpet. Pause this audio here.

Paul says that the dead in **Christ** will rise first. These are people who have trusted Jesus Christ as their savior. Use the same word for Christ as you have used in previous passages, and remember that Christ is in the Master Glossary.

Once Paul finishes his description of the Lord's return, Paul tells the believers to **encourage**, or comfort, one another with this teaching.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **encourage**. This word should be a word that you use when you comfort someone who is grieving.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

1 Thessalonians 4:13–18

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (13528858 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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1 Thessalonians 5:1–11

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 1 Thessalonians 5:1–11 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 1 Thessalonians 5:1–11 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 1 Thessalonians 5:1–11 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In the last section, Paul gives clear instructions and comfort to the brothers, or believers, regarding those people who died as believers. Here, Paul reminds the believers about the uncertainty of exactly when the Lord Jesus will return. Paul then goes on to talk about the destruction of the unbelievers who are not prepared for the Lord's return. Paul then discusses how the believers in Jesus should live compared to those people who do not believe. Paul uses comparisons to explain the differences between these two groups of people and how they behave or live their lives.

Paul begins this section by reminding the believers of the teaching that they received from Paul earlier. We know from the book of Acts that Paul spent a few weeks with the believers in Thessalonica and he taught them about the return of Jesus and other prophetic matters. Paul tells the believers that there is no need for him to write to them about the exact moment when the Lord will come because the believers know how it will happen.

Paul says that "the day of the Lord" will come like a thief comes in the night. We see the phrase "day of the Lord" elsewhere in the Bible. In those other places, it refers to the time when God would judge the people of the world and punish those who had sinned against God. But here, Paul says that it is the Lord Jesus who will return to earth to judge and punish the people of this world. Because Paul knows that Jesus is God, this is not a contradiction for Paul. Paul compares the coming of the Lord Jesus to the coming of a thief. The thief comes suddenly and at a time when no one expects the thief. This leads to an unhappy surprise or shock to those people who are not prepared. In the same way, the Lord Jesus will come at an unexpected time and when some people are not prepared for Jesus' return.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Talk about a time when a thief came and stole something from your house or from your neighbor's house. How did you respond? What did you advise your neighbor about how to keep things safe from further attacks? Or how would you keep your house safe from further attacks? Pause this audio here.

Paul then goes on to explain how the unbelievers are not prepared for the Lord's return. Instead of being prepared, the unbelievers think they are safe. The unbelievers are probably thinking and telling themselves and each other that there is peace everywhere and it is all safe, but that is not true. Suddenly, the unbelievers will suffer greatly. When a pregnant woman is about to give birth to a child, the pain comes suddenly and she will suffer with those labor pains. In the same way, the unbelievers will suddenly suffer a lot, and it is absolutely certain that the unbelievers will suffer.

People who live in the dark do not know what is happening around them. But people who live in the light are aware of what is happening around them. In this way, Paul contrasts how the people in the dark and those in the light respond to the day when the Lord would return. The believers in Thessalonica were not living in darkness and so they would not be surprised or unprepared when Jesus returned suddenly.

Paul goes on to emphasize the fact that the day of the Lord will not come at an unexpected time for the believers because the believers belong to the light and to the day. Paul uses this picture of day and light to refer to people who do what is right and live a Godly life. Paul also adds that we, believers, are not people who sin and belong to this evil world. This also means that we do not belong to the night or to the darkness.

Stop here and discuss this as a group: Imagine that you are in a room that is totally dark. How do you feel about that? What will be your thoughts as you sit there in the dark? What would you do to come out of that? Contrast this with another situation where there is a lot of light and the room is bright. How will your feelings and thoughts be? Out of these two situations, which one would you prefer to be in? Pause this audio here.

After explaining the difference between the believers and the unbelievers, Paul goes on to explain the activities of these two kinds of people. The believers are those who live in the day and the unbelievers are those who live in the night. People sleep and get drunk at night. These people do not know what is going to happen to them. But we, the believers, are the people who live in the day, and so we should be awake, alert, and ready for Jesus'

return. Paul emphasizes the need for us to be self-controlled as we belong to the day. Darkness and night usually refers to evil in the Bible, and light and day usually refers to goodness.

Paul continues to emphasize the difference between unbelievers and believers by comparing a believer to a soldier who covers the front of his body with a breastplate to protect himself. In the same way, believers need to trust in Jesus and love God and each other, to protect themselves when the devil attacks them. Believers also need to hope, or to confidently expect, that Jesus will save them, just like a soldier uses a helmet to protect his head in battle.

Stop here and look at a picture of a soldier's helmet and breastplate from the time of Paul. Pause this audio here.

The reason why Paul wants the believers to be alert and self-controlled is so that God will not judge and punish the believers. Instead, God will save believers because the believers trust in what Lord Jesus Christ has done for them. Lord Jesus died for us so that we can live with him forever, whether we are dead or alive at the time of Jesus' return. With this great assurance, Paul urges the believers to continue encouraging one another as Paul knows that they are doing already.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 1 Thessalonians 5:1–11 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the parts, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has two parts.

