

Study Guide

First & Second THESSALONIANS

By Doyle Gilliam



SUNSET
International Bible Institute



LETTERS to the THESSALONIANS



INTRODUCTORY
NEW TESTAMENT
STUDIES

Taught by
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Arranged for study by
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**SUNSET INTERNATIONAL BIBLE INSTITUTE
EXTERNAL STUDIES**

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First and Second Thessalonians Study Guide

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without the written permission of the publisher except in the case of brief
quotations within critical articles and reviews, including translation.

DISCLAIMER

The textbook used in this course was selected because we consider it one of the very best available and well suited to this course of study. **“1 & 2 Thessalonians”** by Jon A. Weatherly contains a wealth of knowledge which will increase your understanding of these two books. The author’s scholarly approach to this study will enhance your understanding of the message Paul penned to the Thessalonians and help you to appreciate the over all content of this study. As with all books written by men, there may be some things with which you and I would not agree. The principle, “use what is good and discard what is not good” applies to all textbooks used with our courses. Please be wise enough to discard any and all teaching that is not biblical.

Instructions and Requirements for Level II Students (Secondary Certificate Only)

Each lesson is built around the instruction on either the DVDs or the CDs. Listen to or view the lecture as you follow along in the course Study Guide.

Reading: You will be required to read the books of 1 and 2 Thessalonians two (2) times by the completion of this course of study. You will also be asked to read the text for the class before coming to class. (**Worth 5% of your final grade**). You may also obtain and read the textbook, “*1 & 2 Thessalonians*” by Jon A. Weatherly and receive an extra five (5) points on your grade.

Tests: There will be two tests to complete for this course. One test is to be done at the end of lesson six (6) and the other is to be done at the end of lesson twelve (12). Each test will cover only the previous six lessons studied. All assignments must be completed by the time of your final test. Each test must be passed with a 70% or better to pass this course. (**This will be 85% of your grade.**)

Memory Work: You will have sixteen (16) verses to memorize in your study of Thessalonians. These are to be done as you go through the study and the appropriate passage done at the appropriate time. You are asked to *either*: write your verses out, correct them with a different colored pen and turn them in with the mid-term or final test or quote them to the test administrator and he will keep track of the verses completed. Please be diligent in doing all your memory work. All memory work must be completed to pass this course. (**Memory work will be worth 10% of your grade.**)

Due with the mid-term test:

1 Thessalonians 1:3–10

Due with the final test:

2 Thessalonians 1:3–10

The self exams for each lesson are to be read previous to listening to or viewing the material on the tapes.

All work is due and must be completed at the time of the final test.

Grading Scale:

Memory Work	10%
Two Tests	85%
Reading	<u>5%</u>
TOTAL	100%

TEXTBOOK READING EXTRA

5%

Instructions and Requirements for Level III Students (Ministry Certificate and Bachelor Degree)

Each lesson is built around the instruction on either the DVDs or the CDs. Listen to or view the lecture as you follow along in the course Study Guide.

Reading: The books of *First and Second Thessalonians* are to be read six (6) times during the course of this study. At least one reading must be in a modern speech Bible. Each time you read the books do so at one sitting. You are also required to read all of the book *1 & 2 Thessalonians* (College Press) by Jon A. Weatherly. Write a ½ page evaluation of each chapter of this book and send in with your Final Exam. **(10% of your final grade)**

Memory Work: You will have forty-two (42) verses to memorize in your study of 1 & 2 Thessalonians. These are to be done as you go through the study. Write out your memory verses, correct them with a different colored ink, and turn them in with your mid-term and final test or quote them to your Administrator. If you write your memory verses out please indicate which Bible version you are using for your memory verses. **(Worth 10% of your final grade).**

Due with the mid-term test:

1 Thessalonians 1:3–10; 2:13–14; 3:5, 12–13, 4:14–18; 5:1–9, 23.

Due with the final test:

2 Thessalonians 1:3–10; 2:13–15; 3:6, 14–15.

Research Paper: Research and write a paper about the city of Thessalonica. You can use an encyclopedia or any other source you may have. Draw a map and locate the city of Thessalonica on the map. Send this research paper and map in with your Mid-term test papers. This should be at least two pages in length. **(Worth 5% of your final grade).**

Tests: There will be two tests to complete for this course. One test is to be done at the end of lesson six (6) and the other is to be done at the end of lesson twelve (12). Each test will cover only the previous six (6) lessons studied. All assignments must be completed by the time of your final test. Each test must be passed with a 70% or better to successfully complete the course. **(Your tests scores will be worth 75% of your final grade).**

You must complete all the "Self Exam" questions in your Course Guide.

Grading Scale:

Reading and paper	10%
Memory verses	10%
Research paper	5%
Tests	<u>75%</u>
TOTAL	100%

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LESSON ONE

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION:



We would like to welcome you to a study of the Thessalonian letters written by the apostle Paul. These letters are some of the very earliest of all the writings of the New Testament and perhaps are the earliest writings of Paul with the possible exception of the book of Galatians. Paul was on his second journey when he came to the city of Thessalonica, preached the gospel and established the church there. Read as a background of this study Acts 17:1–15 about the preaching of Paul, Silas, and Timothy in the city of Thessalonica.

LESSON TEXT: Acts 17:1–15

LESSON AIM: To get an overview of how and when the church was established in Thessalonica.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Learn that Paul, Silas, and Timothy were the men who first brought the gospel to the city of Thessalonica.
 2. See some physical attributes of the make-up of the city of Thessalonica.
 3. Take note of the fact that Paul's practice was to first preach in the Jewish Synagogues when he entered a city.
 4. Notice the response to gospel preaching in Thessalonica was both positive and negative – converts from Jews and Gentiles and opposition from the Jews.
 5. Learn six statements which express Paul's purpose in writing this letter to the church at Thessalonica.
-

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHURCH IN THESSALONICA (Acts 17:1–15)

A. The Evangelistic Team – Paul, Silas, and Timothy

1. The contention between Paul & Barnabas – Paul's choosing of Silas (Acts 15:36–41).
 - a. Paul and Barnabas on first missionary tour (Acts 13 – 14).
 - b. Missionary group divides.
 - 1) Paul and Silas.
 - 2) Barnabas and John Mark to Cyprus.
2. Timothy joins Paul and Silas at Lystra (Acts 16:1–4).
 - a. Commended by the brethren at Lystra.

- b. Jewish mother and a Greek father.
- c. Circumcised before going with Paul and Silas.
- 3. Luke was with them temporarily (Acts 16:9ff). “We” and “us”. Note verse 40 – “Then they left.”

B. The Evangelistic Method – Preaching In The Synagogue In Thessalonica

1. The background of the city of Thessalonica.
 - a. The largest and most important city in Macedonia, the capital of the province.
 - b. It had a fine harbor and was the center of trade for the area.
 - c. The famous Via Ignatia, the Roman highway from west to east, passed through Thessalonica.
 - d. It was built in 315 B.C. by Cassander, who named the city Thessalonica after his wife, who was half-sister to Alexander the Great. Thessalonica apparently grew to include the town of Thermae, a settlement near the hot springs there.
 - e. Thessalonica sided with Octavian and Anthony in the Roman Civil War (42 B.C.) and was rewarded by being given the status of a “free city” by the victors. Its rulers were called “politarchs.” (See Acts 17:6, 8)
 - f. Under its modern name, Salonika, it has remained a thriving city in modern Greece with a population of about one-half million.
2. The practice of preaching in the synagogue. (A synagogue was a Jewish meeting place)
 - a. At Pisidian Antioch. Acts 13:14–15 – *“From Perga they went on to Pisidian Antioch. On the Sabbath they entered the synagogue and sat down. After the reading from the Law and the Prophets, the synagogue rulers sent word to them, saying, ‘Brothers, if you have a message of encouragement for the people, please speak.’”*
 - b. At Berea. Acts 17:10–11 – *“As soon as it was night, the brothers sent Paul and Silas away to Berea. On arriving there, they went to the Jewish synagogue. Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.”*
 - c. At Corinth. Acts 18:4 – *“Every Sabbath he reasoned in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks.”*
 - d. At Ephesus. Acts 18:19 – *“They arrived at Ephesus, where Paul left Priscilla and Aquila. He himself went into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews.”*
3. According to God’s plan the Jew was to hear the gospel first. Romans 1:16 – *“I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.”* Acts 13:46 – *“Then Paul and Barnabas answered them boldly: ‘We had to speak the word of God to you first. Since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles.’”*
4. The content of their preaching – the death and resurrection of Christ from Old Testament Scriptures. Acts 17:3 *“explaining and proving that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead. ‘This Jesus I am proclaiming*

to you is the Christ,' he said."