In the first part: Paul reminds the believers that Jesus will come back suddenly. When Jesus comes, the Lord Jesus Christ will judge and punish the people who did not believe in Christ and follow him.

In the second part: Paul encourages the believers to be prepared at all times for the Lord Jesus as he might come anytime. Paul reminds the believers that since Jesus died on the cross for us, when Jesus comes back, Jesus will save people who believe in him. Jesus will not punish the people who believe in him.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The unbelievers
- The Lord Jesus, or Christ
- The believers who listen to these words
- The person who reads these words aloud
- And God

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

In the last section, Paul says that those believers who died already, and those believers who are still alive, will both meet the Lord Jesus in the sky when Jesus comes back.

In this section, Paul answers the next question that the Thessalonian believers have probably asked Paul. Therefore, Paul is starting a new topic here. You can use a word that you have used before in this book to start a new topic.

Stop here and discuss this as a group: Suppose you are telling some people a story. After you finish that story, you want to tell the people about a different topic. How will you do that? What kinds of words will you use so that the people will know that you are talking about a new subject here? Pause the audio here.

In the first part, Paul reminds the believers that they already know that the Lord Jesus will come back suddenly, similar to how a thief would come unexpectedly into a house. When people think that everything is peaceful and safe, then suddenly, Jesus will come back to punish them. A woman who is giving birth to a child cannot escape the birth pains. In the same way, these people cannot escape the punishment. In this section, Paul is saying very clearly that the Lord Jesus will severely punish the unbelievers when the Lord comes back.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Describe a time when something unexpected and very bad happened. How do you feel about what happened? Then tell another story where a person prepares ahead of time and well for an event. Discuss how that person felt about being prepared ahead of time. How would you describe when someone comes to your home unexpectedly? In the same way, how would you describe when Jesus comes back again suddenly when you do not expect him? Pause this audio here.

In the second part, Paul encourages the believers about how they should live as they wait expectantly for the Lord's return. Paul says that the people of light differ from the people of darkness in the way they behave. Paul also tells the believers that they should be fully prepared as they are the people who belong to the light.

The unbelievers sleep and get drunk in the night. But Paul warns the believers to be awake and sober, or self-controlled, and ready for the Lord's return. When Paul tells the believers to be self-controlled, Paul is telling them that they should be responsible and think carefully about the things that the believers do.

Stop here and tell a story about a person who thinks carefully about what they should do before they do it. How do you describe a person like this? How will you describe a person who is self-controlled, or sober, in this passage? Pause this audio here.

Paul then tells the believers to trust and love God. Paul describes this like a soldier who wears a breastplate over his body to protect himself from his enemies. We should be very sure that God will save us. Our hope in God's salvation will protect us like a helmet would protect a soldier's head.

God did not choose his people and then decide to be angry or wrathful with us and punish us. Instead, God decided to make a way for us to be saved and to live with God forever. Lord Jesus died for us so that we can live with him forever, whether we are awake or asleep at the time of Jesus' return. Paul uses the special language of being awake or being asleep to talk about being alive or being dead.

Stop here and remember how in previous passages you talked about people being asleep as a way to say that those people were dead. In this passage, how will you talk about people being either dead or alive when Jesus returns? Pause this audio here.

Paul uses these words to encourage the believers. Paul knows that the people are already encouraging one another, and Paul wants the believers to continue doing this.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: As an activity, imagine that someone you love dearly, or someone you admire, or someone who has done a great help to you is planning to visit you in your home. This person did not tell you exactly when they would come, but they said that they would definitely come. You are very excited and are eagerly waiting for this person to come and visit you. What would you do to prepare yourself for this person's coming? What are the things that you would do to prepare the house for their coming? How would you imagine yourself to be there when the person comes? What kinds of thoughts and feelings will you experience? Pause this audio here.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has two parts.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The unbelievers
- The Lord Jesus, or Christ
- The believers who listen to these words
- The person who reads these words aloud
- And God

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Paul says, "Brothers, I need not write to you about the time when the Lord Jesus will return. You know that already. The Lord will come suddenly when you do not expect him, similar to how a thief would come suddenly. A pregnant woman's labor pains begin suddenly. In the same way, when the unbelievers say that there is no war and it is all safe, they will be in great trouble suddenly. This will definitely happen."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing the unbelievers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am afraid to think that we will have trouble; or
- I am afraid that we are not prepared for that sudden trouble.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I want these people to know that the Lord Jesus will come suddenly; or
- I want these people to be prepared for the Lord's coming; or
- These unbelievers are going to experience great trouble.

Paul continues, saying, "But you brothers, you know what will happen. You are not like the people who live in the night or in the dark. All of you are people who belong to the light and to the day. So when the great day of the Lord happens suddenly, it should not surprise us, like a thief might surprise you."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing the believers who are listening, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- We are people of the light, or the day, so the Lord's coming is not a surprise; or
- The Lord will come suddenly, but we are prepared for that, because we know it will happen someday.