- a. This is what Jesus had taught when He was in his personal ministry.
 - 1) Jesus was the subject of Moses' prophecy. John 5:45–47 – *"But do not think I will accuse you before the Father. Your accuser is Moses, on whom your hopes are set. If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me. But since you do not believe what he wrote, how are you going to believe what I say?"*
 - 2) Jesus was the fulfillment of prophecy. Luke 24:25–27 – *"He said to them, 'How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?' And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself."*
- b. This was also the apostolic pattern of preaching:
 - 1) The Apostle Paul. Acts 26:22–23 – *"But I have had God's help to this very day, and so I stand here and testify to small and great alike. I am saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen—that the Christ would suffer and, as the first to rise from the dead, would proclaim light to his own people and to the Gentiles."* (See also 1 Corinthians 15:3,4).
 - 2) The Apostle Peter. I Peter 1:10–11 – *"Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow."*

C. The Evangelistic Results Of Preaching In Thessalonica

1. Positive: converts from Jews and Gentiles (Acts 17:4) *"Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and not a few prominent women."* I Thessalonians 1:9 – *"for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God."*
2. Negative: opposition from the Jews (cf. Acts 17:5–9). They formed a mob, started a riot and caused Paul to have to leave town prematurely. They also followed him to Berea where they agitated the crowd and stirred up more opposition (cf. Acts 17:13).
3. These actions and similar actions in others places called forth perhaps his strongest indictment against the Jews: *"For you, brothers, became imitators of God's churches in Judea, which are in Christ Jesus: You suffered from your own countrymen the same things those churches suffered from the Jews, who killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets and also drove us out. They displease God and are hostile to all men in their effort to keep us from speaking to the Gentiles so that they may be saved. In this way they always heap up their sins to the limit. The wrath of God has come upon them at last"* (I Thessalonians 2:14–16).

D. The Evangelists' Departure from Thessalonica (cf. Acts 17:9–10)

OCCASION AND PURPOSE OF I THESSALONIANS

A. The Occasion Of The Letter

1. Opposition had caused Paul and Silas to leave Thessalonica (cf. Acts 17:5–10).
2. Paul and his companions had wanted often to return to Thessalonica, but Satan had stopped them (cf. 1 Thessalonians 2:17–18).
3. Paul had sent Timothy to strengthen and encourage them in their faith. Timothy had returned with an encouraging report but also with news of some apparent problems (cf. 1 Thessalonians 3:6–8).

B. Purposes Of The Letter

1. To express joy and thanksgiving because of their faithfulness to God (cf. 1 Thessalonians 1:2–10).
 - a. Seen in his constant remembrance of them in prayer. *“We always thank God for all of you, mentioning you in our prayers. We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ”* (1 Thessalonians 1:2–3).
 - b. Seen in his estimation of their faith. *“For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ when he comes? Is it not you? Indeed, you are our glory and joy”* (1 Thessalonians 2:19–20).
 - c. Seen in their perseverance. *“For now we really live, since you are standing firm in the Lord. How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy we have in the presence of our God because of you?”* (1 Thessalonians 3:8–9).

2. To present a defense of Paul and his fellow-workers’ ministry among them (cf. 2:1–12).

Despite the shameful treatment they received at Philippi, they were bold in God to preach in Thessalonica despite strong opposition. They were not religious charlatans with impure or deceitful motives in preaching the word. In fact, they behaved themselves in a worthy manner and had deeply loved and shared their lives with them. They had also worked hard with their hands and were not a burden to anyone. *“We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us.”* (1 Thessalonians 2:8).

3. To encourage their faith in the midst of trials.
 - a. By reminding them of their fellowship in suffering with Paul and with the Lord. *“You became imitators of us and of the Lord; in spite of severe suffering, you welcomed the message with the joy given by the Holy Spirit”* (1 Thessalonians 1:6).
 - b. By reminding them of their fellowship in suffering with the Judean churches. *“For you, brothers, became imitators of God’s churches in Judea, which are in Christ Jesus: You suffered from your own countrymen the same things those churches suffered from the Jews”* (1 Thessalonians 2:14).
 - c. By sending Timothy to strengthen and encourage their faith. *“We sent Timothy, who is our brother and God’s fellow-worker in spreading the*

gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you in your faith, so that no one would be unsettled by these trials. You know quite well that we were destined for them” (1 Thessalonians 3:2–3).

4. To warn against easy-going Pagan standards in sexual matters (cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:1–8). Christians who had recently been called out of paganism with its sexual immorality and sensuality were often tempted to return to that life style, but God has a different message for his holy people. *“It is God’s will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality” (1 Thessalonians 4:3). “For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life” (1 Thessalonians 4:7).*
5. To clarify matters concerning the second coming of Christ:
 - a. Regarding the saints who were asleep in Jesus (cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18). The saints who had died in Christ would not miss the blessings of God when the Lord returned. They would be raised first and along with the living saints meet the Lord in the air and forever be with Him.
 - b. Regarding the time of His coming (cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:1–11). They had been taught that the Lord would come as a thief in the night, so they would not know precise time and dates for that coming. But since they were sons of light, they would live as children of day and be prepared whenever He came. The day would not catch them unprepared as it would those in the pagan world.
6. To give some exhortations regarding their relationship with each other (cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:9–12; 5:12–22). This would include increasing love for each other, working with their hands and providing for their own needs, respect for their church leaders, living in peace and a life of joyful, prayerful trust in the living God.

AN OUTLINE OF I THESSALONIANS (From F. F. BRUCE)

- A. Salutation (1:1)
- B. Thanksgiving for their faith and steadfastness (1:2–10)
- C. Explanation of his own conduct (2:1–16)
- D. Narrative of events since he left Thessalonica (2:17 – 3:10)
- E. Prayer for an early reunion (3:11–13)
- F. Encouragement to holy living and brotherly love (4:1–12)
- G. Concerning the second advent (4:13 – 5:11)
- H. General exhortations (5:12–22)
- I. Prayer, final greeting and benediction (5:23–28)

**“Greetings, dear brothers
beloved in the Lord.”**

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON ONE:

1. Who brought the gospel to the city of Thessalonica resulting in the beginning of the church?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____

2. In what location did Paul preach the gospel first in Thessalonica?
Name four other cities where he practiced the same method.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
 - 5) _____

3. What were the results of preaching the gospel in Thessalonica?
Positive: _____
Negative: _____

4. Doyle Gilliam expresses six reasons Paul wrote this letter to the Thessalonians.
List these six reasons below.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
 - 5) _____
 - 6) _____

5. Write out the outline of 1 Thessalonians as given at the end of this lesson. Be sure to list the scriptures as well.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
 - 5) _____
 - 6) _____
 - 7) _____
 - 8) _____
 - 9) _____

LESSON TWO

JOY IN REMEMBERING

INTRODUCTION:

This is now our second lesson in our study of the letter of Paul to the Thessalonians. This study will involve the study of 1 Thessalonians 1:1–10. “Paul, Silas, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians.” Paul is joined by Silas and Timothy as he writes this epistle to the church of the Thessalonians to encourage them in the midst of fiery trials. And so we want to look at some of the things that are said there.