Paul then warns the people and says, "People sleep in the night and they become drunk. Those people do not know what is happening around them. But you should watch carefully. You should be like people who are not sleeping but awake and ready. We must continue to trust God and love God. That will be like a breastplate, or the metal covering that a soldier wears to protect his body. We must also continue to hope that God will save us. That will be like a helmet that people wear to keep their head safe."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I feel sorry for those people who are unaware of what is happening; or
- The believers should continue to stay strong, loving and trusting Jesus. The believers should be waiting for Jesus' return anxiously.

Ask the people playing the believers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I should watch carefully. I should not be like the people who are sleeping or like the people who are drunk. I should love God and trust him for all things. I should depend on God completely to save me.

Paul then encourages the believers and says, "God did not choose us to be his people so that he could be angry with us. God chose us so that he could save us because of what our Lord Jesus Christ has done. Jesus died for our sake so that we can live together with Jesus forever. It does not matter whether we are alive or dead when Jesus returns. We will all go to live with Jesus. Since this is true, you should encourage and help each other to believe in God more strongly."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- It gives me more joy to know that Jesus Christ died for me so that I can live with Jesus forever; or
- It does not matter whether we are alive or dead. Jesus will take us to live with him.

Ask the people playing the believers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- God will not get angry at me. God made Lord Jesus to die for me so that I can live with God. So, I am happy that I can go to God whether I am dead or alive. But I need to encourage and help my fellow believers with these words so that we can all become strong believers.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Paul tells the **brothers**, or **brothers and sisters**, that Paul does not need to tell them about the times and dates when the **Day of the Lord** will come. Use the same word or phrase for brothers and sisters as you have used in previous passages. The "Day of the Lord" means the day when the Lord Jesus will return to earth. For more information on Lord, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase that you have used in previous passages.

Some people are saying "**peace** and safety." Use the same word for peace that you used in previous passages, and remember that peace is in the Master Glossary.

But the believers in the city of Thessalonica are not living in darkness, and so the believers should not be surprised or unprepared when Jesus returns. Instead, the believers are living in the light and belong to the day. Darkness and night always refers to **evil** in the Bible, and light and day refers to goodness in the Bible. If you want to say that night and darkness represents evil, remember that evil refers to anything that comes against God. Evil is the opposite of good. Evil behavior is a wrong thing to do, or a bad thing.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word you will use for **evil**, if you choose to use the word for evil in your translation. For more information on evil, refer to the Master Glossary. If you have already translated this word in a previous book of the Bible, use the same word or phrase for evil as you used in previous passages. Pause this audio here.

In the same way, if you want to say that day and light represents **goodness**, remember that goodness refers to anything that comes from God. Goodness pleases God. Goodness is similar to godliness, and it is the quality of Christ that we should imitate. Goodness also expresses the idea of right behavior.

Since we belong to the day, we must protect ourselves from attacks by our enemies by having **faith**, or trusting and loving the Lord Jesus continually and also by **hoping**, or confidently expecting that Jesus will save us. Use the same words or phrases for faith and hope that you have used in previous passages, and remember that faith and hope are in the Master Glossary.

When we trust, love, and hope in Jesus, this is similar to the **breastplates** and **helmets** that soldiers will wear to protect themselves. A breastplate is a type of body armor that covers the front and sometimes the back of the upper body. A breastplate provides essential protection to one of the most vulnerable areas in battle. People made helmets from metal and used them to protect the heads of the soldiers from swords and arrows.

Stop here and look at a Roman breastplate and helmet as a group, if needed. Discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **breastplate** and for **helmet**. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

We need to do this because God did not choose us to suffer **wrath**, or to punish us for our sins. Wrath is the very strong anger that God shows when God sees sin in the world.

Stop here and discuss as a group how you will talk about the fact that God did not choose us and then make us suffer wrath, or become angry at us. If needed, look up wrath in the Master Glossary, and translate this word in the same way that you translated it in other parts of the Bible. Pause this audio here.

God chose us so that he could save us because of what our Lord Jesus Christ has done. Jesus died for us so that we can live together with Jesus. It does not matter whether we are alive or dead when Jesus returns. If it is not clear as to why God would punish us, you can say that it is because of our sins. Remember that **sin** is any action, feeling, or thought that people do against God. For more information on sin, refer to the Master Glossary. If you choose to use the word sin in your translation, use the same word or phrase for sin as you used in previous passages.

The Bible says that when a person leaves their bad ways and trusts in Jesus to forgive them for their bad ways, that person is **saved** and God gives that person eternal life. For more information on saved or salvation, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for salvation as you have used in previous passages.

Christ means someone who is appointed for a special task. Here, it refers to Jesus, whom God had promised to send to save the people of this world. For more information on Christ, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for Christ as you used in previous passages.

Since the believers know that they are going to live with Christ forever, the believers should continue to encourage and help each other to become strong believers. This is something that the believers are doing already.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in their own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (14504989 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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1 Thessalonians 5:12–22

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 1 Thessalonians 5:12–22 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 1 Thessalonians 5:12–22 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 1 Thessalonians 5:12–22 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In the previous section, Paul talks to the believers in Thessalonica about "the day of the Lord," and Paul reminds the believers that they are people of the light and so they should be awake, alert, and ready for Jesus' return. Paul reaffirms that God will not punish the believers, but will save the believers because they trust in Jesus Christ. Paul asks the believers to encourage each other and to strengthen each other in their faith.