LESSON TEXT: 1 Thessalonians 1:1–10

LESSON AIM: To see Paul’s joy in remembering the church as he prays first for the Christians themselves and then their work in the Lord.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. See in the salutation Paul, Timothy, and Silas’ prayer that the church might be granted grace and peace in God and in Christ.
 2. Learn that Paul prays for them personally and also their work in Thessalonica.
 3. Examine the response of the Thessalonians to the Gospel which was preached to them by Paul.
 4. Finally you will see that the Thessalonian church became an example (a model) to all believers in Macedonia and Achaia in their missionary zeal and in their complete conversion.
-

THE SALUTATION – CORRESPONDENTS AND RECEIVERS

A. The Correspondents – Paul, Silas and Timothy (1:1)

1. Paul who brought the gospel to Thessalonica.
 - a. The former persecuting Pharisee. Galatians 1:13 – “*For you have heard of my previous way of life in Judaism, how intensely I persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it.*”
 - b. The confronted Pharisee. The encounter on the road to Damascus, forgiveness in Damascus (cf. Acts 9, 22, 26).
 - c. The commissioned Christian. To open the eyes of Jews and Gentiles with the gospel of salvation (Acts 26:16–18). “*Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen of me and what I will show you. I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgive-*

ness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.’” (See also Acts 13:46–47; Romans 1:16)

- d. The obedient preacher. Obedient to his commission (Acts 26:19–20). *“So then, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven. First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and to the Gentiles also, I preached that they should repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds.”* See also 1 Corinthians 9:16.
2. Silas, Paul’s co-worker and co-sufferer.
 - a. A leader in the Jerusalem church (cf. Acts 15:22).
 - b. He was also a prophet (cf. Acts 15:32).
 - c. He was chosen by Paul to accompany him on his second missionary tour (cf. Acts 15:40).
 - d. He was a Roman citizen (cf. Acts 16:37).
 - e. He was regarded by Peter as “a faithful brother” (cf. 1 Peter 5:12).
3. Timothy, their young apprentice.
 - a. He had a Jewish mother who was a Christian and a Greek father (cf. Acts 16:1).
 - b. He had sincere faith in imitation of his grandmother, Lois, and his mother, Eunice: *“I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also”* (2 Timothy 1:5).
 - c. He knew the Holy Scriptures from his infancy (2 Timothy 3:15).
 - d. He was commended by brothers at Lystra and Iconium (Acts 16:2).
 - e. He was often sent by Paul to encourage and strengthen churches. *“For this reason I am sending to you Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord. He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church”* (1 Corinthians 4:17).
 - f. Timothy is often associated with Paul in the salutations of his letters. (See 2 Corinthians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, Philemon).

B. The Recipients – The Church

1. The physical location of the recipients. “The church of the Thessalonians”. This is rather an unusual kind of expression in the New Testament. Similar expression found in the New Testament.
 - a. *“... the churches of Galatia”* (Galatians 1:2).
 - b. *“... the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven”* (Hebrews 12:23).
2. The spiritual location of the recipients. *“Who are in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”* *“God’s churches in Judea, which are in Christ Jesus”* (1 Thessalonians 2:14).
 - a. They are in both the Father and in Christ. This suggests that we live our lives in the Lord.
 - b. Divine blessings proceed from the Father and the Lord Jesus (1 Thessalonians 3:11). *“Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus clear the way for us to come to you.”* (see also. 2 Thessalonians 2:16–17)

C. The Greeting: “Grace And Peace To You”

1. Out of grace comes gratitude.
“I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me faithful, appointing me to his service. Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus” (1 Timothy 1:12–14).
2. Out of grace and gratitude comes peace.
 There is the “peace of God.” Also there is the “peace with God” which takes place when one is justified (Romans 5:1). The “peace of God” comes as a result of a life of prayerful trust. *“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus”* (Philippians 4:6–7).
3. The peace of God is the result of a prayerful trust and living faith in God on a daily basis.

NOTE: Grace and peace are needed as encouragement in the midst of fiery trials which the Thessalonian Christians were experiencing.

THANKSGIVING FOR THEIR FAITH, HOPE, & LOVE (1:2–10)

A. Prayers Of Thanksgiving (1:2–4)

1. Prayer for them personally. “We always thank God for all of you” –
“And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe” (1 Thessalonians 2:13).
“How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy we have in the presence of our God because of you?” (1 Thessalonians 3:9).
“We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all the saints” (Colossians 1:3–4).
“I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now” (Philippians 1:3–5).
2. Prayer for their work. Remembering before our God and Father:
 - a. Their working faith. *“Your work produced by faith”* (1 Thessalonians 1:3).
 - 1) Hebrews 11 demonstrates that faith is active, faith accomplishes great things because it moves people to act, to obey God in every circumstance of life.
 - 2) James 2:14–26 teaches us that “. . . faith without deeds is useless” and is as dead as a body without a spirit. Faith has always been demonstrated by actions!
 - 3) Galatians 5:6 – *“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith*

expressing itself through love.”

- b. Their laboring love. *“...your labor prompted by love...”* – Love is what prompts sacrificial giving for others.
Romans 5:8 – *“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”*
1 John 3:16–18 – *“This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.”*
- c. Their persevering hope. *“. . .your endurance inspired by hope . . .”* – *“Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal”* (2 Corinthians 4:16–18).
“We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain” (Hebrews 6:19).

NOTE: The triad of faith, hope and love: *“But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet”* (1 Thessalonians 5:8).

“through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us” (Romans 5:2–5). *“because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all the saints – the faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven and that you have already heard about in the word of truth, the gospel”* (Colossians 1:4–5) *“and now these three remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love”* (1 Corinthians 13:13).

B. The Response of the Thessalonians to the Gospel (1:4–10)

1. Their election (vs. 4–6). The purpose of thanking God because he knew they were God’s elect – “to give them steadfastness.”
 - a. The Bible teaches that God chooses or elects nations and individuals:
 - 1) Nations – Israel: chosen to proclaim God’s praise.
“You only have I chosen of all the families of the earth” (Amos 3:2).
“The people I formed for myself that they may proclaim my praise” (Isaiah 43:21).
 - 2) Individuals: Abraham, Moses, Aaron and others.
 - 3) Christians are also chosen people:

“For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight” (Ephesians 1:4). (See also Romans 11:5; 1 Peter 2:9).

- b. The Bible also teaches that man is responsible and must respond to God’s choosing:
 - 1) *“You only have I chosen of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your sins”* (Amos 3:2).
 - 2) *“But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light”* (1 Peter 2:9). (See Romans 11:19–22; 2 Peter 1:10; Colossians 1:22–23).
2. Proof of their choosing. How Paul knew they were chosen:
 - a. Because of the way the gospel came to them.
 - 1) With words. They had received Paul’s message as the word of God, and this word had brought them salvation. *“For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God”* (1 Peter 1:23).
 - 2) With power. The Holy Spirit was the source of the power. The gospel is not simply words but is the very power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16).
 - 3) With the Holy Spirit.
 - *“by the power of signs and miracles, through the power of the Spirit. So from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ”* (Romans 15:19).
 - *“The things that mark an apostle—signs, wonders and miracles—were done among you with great perseverance”* (2 Corinthians 12:12).
 - *“how shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will”* (Hebrews 2:3–4).
 - 4) With deep conviction. This was demonstrated in the lives of those who brought the message to them. *“It is written: ‘I believed; therefore I have spoken.’ With that same spirit of faith we also believe and therefore speak”* (2 Corinthians 4:13).
 - b. How the Gospel was received:
 - 1) They imitated the preachers and the Lord (v. 6). *“You became imitators of us and of the Lord.”* Paul and his fellow workers had set an example for them. They had preached despite severe opposition and had not capitulated to the pressure of those persecuting them.
 - 2) *“... In spite of severe suffering they welcomed the message with the joy given by the Holy Spirit”* (v. 6). Note that joy is frequently related to the Holy Spirit:
 - *“For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy*

- *Spirit*” (Romans 14:17).
 - “*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit*” (Romans 15:13).
 - “*And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit*” (Acts 13:52).
 - “*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness*” (Galatians 5:22).
- 3. The example of the Thessalonians (1:7–10). They were a model to all believers in Macedonia and Achaia (the only church in the New Testament mentioned as a “model to the others). But see also: 2 Corinthians 8:1–5; Romans 1:8.
 - a. Two ways in which the Thessalonian Christians became examples for others to follow.
 - 1) By their missionary zeal (v. 8). “. . . *for from you sounded out the word.*”
 - 2) In complete conversion (vs. 9–10). “. . . *How you turned to God from idols.*” (See also Acts 14:15; Acts 17:29–30).
 - b. Three things that the true conversion of the Thessalonians involved (vs. 9–10).
 - 1) They stopped sinning (v. 9) – “they turned from idols.”
 - 2) They started serving (v. 9) – “to serve the living God.”
 - 3) They were waiting for Christ’s return (v. 10).
- 4. Escaping the wrath of God. “. . . *Who rescues us from the coming wrath.*” The phrase “the wrath to come” (that is coming) means that wrath is in the process of coming (Romans 2:5; 2 Peter 2:1–3; 2 Thessalonians 1:8–9; Ephesians 5:6; 1 Thessalonians 5:9).

NOTE: Each chapter in 1 Thessalonians will conclude with a reference to the second coming of Christ.

**MEMORY OF THE
BRETHREN IS
A BLESSING
FROM GOD!**

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON TWO:

1. List four descriptions which form a picture of Paul the writer of 1 Thessalonians.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____

2. Give five things which describes Silas, Paul's co-worker and co-sufferer.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
 - 5) _____

3. List six phrases which supply us with a description of Timothy, the young apprentice of Paul and Silas.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
 - 5) _____
 - 6) _____

4. What three spiritual characteristics did Paul especially mention in his prayer of thanksgiving to God?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____

5. Give two things which furnished proof to Paul that the Thessalonians were chosen by God.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____

7. Give three things that the true conversion of the Thessalonians involved in verses 9 & 10.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____

LESSON THREE

PAUL'S MINISTRY IN THESSALONICA

INTRODUCTION:

This section of 1 Thessalonians has to do with the ministry of Paul and his co-workers in Thessalonica. They have been falsely accused of being in the general class of religious charlatans who roamed throughout the Mediterranean area hawking their religious wares. Paul affirms their integrity and the purity of their motives in preaching to the Thessalonians. This lesson will deal with four points regarding Paul's ministry in Thessalonica:

1. Paul's visit – 2:1–4.
 2. Paul's behavior – 2:5–8.
 3. Paul's example – 2:9–12.
 4. Acceptance of the message – 2:13–16.
-

LESSON TEXT: 1 Thessalonians 2:1–16

LESSON AIM: We will examine the characteristics of the ministry of Paul and his co-workers when they labored in Thessalonica.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Investigate Paul's message and see that it was genuine and boldly proclaimed.
 2. Listen carefully as Paul offers his defense of his motive in preaching in Thessalonica.
 3. View Paul's manner of life while he preached the saving gospel and worked in their midst.
 4. See the beauty of the gospel at work in the lives of the Thessalonians as they both received the message and became examples for other churches in their suffering for the Christ they had come to love.
-

PAUL'S DEFENSE OF HIS MESSAGE (2:1–4)

Paul, Silas and Timothy's visit to Thessalonica:

A. Paul's Visit (Preaching) In Thessalonica (v. 1)

1. Was Not A Failure – it was fruitful (v. 1; 1:7–9).
2. It was preached with boldness.
3. It was spoken in much contention (Greek AGONI – agony).

B. Previous Suffering And Insults At Philippi (v. 2)

(See also Acts 16:16ff; Philippians 1:30).

C. Yet They Dared To Preach At Thessalonica (v. 2)

1. Despite strong opposition (Acts 17:5–9; Acts 4:19–20; 5:28–29).
2. “With the help of our God” (v. 2; 2 Cor. 4:7; 12:9–10).

D. Paul’s Message Was Genuine (vs. 3–4)

1. The preachers’ honesty. “[*Our appeal*] does not spring from error . . .” (v. 3).
 - a. Not false teaching, “*cleverly invented stories*” (2 Peter 1:16; see also 2 Timothy 3:13).
 - b. As Jonah was commanded they preached the message God gave them (cf. Jonah 3:1–2).
 - c. Hence, it was “his gospel” (v. 2), “the gospel of God” (v. 9), not a humanly devised message (See v. 13; Galatians 1:8–9).
2. The preachers’ purity. Nor “*impure motives*” (v. 3). The word used here is connected with moral or sexual impurity. (See Romans 1:24; Galatians 5:19; 2 Corinthians 12:21; Ephesians 4:19). Paul affirmed that there was no connection with ritual prostitution nor anything else connected with moral impurity or depravity.
3. The preachers’ integrity. “. . . *nor are we trying to trick you*” (v. 3). Improper means were not used as a bait or a trap.
2 Corinthians 4:2 – “*Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.*”
4. The preachers’ honor. “*We are not trying to please men . . .*” (v. 4).
Galatians 1:10 – “*Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ.*”
 - a. Yet in another sense Paul did try to please men:
1 Corinthians 9:19–22 – “*Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God’s law but am under Christ’s law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some.*”
1 Corinthians 10:31–11:1 – “*So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God—even as I try to please everybody in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved. Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.*”
 - b. In matters of personal rights and privileges and matters of judgment – Paul was most forbearing and flexible. In matters of truth and error, right and wrong Paul was unbending and uncompromising; he was not seeking to please men but God!

PAUL'S DEFENSE OF HIS MOTIVES (2:4–6)

- A. Men Approved By God.** *“On the contrary, we speak as men approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel”* (v. 4). (See 1 Timothy 1:12–15; Galatians 1:23–24).
Galatians 2:7 – *“On the contrary, they saw that I had been entrusted with the task of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, just as Peter had been to the Jews.”*
- B. Men Tested By God.** We are trying to please God who tests our hearts (v. 4).
1. There is no greater motivation than that of trying to please God. (See John 5:30; 1 Thessalonians 4:1).
 2. It is with the recognition that He tests our hearts:
Romans 2:16 – *“This will take place on the day when God will judge men’s secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares.”*
- C. Men Motivated By God (vs. 4–6).** Motives from which Paul was free:
1. Pleasing men (v. 4; Galatians 1:10; Note John 12:42–43 as an example of men pleasers).
 2. Flattery (v. 5).
 3. Covetousness (v. 5; see also 2 Peter 2:1–3; Titus 1:11).
 4. Desire for glory of men (v. 6).

PAUL'S DEFENSE OF HIS METHOD (2:5–8)

Four negative statements describing his preaching:

- A. Their Behavior Negatively Stated**
1. Flattery not involved in his preaching. *“You know we never used flattery”* (v. 5).
 - a. Flatter: means “to praise too much or beyond the truth; praise insincerely.” See Romans 16:18.
 - b. We think of Absalom, the son of David, who used flattery and so *“stole the hearts of the men of Israel”* (2 Samuel 15:1–6).
 - c. Paul said, you know we never used such methods while among you.
 2. Greed/covetousness not involved in his preaching. *“... nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed”* (v. 5).
 - a. Religious teachers may be motivated by greed as we have often seen in our day.
2 Peter 2:3 – *“In their greed these teachers will exploit you with stories they have made up. Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping.”*
2 Peter 2:15 – *“They have left the straight way and wandered off to follow the way of Balaam son of Beor, who loved the wages of wickedness.”*
 - b. Such an attitude characterizes one who loves the world and the things of the world: *“For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world”* (1 John 2:16).
 - c. Covetousness is idolatry (cf. Colossians 3:5; Ephesians 5:5).

- d. Paul denies that he was motivated by such greed in his preaching.
Acts 20:33–34 – *“I have not coveted anyone’s silver or gold or clothing. You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions.”*
- e. Paul appeals to God as his witness (v. 5) as he often does: Romans 1:9 – *“God, whom I serve with my whole heart in preaching the gospel of his Son, is my witness how constantly I remember you.”*
2 Corinthians 1:23 – *“I call God as my witness that it was in order to spare you that I did not return to Corinth”*
Philippians 1:8 – *“God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.”*
- f. **Note:**
 - 1) For testimony to his conduct he appeals to their knowledge – “you know” (cf. Acts 2:22; 2 Thessalonians 3:2).
 - 2) For testimony to his motives he appeals to God.
- 3. Self-glory is not involved in his preaching. *“We were not looking for praise from men, not from you or anyone else.”* (v. 6).
 - a. The Jews of Jesus’ time often remained in unbelief and disobedience because they sought men’s praise not God’s.
John 5:44 – *“How can you believe if you accept praise from one another, yet make no effort to obtain the praise that comes from the only [One] God?”*
 - b. Some who believed on Him refused to confess Him *“for they loved praise from men more than praise from God”* (John 12:43).
 - c. Paul did not seek men’s praise but God’s for he knew that this was the only praise that really mattered.
- 4. Financial gain is not involved in his preaching. They refused to make themselves a burden to them (v. 7; 1 Corinthians 9:14–15; 2 Corinthians 11:9).