As Paul ends his letter, Paul addresses the Thessalonian believers as "brothers," or "brothers and sisters," which refers to all the believers in the church. Paul then urges and encourages the believers to follow or obey a list of very important commands as they live as Christians. Paul includes two clear sets of commands in this passage. Paul begins each set of commands with a request and then says what Paul, Silas, and Timothy want the Thessalonians to do.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: If a son is going to a far away place for study, what kind of advice or instruction will his father give him? How will the father say that to the son? Pause this audio here.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: If a village leader wants his people to do something that is very important, how will he tell his people? What kinds of words will the leader use to emphasize his command? Pause this audio here.

Here, Paul describes the people who work among the believers in three different ways. These leaders work hard. These leaders take care of their people and guide the people. The leaders also warn or rebuke the people concerning things that the people need to correct or avoid.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What do the church leaders in your community do? What kind of service or work do those leaders do? How do the leaders interact with the people in the community and in the church? How do the leaders correct people who do wrong things? How do you react to these leaders when the leaders do these things? Pause this audio here.

The first request that Paul makes is about the relationship between the believers and the leaders of the church. The believers should respect and honour their leaders in the church, and the believers should love the leaders very much, because these leaders work hard. The believers should choose to act for the well-being of their leaders. The believers should live in peace among themselves. This means that the believers should live together without quarreling.

Stop here and discuss this as a group: What are the things that we do to show others that we respect them? What does it mean to love someone without wanting things for yourself? Why do we quarrel with people? Why should we live together without quarreling? Pause this audio here.

After Paul instructs the believers about how they should behave towards their leaders, Paul makes a second request. Now, Paul is addressing the believers again as "brothers and sisters," as Paul did in the beginning of this passage. Paul tells the believers how the believers should behave among themselves. Paul gives the believers advice on how to deal with difficult people. The believers should warn those people who do not want to work that those people should work. The believers should encourage those people who are fearful to be courageous. The believers should help and support those people who are weak, and the believers should be patient with all the people, including non-believers. Again, Paul advises the believers on how to behave not only among their fellow believers, but also among all the other people. Paul tells the believers that they should never do evil things to anyone who has done evil things to the believers. This means that the believers should never take revenge on people who do evil things against the believers. Instead, the believers should always try to do good things that will help one another and help everyone else.

Stop here and discuss this as a group: If people are devoted to a particular religion in your community, how do those people behave among themselves? How will those people behave with people of other religions? Which actions do you think are helpful for the community and which actions are not? Pause this audio here.

Paul then goes on to tell the believers what God wants the believers to do because the believers have a relationship with Jesus Christ. The believers should be joyful at all times. The believers should pray to God all the time and in all situations, whether good or bad, and give thanks to God.

Paul continues to give the believers advice and instructions regarding their public worship. Paul tells the believers that the believers should not stop the work of the Holy Spirit among the believers, similar to how the believers would quench a fire. Paul means that the believers should allow the Holy Spirit to do the Holy Spirit's work. The believers should not reject or ignore prophecies. Prophecies are the messages that God reveals to God's people. But the believers should verify all the messages in order to know whether or not the messages are truly from God. The believers should put into practice what is good and refuse to do anything that is evil. This means that the believers should accept the messages that came from God and reject those messages that did not come from God.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 1 Thessalonians 5:12–22 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the parts, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has four parts.

In the first part: Paul encourages the believers to respect their leaders in the church.

In the second part: Paul tells the believers how the believers should deal with the difficult people both in the church and outside.

In the third part: Paul encourages the believers to do three things. Those things are God's will for the believers, because the believers belong to Christ.

In the fourth part: Paul tells the believers what they should do in public worship.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- Silas and Timothy
- The believers who are listening to these words
- The person reading these words aloud
- God
- Christ Jesus
- And Holy Spirit

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

In the previous section, Paul reaffirms that God will not punish the believers, but will save the believers when Christ returns.

In this section, as Paul concludes his letter, Paul gives the believers a list of commands to follow as the believers wait for Christ Jesus to return.

In the first part, Paul starts by addressing the believers as "brothers." This is an affectionate way to refer to the believers. Paul often uses this word to refer to both men and women. Here, Paul explains to the believers about the people who work among the believers—that is, the people who are like leaders. Paul tells the believers that these people not only work for the believers by leading and guiding the believers, but these people also warn the believers to do the right things. Then Paul asks the believers to appreciate these peoples' work and to respect them greatly with love by living in peace with the leaders and each other.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Imagine you are sending a letter or a message to a group of people you care about. Discuss how you would end the letter. Paul is an elderly person, but Paul still tells the believers these commands like a request. How will your leaders or elders give advice or commands to the younger people? What kind of formal words or phrases do people in your culture use in this context? Pause this audio here.

In the second part, Paul encourages the believers how to deal with people who are difficult to handle. Paul's words are not a rebuke, or just advice, but a serious command in a polite manner. Paul calls the believers "brothers" in an affectionate manner, as Paul did in the first part. Paul tells the believers how they should deal with three groups of people. Paul also mentions these kinds of people in chapter four of this book. The believers should warn people who are lazy so that those people will work. The believers should encourage people who are afraid so that those people will be brave. The believers should help and support people who are weak and not able to do everything for themselves. The believers should live patiently with everyone. In other words, the believers should speak softly and kindly to everyone.