B. Their Behavior Positively Stated

- 1. *“... we were **gentle** among you, like a mother caring for her little children”* (v.7)
 - a. Moses used the figure of a nursing mother as he voices his complaint to God (cf. Numbers 11:12).
 - b. But Paul did not look upon the Thessalonians as a painful burden. They were his joy and crown, and he had treated them with the gentleness and care of a nursing mother.
- 2. *“We loved you so much that we were delighted to **share** with you . . .”* (1 Thessalonians 2:8). That which Paul shared:
 - a. The gospel of God. 1 Thessalonians 2:2 “his gospel” (1:5) “our gospel” (because it had permeated their hearts and lives).
 - b. Their own lives. *“... our lives as well”* (v. 8).
2 Corinthians 12:15 – *“So I will very gladly spend for you everything I have and expend myself as well. If I love you more, will you love me less?”*
Matthew 20:28 – *“just as the Son of Man did not come to be served,*

but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

I John 3:16 – *“This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.”*

- c. The Macedonians (Including the Thessalonians) learned this principle of self-giving as well.

2 Corinthians 8:5 – *“And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God’s will.”*

PAUL’S DEFENSE OF HIS EXAMPLE IN THESSALONICA (2:9–12)

A. They Were Involved in Toil and Hardship (v. 9)

1. “We worked night and day.”
 - a. Apparently in the work of tent-making (cf. Acts 18:3). (2 Thessalonians 3:8); *“nor did we eat anyone’s food without paying for it. On the contrary, we worked night and day, laboring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to any of you.”*
 - b. *“While we preached the gospel of God to you.”* See also Philippians 4:16.

B. Their Righteous Lives (vs. 10–12)

1. They were holy, righteous, and blameless among them (v. 10).
2 Corinthians 1:12 – *“Now this is our boast: Our conscience testifies that we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially in our relations with you, in the holiness and sincerity that are from God.”*
2. They dealt with them as a father deals with his own children (v. 11).
 - a. Though Paul did not wear a religious title “father” (Matthew 23:9), he looked upon those who he taught as his spiritual children (1 Corinthians 4:14–15; Philemon 10).
 - b. “As a father has compassion on his children” (Psalm 103:13), Paul had compassion on his Thessalonian converts.
 - c. His work as a father involved “encouraging, comforting and urging them” *“... to live lives worthy of God”* (v. 12).
 - 1) Christians are made or counted worthy on the basis of Christ’s atoning sacrifice (Romans 3:24–26; 5:1).
 - 2) But then we have the responsibility to “live lives worthy of God.”
See:
Ephesians 4:1 – *“As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.”*
Colossians 1:10 – *“And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God.”*
 - d. It was to a life worthy of God “who calls you into his kingdom and glory.”
 - 1) The kingdom was a present reality and men were being called into it:
Colossians 1:13 – *“For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves,”*

Revelation 1:5–6 – “...and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.”

Hebrews 12:28 – “Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe.”

- 2) There is also a future aspect to the kingdom, and God continually calls us to that kingdom and glory.

2 Timothy 4:18 – “The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

THEIR ACCEPTANCE OF THE MESSAGE (2:13–16)

- A. They Received The Message (v. 13).** As the Word of God. Hence, it is “the gospel of God.” See Galatians 1:11–12; 1 Corinthians 14:37.

1. That word works in them that believe (Ephesians 3:20).
2. Such a reception by the Thessalonians was another cause of thanksgiving – “and we also thank God continually.” See also 1 Thessalonians 3:9.

- B. They Became Imitators Of God’s Churches In Judea (v. 14).** God’s churches in Judea; the Jerusalem church and others in Judea.

- C. The Jews’ Hardness And Opposition (vs. 15–16)**

1. They killed the Lord Jesus – See Acts 2:23, 36; 3:15; 7:52.
2. They killed the prophets:
Matthew 23:37 – “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing.” See also Acts 7:51–52.
3. They drove Paul and Barnabas out.” Acts 13:50 – “But the Jews incited the God-fearing women of high standing and the leading men of the city. They stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region.”

Also see Acts 17:5–9, 13, 14 for the same at Thessalonica and Berea.

4. They displease God and are hostile to all men.
 - a. Their efforts to forbid preaching to the Gentiles. See Jesus’ indictment: Matthew 23:13 – “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the kingdom of heaven in men’s faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to.” See Acts 22:21–22.
And remember what had happened in Thessalonica and Berea – Acts 17.
 - b. They would keep them from being saved – Cf. Romans 1:16.
5. “In this way they always heap up their sins to the limit” (v. 16).

Genesis 15:16 – *“In the fourth generation your descendants will come back here, for the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure.”*
 Matthew 23:32 – *“Fill up, then, the measure of the sin of your forefathers!”*

6. The wrath of God has come upon them at last.
 - a. The aorist tense emphasizes the certainty of the judgment and wrath.
 - b. This certainty of judgment on his people caused him great anxiety and pain (Romans 9:1–3).
 - c. Here he speaks like an Old Testament prophet, and his strong words leave no doubt as to the extent his nation had departed from God’s way.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON THREE:

1. Four things which describes Paul, Silas, and Timothy’s visit to Thessalonica in verses 3–4 are:
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
2. In his defense of his motives Paul says three things about himself and his co-workers. List these three things below.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
3. In vs. 5–8 Paul defends his method of preaching with four statements about his preaching. What are these four statements describing his preaching?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
4. In verses 13–16 Paul say the Thessalonians received the message in what way?

5. Paul states that the church in Thessalonica became imitators of God’s churches in what location?

6. In what did they imitate the other churches?

LESSON FOUR

PAUL'S CONCERN FOR THEIR STEADFASTNESS & GROWTH

INTRODUCTION:

Paul, Timothy and Silas had been forced to leave Thessalonica before they were ready to leave. Opposition from the Jews forced them out of town, leaving a young church with new converts out of Gentile paganism. They were surrounded by hostile Jews and their own countrymen who opposed and persecuted them severely. Were the Thessalonians mature and strong enough in faith to endure such trials and opposition? Would they capitulate to the pressure from the Jewish and pagan world? In this section of Scripture Paul discusses his great anxiety for the Thessalonian converts, of his sending Timothy to them and of Timothy's encouraging report.

LESSON TEXT: 1 Thessalonians 2:17 – 3:13

LESSON AIM: To learn of Paul's great concern for the Thessalonian converts and steps he took to strengthen and encourage them.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Learn of Paul's great and deep longing to return to Thessalonica hindered by Satan's efforts.
 2. See how Paul compensated for his inability to return unto them by sending his co-worker, Timothy.
 3. The second way he strengthened the Thessalonian church was by praying fervently for them.
-

PAUL'S CONCERN FOR THE THESSALONIANS

A. Paul's Return Trip Hindered By Satan (2:17–18)

"But, brothers, when we were torn away from you for a short time (in person, not in thought), out of our intense longing we made every effort to see you. For we wanted to come to you—certainly I, Paul, did, again and again—but Satan stopped us."

1. Paul's sudden departure. He had been "torn away" from them (v. 17). This reminds us of what happened in Thessalonica according to Acts 17:5ff. *'But the Jews were jealous; so they rounded up some bad characters from the marketplace, formed a mob and started a riot in the city. They rushed to Jason's house in search of Paul and Silas in order to bring them out to the crowd . . . Then they made Jason and the others post bond and let them go'* (v. 9).

- a. Paul and his companions had been “like a mother caring for her little children” (v. 7).
- b. They had dealt with them “as a father” deals with his own children” (v. 11).
- c. Now they had been “torn away” (literally “being orphaned”), like orphaned children.
- d. Yet the Thessalonians were ever on their minds – “though never for a moment separated in heart” (Phillips).
2. Paul’s intense longing. To return to see the Thessalonian Christians.
3. Satan’s devious interference. “But Satan stopped us.”
 - a. The word “Satan” means adversary. It is used three times in the Septuagint (Greek translation of Old Testament) and refers to adversaries God raised up against Solomon because of his apostasy.
 - b. In the New Testament Satan is also called:
 - 1) The devil – 1 Peter 5:8.
 - 2) The evil one – Matthew 13:38.
 - 3) The ruler of the kingdom of the air – Ephesians 2:2.
 - 4) The prince of this world – John 14:30.
 - 5) The serpent – 2 Corinthians 11:3.
 - 6) The god of this age – 2 Corinthians 4:4.
 - 7) The tempter – 1 Thessalonians 3:5.
 - 8) The dragon – Revelation 12:9.
 - c. We are not told exactly how Satan hindered Paul’s return to Thessalonica.
 - 1) Some have suggested that it was the “bond” posted by Jason and others which meant Paul could not return during a certain time, but the Thessalonians would have been aware of this.
 - 2) Whatever it was, Paul attributed it to the power of Satan.

B. Paul’s Joy Expressed (2:19–20)

1. The possibility of glorying in the presence of the Lord because of faithful converts:
 Philippians 2:16 – “*as you hold out the word of life—in order that I may boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor for nothing.*” 2 Corinthians 1:14 – “*as you have understood us in part, you will come to understand fully that you can boast of us just as we will boast of you in the day of the Lord Jesus.*”
2. Faithful converts to Jesus are the teacher’s greatest joy:
 Philippians 4:1 – “*Therefore, my brothers, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, that is how you should stand firm in the Lord, dear friends!*”
 3 John 4 – “*I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.*”

C. Paul’s Emissary Sent

1. Paul’s action – Timothy sent back to Thessalonica (v. 2).
 - a. His qualifications:
 - 1) Our brother.
 - 2) God’s fellow worker.

1 Corinthians 3:9 – *“For we are God’s fellow workers.”*

Romans 16:21 – *“Timothy, my fellow worker . . .”*

Philippians 2:22 – *“But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel.”*

b. His mission:

1) *“. . . to strengthen and encourage you in your faith”* (1 Thessalonians 3:2).

2) *“. . . that no one would be unsettled by these trials . . .”* (v. 3).

2. Paul’s warning – Trials to be endured by the Thessalonians:

a. The common lot of Christians. *“we were destined for them”* (v. 3b).

John 15:18–20 – *“If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. Remember the words I spoke to you: ‘No servant is greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also.”*

John 16:33 – *“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”*

2 Timothy 3:12 – *“In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,”*

b. They were warned in advance, *“. . . when we were with you, we kept telling you that we would be persecuted”* (v. 4).

Acts 14:22 – *“strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. ‘We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God,’ they said.”*

John 16:1–2 – *“All this I have told you so that you will not go astray. They will put you out of the synagogue; in fact, a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering a service to God.”*

3. Paul’s heart – deep concern about their faith. *“For this reason, when I could stand it no longer, I sent to find out about your faith . . .”* (v. 5).

4. Paul’s concern for the success of his preaching. *“Our efforts might have been useless”* (v. 5). Failure of their faith during those trials would mean that Paul’s efforts in Thessalonica would have been in vain.

Philippians 2:16 – *“as you hold out the word of life—in order that I may boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labour for nothing.”*

Galatians 2:2 – *“I went in response to a revelation and set before them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles. But I did this privately to those who seemed to be leaders, for fear that I was running or had run my race in vain.”*

TIMOTHY’S ENCOURAGING REPORT (3:6–10)

A. The Good News From Thessalonica (vs. 6–7)

Proverbs 25:25 – *“Like cold water to a weary soul is good news from a distant land.”*

1. Assurance about their faith and love (v. 6) *“But Timothy has just now come*

to us from you and has brought good news about your faith and love . . . (v. 8) – For now we really live, since you are standing firm in the Lord.”

2. Apprized of their pleasant memories (v. 6). “. . . you always have pleasant memories of us and that you long to see us, just as we also long to see you.”
3. Admonition to stand firm (v. 8). 1 Corinthians 16:13 – “Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be men of courage; be strong.”
Galatians 5:1 – “It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.”
Philippians 1:27 – “Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel.”

B. The Good News Brings Paul Satisfaction (vs. 8–10)

1. The good news brought revival for Paul. “. . . now we really live . . .” (v. 8). Paul’s life and happiness were wrapped up in his converts’ faithfulness.
2 Corinthians 11:28–29 – “Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches. Who is weak, and I do not feel weak? Who is led into sin, and I do not inwardly burn?”
2. The good news caused thankfulness in Paul. “How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy we have in the presence of our God because of you?” (v. 9).
 - a. The Thessalonians had turned from idols to serve the living God (cf. 1 Thessalonians 1:9).
 - b. Despite severe trials and persecution, they had persevered and grown in faith and love.
 - c. They were ringing out the message in Macedonia and Achaia and in every place.
 - d. They were living in order to please God (cf. 4:1).
 - e. They were manifesting love “to all the brothers throughout Macedonia” (cf. 4:10).
 - f. They were encouraging and building each other up (cf. 5:11).
 - g. No wonder Paul felt incapable of thanking God enough for them!! They were a dream congregation for any preacher!
3. The good news caused constant prayer by Paul (v. 10). “Night and day we pray most earnestly.” Two things Paul prayed for:
 - a. To see them again. “. . . that we may see you again.”
 - b. To build up their faith. “. . . and supply what is lacking in your faith.”
Use of “your faith” in this chapter:
vs. 2 “. . . to encourage you in your faith . . .”
vs. 5 “. . . I sent Timothy to find out about your faith . . .”
vs. 6 “. . . good news about your faith and love.”
vs. 7 “. . . encouraged about you because of your faith.”
If faith is there, other things will fall into place.
 - c. Their faith was not perfect.
 - d. Examples of what was lacking may be found in some of the exhortations in chapters 4 and 5.
 - 1) Temptation to revert to pagan sexual immorality (cf. 4:3–8).
 - 2) Problem of not minding their own business and providing for their

needs (cf. 4:11–12).

- 3) Anxiety over the fate of loved one who had died in the Lord (cf. 4:13–18).
- 4) Lack of proper regard for their leaders (cf. 5:12–13).

PAUL'S PRAYER FOR THE THESSALONIAN CHRISTIANS (3:11–13)

A. Paul's Prayer Addressed To Both The Father And Jesus. *"Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus . . ."*

1. It is scriptural to address prayer to both God and Jesus Christ. 2 Thessalonians 2:16–17 – *"May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word."*
2. The fact that appeals and prayer petitions are addressed by Paul to Jesus Christ as well as to the Father is a strong affirmation of the deity of Christ.

B. Paul's Prayer Requests Involved Three Things

1. For God's providential guidance. To *" . . . clear the way for us to come to you"* (v. 11).
 - a. According to our records Paul did not return to Thessalonica immediately or soon after writing this letter.
 - b. However, on his third journey he did go through Macedonia where *"he traveled through that area, speaking many words of encouragement to the people"* (Acts 20:1–3).
2. For God to increase their love. *" . . . make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else"* (v. 12).
 - a. They were already loving *"all the brothers throughout Macedonia"* – 4:10. Yet they needed to increase and overflow with such love.
 - b. This prayer was answered. *"We ought always to thank God for you, brothers, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love every one of you has for each other is increasing"* (2 Thessalonians 1:3).
 - c. This is one of the marks of discipleship among God's people. John 13:34–35 – *"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."*
 1 Peter 1:22 – *"Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart."*
3. For God to empower them to be holy. *"May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy . . ."* (vs.13).
 - a. A prayer for inner strength.
 - 1) For the Ephesian church. *"I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being"* (Ephesians 3:16).
 - 2) For the Colossian church. *" . . . we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will"*

through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. ...that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God” (Colossians 1:9–10).

- b. A model prayer for all Christians. These are the kind of prayers we need to be praying for our brothers and sisters.
- c. The day and manner of the Lord’s coming. “. . . *when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones*” (v. 13).
 - 1) The Lord is often pictured in Scripture as coming with his angels (2 Thessalonians 1:7; Matthew 13:41; 25:31).
 - 2) Also God’s people, the saints, are to return with Him.
1 Thessalonians 4:14 – “*We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.*”

CONCLUSION:

- A. Each chapter in 1 Thessalonians closes with a reference to the second coming of Christ**
- B. This chapter stresses the need for a life that is blameless and holy in His presence when Jesus comes.** This reminds us of 1 John 3:2–3 – “*Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.*”

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON FOUR:

1. Paul had a deep longing to return to see the Thessalonian Christians. What kept him from going to them?

2. It is said in 1 Thessalonians 2:7, 11 that Paul and his companions had dealt with them as:
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
3. Concerning Paul's emissary to the Thessalonians?
His name was: _____
His qualifications were: 1) _____
2) _____
His mission was: _____
4. What three statements reflect the good news Paul's emissary brought back from the church in Thessalonica?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
5. Three things the good report caused in Paul. List these below.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
6. Paul prayed for what three things in verses 11–13?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
7. Each chapter in 1 Thessalonians closes with a reference to what great event?