Paul concludes this part by strongly emphasizing a command that none of the believers should ever take revenge on anyone or do bad things to someone because those people did bad things to the believers. Instead,

the believers should try hard to be kind and good to each other and to everyone else. Paul often gives instructions that are opposite to each other to emphasize what Paul says.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Imagine that you want your loved ones to do something for sure. What kind of words will you use? How will you emphasize the importance of doing what you say in a way that does not offend your loved ones? When you want your loved ones to do several things, how will you list those things or how will you explain them in order so that your loved ones remember those things well? What words would you use to emphasize your instructions but also to make those instructions gentle and clear? Pause this audio here.

In the third part, Paul tells the believers that they should do these three things because these things are God's will or desire for them to do as believers in Jesus Christ. Those three things are to be joyful at all times, to pray to God in any and every situation, and to be thankful to God no matter what happens. Praying is talking to God and thanking God for the good things that God has done for us. Praying means talking to God about everything that we want to tell God.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: When someone is happy, how do you describe that person? How can you pray to God at all times and in all situations? What comes to your mind when you hear the word "pray"? Pause this audio here.

In the fourth part, Paul tells the believers about their responsibilities in their public worship. Here, Paul gives five commands that will affect the quality of public worship. First, Paul tells the believers not to do two things, and then Paul goes on to say three things that the believers should do instead. First, the believers should not try to stop the work of the Holy Spirit among the believers. Here Paul uses special language to compare the Holy Spirit to a fire. Like someone who tries to put out a fire, the believers should not put out the Holy Spirit's work in their lives. Secondly, the believers should not reject prophecies, or messages from God, without first evaluating those messages, or making judgements about if those messages are good or bad. People who claim to speak on behalf of God give these prophecies, or messages. Believers should judge all messages to make sure that the messages agree with God's Word. If the messages are good, the believers should accept and obey those messages. But if the messages are evil, the believers should not accept or obey those messages. Remember that Paul often gives instructions that are opposite to each other to emphasize what Paul is trying to say. Paul very much wants the believers to turn away from anything evil and to only follow the good things from God.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 1 Thessalonians 5:12–22 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has four parts.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- Silas and Timothy
- The believers who are listening to these words
- The person reading these words aloud
- God
- Christ Jesus
- And Holy Spirit

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Paul says to the believers, "Brothers, we request that you respect your leaders who work hard among you. These people lead you and they also warn you to stop doing wrong things. Show these people how valuable they are to you. And love these people very much because of the work that they do. We also urge that you keep living peacefully with each other."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing believers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I understand that I should respect my leaders; or
- I had never thought about it before, but our leaders work hard for us, and so we should love them; or
- We should live peacefully with all the people.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I want these people to know that they should respect their leaders because the leaders are working hard for them; or
- I want these people to honour their leaders by loving them and living in peace with them; or
- I want these believers to show their leaders that the leaders are valuable to them because they lead the believers and teach the believers the right things.

Paul continues and says, "My brothers, we request that you do this: you must warn lazy people that they should work. If people are afraid, help those people to be brave. If people are weak, take care of those people. Be patient with everyone. If anyone does evil things against you, you should never do evil things against them in return. Instead, always try to do good things that will help your fellow believers and everyone else."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing believers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I understand that Paul wants us to deal with people according to those peoples' needs; or
- We should help and warn others. We should never pay back evil for evil; or
- These are hard things to do, but I will try; or
- I will be happy if I live in such a community.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I want these people to know how to help difficult people; or
- I want these believers to always do the right things.

Then Paul says, "Always be full of joy and rejoice. Pray at all times. Continue to thank God regardless of what happens to you. God wants you to do that, because you belong to Christ Jesus."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing believers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- God wants us to be happy, to pray, and to thank God all the time; or
- I belong to God! This is really good news! or
- It is really hard to always pray and be joyful. I need God's help!

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- Since we all belong to Christ, I want the believers to be happy and to pray and thank God for everything that happens in their life; or
- I love the believers so much that I want the best for them!

Paul continues, "You should not try to stop the work of the Holy Spirit in your lives. Do not reject prophetic messages. But instead, you should check and verify whether these messages really do come from God or not. Obey them if those messages prove to be good. Reject those messages which appear to be evil."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing believers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- We should not stop the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives, and we should not reject prophetic messages; or
- We should check whether those messages are good or evil. We should obey the good messages and reject the evil messages; or
- I am so glad we have this teaching!

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I want the believers to allow the Holy Spirit to work in their lives. The believers should obey the messages that really come from God; or
- The believers should not reject the prophetic messages. Instead, the believers should evaluate those messages to find out right from wrong.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 1 Thessalonians 5:12-22 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Paul asks his fellow believers to honour the people who work hard among the believers to lead and care for the believers in the **Lord** and also to warn the believers to do the right things. Use the same word for Lord that you have used in previous passages, and remember that Lord is in the Master Glossary.

The leaders should live at peace with each other. **Peace** refers to an absence of conflict and to fullness, or completeness, of life. For more information on peace, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for peace that you have used in previous passages.

Paul always addresses his audience as **brothers**, which refers to fellow believers. "Brothers" includes men and women. Use the same word or phrase for "brothers" or "brothers and sisters" that you have used in previous passages.

Paul instructs the believers again about dealing with different kinds of people. The believers should warn the lazy people to work, encourage the people who are fearful to be brave, and help the people who are weak. The believers should be **patient** with everyone. The believers should never do **evil** things to anyone who has done evil things to the believers. Instead, the believers should always try to do **good** things that will help one another and help everyone else. Patience refers to the ability to accept or tolerate problems or suffering without becoming annoyed or anxious. Evil things refers to anything that does not come from God. Evil is against God and it is the opposite of good. Good things refers to anything that comes from God.

Stop here and discuss what word or phrase you will use for **patient**, **evil**, and **good**, if you have not discussed these words before. For more information on evil, refer to the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

The believers should be **joyful** at all times, and the believers should **pray** continually and be **thankful** to God in every situation. When someone is joyful, that person feels great pleasure and happiness, but this happiness always comes from our relationship with God. When someone prays, that person talks to God to express love, to ask for something, or to give thanks. For more information on prayer, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same words or phrases for joyful and pray that you have used in previous passages.

Stop here and discuss what word you will use for **thankful**. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word or phrase here. Pause this audio here.

Giving thanks means to tell someone that you are happy because of something that person has done. Use the same word or phrase that you have used in previous passages.

We should give thanks because it is the will of **Christ** Jesus. Use the same word for Christ that you have used in previous passages, and remember that Christ is in the Master Glossary.

Believers should not stop the work of the **Spirit**. Holy Spirit is God, and he works in the life of the believers. In this verse, it says "Spirit," but it refers to the Holy Spirit, and so you can use that term here. The phrase Holy Spirit is in the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for Holy Spirit as you used in previous passages.

Paul concludes this section by telling the believers that they should not despise **prophecies** but should test them. A prophecy is a message from God that a prophet speaks. For more information on prophecy, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for prophecy as you used in previous passages.

After checking the prophecies with God's Word, the believers should accept those prophecies that are **good**, or come from God, and reject those prophecies that are **evil**, or do not come from God. Paul also uses the words good and evil in the first part of this passage. Use the same words as you have used before. See the Master Glossary for more information about evil.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

1 Thessalonians 5:12–22

Audio Content

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1 Thessalonians 5:23–28

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 1 Thessalonians 5:23–28 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 1 Thessalonians 5:23–28 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 1 Thessalonians 5:23–28 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

Paul finishes his letter with a prayer for the Thessalonians and a few final instructions.

Paul says that our God is the God of peace, which means God is the one who brings true peace, so that believers can live without conflict with each other and with God. Paul prays that God will sanctify the believers, or make the believers completely holy. Believers are already holy because they belong to Christ, but as believers follow Jesus, God and the Holy Spirit work in people's hearts to make them more and more like Jesus.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Think of a group that you are a part of, such as a sports group or a singing group. What title or role do you have because you are in that group, such as "athlete" or "singer"? Now think of someone who has that same title or role that you respect and want to be like. While you both have that title now, how are you two different? If you wanted to act like the person you respect, what would you have to do? Pause this audio here.

Paul also prays that God will keep every part of every believer blameless, or keep those believers from sinning in any way. One day, Jesus Christ will return to earth and Jesus will judge all people for what those people have done. Paul wants the believers to behave in a good and right way so on that day, no one will be able to accuse the believers because of anything the believers have done. Paul knows that the believers need God to help them behave like that. God has called or chosen the believers to be God's people, and God has promised that he will help the believers. God is faithful and always does what he has promised to do.

Paul asks the believers to pray for Paul and the other believers with Paul. Paul and his companions are friends with the Thessalonians. Paul wants the Thessalonians to pray for Paul too, because the Thessalonians are all brothers and sisters together in God's family, who care for each other.

Paul then tells the believers in Thessalonica that the believers should greet each other with a holy kiss. In Paul's time, a kiss on another person's cheek was a normal way to show a family member that you loved and respected that person. Since God is the Father of all believers, all believers are like brothers and sisters, so the believers began to greet each other like family members. This holy kiss is a sign of respect and love between God's holy

people. Unbelievers would be surprised to see believers from different places, social classes, and groups show that they care for and love each other like a family with this greeting.

Stop here and discuss: In your culture, what is a respectful and loving way to greet other people? How do men and women greet each other respectfully and lovingly? Pause this audio here.

Paul commands, or asks, the people to make a solemn promise to make sure that someone reads this letter aloud to all the believers in Thessalonica. This way everyone can hear the encouragement and teaching that Paul is sending to the Thessalonians. Paul finishes by praying for the people in Thessalonica. Paul prays that the Lord Jesus will give grace to the believers. When Jesus gives us grace, it means Jesus is good and kind to us even though we do not deserve it.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 1 Thessalonians 5:23-28 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the parts, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has three parts.