LESSON FIVE

LIVING TO PLEASE GOD

INTRODUCTION:



ne of the dangers facing first century Christians was that of the pagan life style of sexual immorality. Blatant immorality was widely practiced in the Greek world without shame or embarrassment. Demosthenes wrote: “We keep prostitutes for pleasure; we keep mistresses for the day to day needs of the body; we keep wives for the begetting of children and for the faithful guardianship of our homes.” There was no shame in having extra-marital relationships.

But the holy God would not tolerate such a life style for His people who had been called out of the world. God had called His people to be holy and to live lives of absolute faithfulness in marriage relationships and to sexual purity before marriage. But it was not easy to follow this new ethic of moral purity when surrounded by a world that had abandoned itself to gross immorality. Christians were always being tempted to return to the easy-going pagan standards from which they had recently been delivered.

The fact that epistle after epistle in the New Testament warns about the sins of sexual immorality demonstrates that the problem was real and pressing throughout the Roman Empire. Note that such warnings appear in most of the New Testament letters:

Romans 13:13 – *“Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy.”*

1 Corinthians 6:18 – *“Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body.”*

2 Corinthians 12:21 – *“I am afraid that when I come again my God will humble me before you, and I will be grieved over many who have sinned earlier and have not repented of the impurity, sexual sin and debauchery in which they have indulged.”*

Galatians 5:19–21 – *“The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.”*

Ephesians 5:5 – *“For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a man is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.”*

Philippians 3:18–19 – *“For, as I have often told you before and now say again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things.”*

Colossians 3:5 – *“Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.”*

Hebrews 13:4 – *“Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.”*

Our society has become much like that decadent society of the first century, and sexual immorality is widely tolerated and practiced. Sadly, this is even true among God’s people, and we need to be reminded often what this passage emphatically points out: “It is God’s will that you should be holy; that you should avoid sexual immorality... For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life!

LESSON TEXT: 1 Thessalonians 4:1–12

LESSON AIM: Understand God’s will concerning immorality and know the motivation Paul gives to do that will.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Learn that God gives some definite instructions as to the kind of life-style His followers are to live.
 2. Understand that overcoming immorality involves three things: purity toward oneself, toward God, and toward brothers.
 3. See that the motivation to do God’s will is to realize that God is the avenger, immorality is inconsistent with our call and the presence of the Holy Spirit in the Christian’s body and life.
 4. See Paul’s exhortation to labor honestly so they would have a good report from outsiders and provide for themselves.
-

A LIFE PLEASING TO GOD (4:1–2)

A. Instructions Given By Paul (v. 1). *“Finally, brothers, we instructed you how to live in order to please God . . .”*

1. Man cannot simply do his own thing, do what is right in his own eyes.
2. He needs instructions to know how to please God. Paul knew that and gave them such instructions during his short stay in Thessalonica.

B. Instructions By The Authority Of The Lord Jesus

1. The basis of Paul’s instructions – who He is and what He taught. *“If anybody thinks he is a prophet or spiritually gifted, let him acknowledge that what I am writing to you is the Lord’s command”* (1 Corinthians 14:37).
2. The source of Paul’s instruction – *“ . . . he who rejects this instruction does not reject man but God . . . (v. 8).*
3. The fruit of following Paul’s instructions – a life style that pleased God (v. 1).
 - a. They were walking in the light (1 John 1:7).

- b. Living according to the truth (3 John 4).
- 4. They were urged to “. . . *do this more and more*” (v. 1).
 - a. God’s people cannot be satisfied to remain in the same spiritual state year after year. Growth is always necessary.
 - b. Note:
 - 1) Their love for all the brothers in Macedonia (v. 10). “. . . *Yet we urge you, brothers, to do so more and more.*”
 - 2) They were urged to continue to encourage and build each other up, “. . . *just as in fact you are doing.*” (5:11).

A LIFE OF SEXUAL PURITY (4:3–8)

A. Holiness Enjoined – God’s Will Stated (v. 3)

- 1. To be obedient children. “*It is God’s will that you should be holy.*”
- 2. To be like God (1 Peter 1:14–16). “*Be holy, because I am holy.*”

B. Sexual Immorality Condemned (v. 3). “. . . *that you should avoid sexual immorality.*” (See also Acts 15:29; 1 Corinthians 6:18).

- 1. **Purity toward oneself.** “. . . *that each of you should learn to control his own body . . .*” (v. 3).
 - a. A purity to keep (1 Timothy 5:22). “. . . *Keep yourself pure.*”
 - b. An evil to flee (2 Timothy 2:22). “*Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.*”
 - c. A sin against own body (1 Corinthians 6:18–20). “*Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body.*”
- 2. **Purity toward God.** “. . . *like the heathen, who do not know God.*”
 - a. The heathen are described as those who do not know God.
 - 1) What knowledge of God they had was rejected, exchanged for a lie by the pagan world (cf. Romans 1:21–32).
 - 2) They are described as being “*separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of promise, without hope and without God in the world*” (Ephesians 2:12).
 - b. Their practice of passionate lust can serve as no guide for the Christian (Ephesians 4:17–19).
 - c. The child of God is to put to death or crucify the passions of the flesh. (cf. Colossians 3:5; Galatians 5:24).
- 3. **Purity toward brothers.** “. . . *in this matter no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him*” (v. 6). A warning from the Old Testament: Proverbs 5:15–20 – “*Drink water from your own cistern, running water from your own well. Should your springs overflow in the streets, your streams of water in the public squares? Let them be yours alone, never to be shared with strangers. May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth . . .*”

C. Motivation To Do God’s Will (vs. 6–8). Four reason given:

- 1. **God is the avenger** (v. 6).

- a. They had been told and warned about this already (v. 6). *“as we have already told you and warned you.”* (See also Galatians 5:19–21; Ephesians 5:5; Hebrews 13:4; Revelation 21:8).
- b. Note that most of these warnings are addressed to Christians, saved people, not the heathen.
2. ***Immorality is inconsistent with our call.*** God’s calling is to pure living, not to impurity (v. 7). Therefore, Christians are to keep themselves pure (cf. 1 Timothy 5:22). Flee (run from) the passions of youth (2 Timothy 2:22). 1 John 3:3 – *“Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.”*
3. ***Rejection of this instruction means rejection of God*** (v. 8). It is the “wrath of God” not that of Paul that comes upon the disobedient (Colossians 3:6).
4. ***Sexual sin is contrary to the presence of the Holy Spirit in the Christian’s body and life.*** “. . . who gives you his Holy Spirit” (v. 8). This is the import of 1 Corinthians 6:19–20, in a context of warning about sexual immorality: *“Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God. . .”*

A LIFE OF BROTHERLY LOVE (4:9–10)

A. The Exhortation To Increase In Love. *“Now about brotherly love we do not need to write to you”* (v. 9).

1. It was often thought necessary to write about brotherly love.
 - a. Romans 12:10 – *“Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves.”*
 - b. Hebrews 13:1 – *“Keep on loving each other as brothers.”*
 - c. 1 Peter 1:22 – *“Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart.”*
 - d. Colossians 3:14 – *“And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity”.*
2. Paul and other New Testament writers often did so.

B. They Had Been Taught By God To Love Each Other (v. 9)

1. They had an attitude of wanting to know God’s will and obviously learned from His servants about the necessity and importance of love.
2. They were already manifesting this love to all the brothers in Macedonia (v. 10).
3. It was demonstrated also in their rich generosity toward those in need (2 Corinthians 8:1–5).

C. They Were Urged To Grow More And More, (v. 10)

1. Paul prayed that their love would “. . . increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else . . .” (1 Thessalonians 3:12).
2. According to the second letter they did, in fact, grow in their love – “. . . the love everyone one of you has for each other is increasing” (2 Thessalonians 1:3).

A LIFE OF HONEST ENDEAVOR (4:11–12)

A. Exhortation To Labor Honestly

“Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life . . .” (v. 11). This would include a life of quiet trust and dependence upon God. (cf. John 14:1; Philippians 4:6–7).

1. Quietness (study to be quiet) – to be ambitious about settling down.
“. . . Mind your own business” (v. 11). A Christian is not to interfere in others’ affairs or to be a meddler (cf. 1 Peter 4:15).
2. Tend your own business (cf. 1 Timothy 5:11–14; 1 Peter 4:4–5).
3. Work with your own hands (v. 11).
 Some apparently were lazy, not wanting to face up to their responsibilities of providing for their own. (cf. Ephesians 4:28; 2 Thessalonians 3:10).