In the first part: Paul prays that God will make the believers completely holy and keep the believers from sinning in any way. God will help the believers do this because God is faithful.

In the second part: Paul asks the believers to do three things: pray for Paul and his companions, greet fellow believers affectionately, and make sure everyone hears what Paul has said in this letter.

In the third part: Paul finishes his letter and prays that the Lord Jesus Christ will show grace to the believers.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The believers who are listening to someone read this letter aloud
- The person who reads this letter aloud
- God the Father
- The Lord Jesus Christ
- And Paul's coworkers

Paul often finishes his letters with prayers and final instructions for the believers. Here, Paul also repeats or reminds his listeners about things Paul talked about earlier in his letter. Remember that Paul has talked to the believers about living in a holy way, about Christ's return, and about how God is faithful. Paul reminds the believers one more time about these things, because these things are important.

In the first part, Paul prays good things for the believers. Paul reminds the believers that God is the one who brings peace to believers. The believers will have peace with each other and with God if they live in a holy way. Paul knows that the believers need help to live in this way, so Paul asks God to sanctify the believers, to help the believers act in a holy way, just like Christ acts.

Paul asks that God will keep the believer's spirit, soul, and body blameless. A person's soul is the total invisible, inner part of a person. This part of a person may live on even after the person's body dies. The spirit is very similar to the soul, but this is the inner part of ourselves that has a relationship with God. When a person prays, that person's spirit is talking with God. The body is a person's physical body that breathes and eats and moves. Paul is not trying to explain how many parts make up a person. Paul probably uses all three to emphasize that

every part of a person must be innocent, or not guilty of sin. Everything that person does and thinks and believes must please God.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your language, how do you talk about the parts of a person you can see and the parts you cannot see? Discuss what words or phrases you use for the invisible part of a person that thinks and feels. Discuss what words or phrases you use for the part of a person that connects or communicates with God. Discuss what words or phrases you use for the part of a person that you can see. Pause this audio here.

Then, when Christ returns, Christ will judge all people. Paul wants the believers to not be guilty, or to not deserve any blame. Paul says that he who calls the believers will help the believers, because he is faithful, or he does what he says he will do. Paul is talking about God, since God is the one who calls believers to be his people. In Paul's culture, writers would sometimes refer to God through God's characteristics instead of saying God's name.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: As an activity, discuss how you could talk about the other people in the group without saying those people's names. Instead, call them the person who is a certain way or does a certain thing, such as "the one who cooks really well," or "the one who runs very fast." When would you describe someone like this? Pause this audio here.

In the second part, Paul tells the believers to do three things. First, Paul wants the believers in Thessalonica to pray for Paul and the believers with Paul. The believers should also greet each other with a holy kiss. Paul probably uses the word holy, or special, to show the difference between this greeting and the sort of kissing between a man and a woman who are married.

Paul also wants to make sure that all the believers could hear the encouragement and teaching that Paul is sending to the Thessalonians. Paul wants someone who can read to read this letter out loud. The believers will probably gather together to listen, and that person will read the letter aloud until everyone has heard it. Paul commands the believers before the Lord to do this. When Paul says, "before the Lord," Paul is showing how important this command is. The Lord wants the believers to hear this letter, and the believers will have to explain their actions to the Lord if they do not do this.

In the third part, Paul finishes with one last prayer. Paul prays that the Lord Jesus Christ will show his grace, or his love and kindness, to the believers. In the beginning of Paul's letter, Paul also prayed the same thing. Paul often begins and ends Paul's letters like this.

Stop here and discuss: If you were writing a letter or sending a message to someone far away, how would you begin and end the letter? What kinds of things do you pray or wish for people you care about?

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it. As you do this, you might want to have drawings, objects, or even people to represent Paul, Paul's audience, the person reading this letter aloud, God, Jesus, and the believers with Paul.

Choose people, drawings, or objects to be each one of these characters. You can begin by acting how Paul is telling these words to another believer who is writing this letter. Then someone can take the letter to the town of Thessalonica. The Thessalonian believers can gather together, and someone can pretend to read the letter aloud to everyone. Then act out what Paul says in this part of the letter. The person playing God can bring people to stand next to each other like friends to show how God brings peace to the believers. Have God lead the believers to stand apart from other people, because God has chosen the believers to be God's special or holy people. Then the person playing God can show the believers the right way to act and help the believers to do these actions too. The believers can act out how they pray for Paul, greet each other affectionately, and read the letter aloud to everyone. Act out how Christ shows grace to the believers even when the believers do not deserve that grace. Christ is with the believers, he encourages the believers, and he gives good things to the believers. Finally, show how Christ will one day come back to earth. When Christ asks if anyone can accuse the believers of anything bad, everyone can shake their heads.

*Embodying the Text**Embodying the Text*

Listen to an audio version of 1 Thessalonians 5:23–28 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has three parts.

The characters in this passage are:

- Paul
- The believers who are listening to someone read this letter aloud
- The person who reads this letter aloud
- God the Father
- The Lord Jesus Christ
- And Paul's coworkers

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Paul said, "I pray to God who gives peace that he will make you completely pure. I pray that God will keep any part of you from sinning in any way until our Lord Jesus Christ comes again. Since God calls you to be holy, he will enable you to do that, because God always does what he says he will do."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing God, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- If my people follow my example, they will have peace with each other and with me. I want my people to have peace instead of acting in a way that hurts one another; or
- I know that it is hard to be holy and blameless. I will help the believers because I care for the believers and do not want them to be discouraged and give up; or
- I am not distracted, and I do not forget what I have said. When I say I will do something, I have the power to do that thing, and I will do it.

Ask the person playing the believers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- Paul is praying that God will keep every part of us pure, even our thoughts. I did not realize that we need to be careful even in the way we think! or
- It is hard to keep myself from sinning. Sometimes I sin without even thinking about it! I need help to act in the way God wants me to. I am glad that God will help me; or
- I know that often, when I sin, I hurt people around me. I do not want to hurt others or cause arguments. I want the peace that God gives.

Ask the person playing Paul, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I want the believers to look forward to the day Christ returns with hope and joy. If the believers are secretly doing bad things, then the believers will not want Christ to return and see what bad things the believers are doing; or
- When I start to worry about what will happen, I remember that God is faithful. God has said that God will teach us and take care of us, so then I feel calm instead of afraid.

Then Paul said, "My fellow believers, pray for us. Greet all your fellow believers affectionately. I command you in the name of the Lord to read this letter to all the believers. I pray that our Lord Jesus Christ may show you his love and kindness."

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing Jesus, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I care deeply for the people on earth. That is why I came to earth to save people! Of course I will continue to show my love and care for people, now that they are God's holy people; or
- I also want people to live peacefully with others, so I want the believers to share this instruction that Paul is sending; or
- I hear Paul when he prays, and I am glad to help the believers.

Ask the person playing the believers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am encouraged that Paul cares so much for us that Paul would send us this letter and pray good things for us, even though Paul is facing difficult things himself; or
- I want to show love to Paul too, so I will pray for Paul and the other believers. I care about the other believers like they are my brothers and sisters! or
- I am glad that we do not have to try to be holy on our own. God will help us and we all can learn together.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 1 Thessalonians 5:23–28 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Paul says that God is the God of **peace**. This word for peace means both an absence of conflict and fullness, or completeness, of life. For more information on peace, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for peace as you used in previous passages.

Paul prays that God will **sanctify** the believers, or make the believers completely **holy**. Holy means set apart for God. When people begin to trust in Jesus and receive the Holy Spirit, those people become holy as well. The

Holy Spirit works in those people's hearts to change the people to become more and more like Jesus and to make the people more and more holy, or set apart for God's special purposes. For more information on sanctification and holy, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for sanctify, or "make completely holy," as you used in previous passages.

Paul prays that God will make each believer's **spirit, soul, and body** to be blameless. A soul is the total invisible, inner part of a person, where that person thinks, feels, and desires. This part of a person may live on even after that person's body dies. The word spirit is also the inner part of a person, but usually focuses on the relationship that a person has with God. When we are praying, our spirit is talking with God. Some people think that the spirit and the soul are the same, and that these two different words are only giving a slightly different emphasis. Other people think that these words are different, and that each person has a body, a soul, and a spirit. Paul is emphasizing that a person should be completely blameless—both the parts of a person you can see and the parts you cannot see.

Stop here and discuss as a group what words or phrases you will use for **soul, spirit, and body**. Remember the words and phrases you discussed in step three. Some translations use "a person's whole life" or "every part of a person" instead of saying soul, spirit, and body. Look up soul and spirit in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated these words in another book of the Bible, use the same words that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Paul wants the believers to be **blameless**, or innocent, when the Lord Jesus Christ returns. Use the same word or phrase for blameless as you used in previous passages, and remember that blameless is in the Master Glossary.

A **Lord** is a master over other people, who has full authority, so the Israelites used this word for God, because God has authority over the whole world. For more information on Lord, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for Lord as you used in previous passages.

Christ refers to the special king and Savior who God had promised to send, who is Jesus. For more information on Christ, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for Christ as you used in previous passages.

Paul calls the believers **brothers**, or **brothers and sisters**. Paul frequently uses the word for brother to mean fellow believers. For more information on brother, refer to believer in the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for brothers or fellow believers as you used in previous passages.

Paul asks the believers to **pray** for Paul and the believers with Paul. To pray means to talk with God. For more information on pray, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for pray as you used in previous passages.

Paul also says the believers should greet each other with a **holy kiss**. This kiss is holy because it is the way God's holy people greet each other. In that culture, at that time, a kiss on the cheek was an appropriate way to greet each other. If it is not appropriate in your culture, you may say that they greeted each other in a loving way as family members.

Stop here and discuss as a group what words or phrases you will use for "holy kiss." Pause this audio here.

Paul prays that the Lord Jesus will give the believers **grace**. To give grace means to give someone something good that they do not deserve. This can often mean the salvation that God gives, but here it probably means the good things, attitudes, and abilities that Jesus gives to believers. For more information on grace, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for grace as you used in previous passages.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

1 Thessalonians 5:23-28

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