B. The Two-fold Fruit Of Honest Labor

1. ***A good report from them that are without.*** *“So that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders . . .”* (1 Thessalonians 4:12).
 - a. Responsibility of a good reputation. It is important that we win the respect of outsiders: Colossians 4:5 – *“Be wise in the way you act towards outsiders; make the most of every opportunity.* 1 Timothy 3:7 – *He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil’s trap.”*
 - b. Outsiders (lost people) cannot be won or influenced for Christ by laziness and carelessness in domestic responsibilities.
2. ***Responsibility of independent livelihood.*** *“. . . so that you will not be dependent on anybody”* (1 Thessalonians 4:12). Again we are reminded of the rule: *“. . . If a man will not work, he shall not eat”* (2 Thessalonians 3:12). Also Paul’s indictment that one who does not provide for his family *“. . . has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever”* (1 Timothy 5:8).

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON FIVE:

1. What four main exhortations are given by Paul in this lesson concerning one's life-style?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____

2. Complete the following statements concerning Paul's instructions:

The basis of Paul's instructions – _____

The source of Paul's instructions – _____

The fruit of following Paul's instructions – _____

3. What instruction does Paul's give concerning the following three areas of purity?

Toward oneself _____

Toward God _____

Toward brothers _____

4. What are four reason given by Paul for doing God's will in this context?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____

5. What is the two-fold fruit of honest labor by Christians?
 - 1) _____
 - _____
 - 2) _____
 - _____

LESSON SIX

THE CHRISTIAN'S HOPE RETURN OF THE LORD

INTRODUCTION:

The second coming of Christ is the main theme of this letter. It is mentioned toward the end of each chapter. In this passage Paul deals with a certain problem concerning the coming of the Lord. Apparently some of the Thessalonian Christians were grieving over some of their Christian loved ones who had died before the Lord's return. What would happen to them? Paul writes to clarify this point and deals with the return of Jesus and events connected with His coming.

LESSON TEXT: 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18

LESSON AIM: The basic principles of truth concerning the Christian's hope of resurrection, even in the presence of death is: security, guarantee, and promise.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: Your will . . .

1. Learn that the security of the Christian's hope cannot be destroyed by physical death.
 2. Discover that the Christian's hope is based on the firmest of foundations – the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
 3. See that the power of the Christian's hope is the promise and manner of Christ's return.
 4. Learn that the Christian's hope is orderly. The dead in Christ will rise first and then the rest will join them as they all rise to meet the Lord in the air.
-

THE CHRISTIAN HOPE – ITS SECURITY (v. 13)

A. Security For Those Who Sleep (v. 13)

1. Sleep: an expression for death – Greek KOIMAO (cf. KOIMETERION – cemetery) – “*to sleep*.”
 - a. In the Old Testament:
 - 1) Israel (Jacob): “... *but when I rest with my fathers, carry me out of Egypt and bury me where they are buried.*” (Genesis 47:30).
 - 2) King David: “*Then David rested with his fathers and was buried in the City of David*” (1 Kings 2:10)
 - b. In the New Testament:
 - 1) Paul speaking of David: “*For when David had served God's purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep*” (Acts 13:36).

- 2) The death of Stephen: *“Then he fell on his knees and cried out, ‘Lord, do not hold this sin against them.’ When he had said this, he fell asleep”* (Acts 7:60).

B. Security and Hope. In Spite of Death, Hope Not Destroyed. They should not *“... grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope”* (v. 13).

1. The phrase, “the rest of men” refers to pagans, those who did not know the true God (1 Thessalonians 4:5; 5:6).
2. The hopelessness of the pagan world (Ephesians 2:11–12).
 - a. Separate from Christ.
 - b. Excluded from citizenship in Israel.
 - c. Foreigners to the covenants of promise.
 - d. Without hope and with God in the world.
3. The hopefulness of the believer. Though Christians may grieve in such situations, it is not the grief of despair and hopelessness. (cf. Acts 8:2; Romans 12:15)
 - a. This is in contrast to the despair of pagans. Unbelievers without hope – have no comfort.
 - b. The Christian’s sorrow is natural, but it is not hopeless.
4. The grief the Thessalonians were experiencing was related to their ignorance about what would happen to their Christian loved ones at the coming of Christ.

THE CHRISTIAN HOPE – ITS GUARANTEE (vs. 14–15)

A. The Basis of Their Resurrection – Jesus’ Resurrection. *“We believe that Jesus died and rose again . . .”* (v. 14). The basic facts of the gospel: 1 Corinthians 15:3–4 – *“For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,”* 1 Corinthians 15:17 – *“And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.”*

B. The Action of The Resurrection. *“... that God will bring with Jesus those who sleep in him.”* (cf. 1 Corinthians 6:14; 2 Corinthians 4:14).

C. The Assurance of The Resurrection. *“According to the Lord’s own word . . .”* (v. 15). It was not something Paul made up nor was it the production of human wisdom and ingenuity. *“And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe”* (1 Thessalonians 2:13). *“I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel I preached is not something that man made up. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ”* (Galatians 1:11–12).

1. The saints who are physically alive. *“... we who are still alive”* (v. 15). Note *“we shall not all sleep”* (1 Corinthians 15:51).
2. The saints who are physically dead. *“... will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep.”* The living saints will not have special favors nor come into the Lord’s presence before the dead saints.

THE CHRISTIAN HOPE – ITS PROMISE

A. The Promises Of The Lord's Return (v. 16)

1. **The promise of Jesus.** *“And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am”* (John 14:3).
2. **The promise of the Angel.** *“‘Men of Galilee,’” they said, “‘why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven’”* (Acts 1:11).
3. **The promise by Paul.** *“and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels . . .”* (2 Thessalonians 1:7–8).

B. The Patient Waiting For The Lord's Return. The hope of the Christian (cf. 1:10; Philippians 3:20–21; Titus 2:13).

C. The Procedure Of His Return. His coming will be “. . . *with a loud command* . . .” The Lord's voice will cause all the dead to be raised. (See: John 5:28–29).

D. The Participants In His Return – Accompanied By Angels. There will also be “. . . *the voice of the archangel* . . .” (v. 16).

1. The only angel called in Scripture an “*archangel*” is Michael. (cf. Jude 9; Revelation 12:7).
2. Many believe that the archangel here is Gabriel, who announced the births of John the Baptist and Jesus in Luke 1.
3. We do know that angels will come with Jesus and be involved in the judgment (2 Thessalonians 1:7; Matthew 25:31).

E. The Pronouncement Of His Return – A Trumpet Call. “. . . *the trumpet call of God* . . .” (v. 16). See also 1 Corinthians 15:51–51).

THE CHRISTIAN HOPE – ITS ORDER

A. The Dead In Christ Will Rise First (vs. 16–17)

1. Two events are involved in Paul's discussion:
 - a. The righteous dead will be raised.
 - b. The righteous living will be caught up with them.
2. In the context of this passage Paul is not discussing the wicked at all. Other passages will discuss the destiny of the wicked (ie., John 5:28–29; 2 Thessalonians 1:7–9).
3. So the statement, “. . . *the dead in Christ will rise first*” means before the living righteous are caught up to meet the Lord in the air.
 Note: “. . . *and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air* . . .” (4:16–17).

B. The Alive In Christ Will Be Caught Up Next

1. In comparing Scripture with Scripture we find that Paul at times puts himself in the category of those who will still be alive when Jesus comes (1 Thessalonians 4:17).
2. At other times he puts himself in the category of those who will be raised (cf. 2 Corinthians 4:14; 1 Corinthians 6:14).
3. Paul did not know with absolute certainty whether he would be alive or dead at the coming of the Lord. Both were possibilities. 1 Corinthians 15:51 says, “. . . *we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.*”
4. The “dead in Christ” are those who have been baptized into Christ (cf. Galatians 3:27); and who have “fallen asleep in Christ” (cf. 1 Corinthians 15–18). (See also Revelation 14:13).

C. Both Will Meet Christ In The Air To Abide With Him

1. The method: “. . . *caught up with them . . .*” This implies being re-united with loved ones who have fallen asleep in Christ. This is in harmony with the context of the passage – grief over loved ones who died before the Lord’s return.
2. The conclusion: “. . . *so we will be with the Lord forever*” (v. 17).
 - a. The whole reward of the Christian is summed up in being with the Lord (cf. John 12:26; John 14:3).
 - b. It’s true that when the Christian dies, apart from his body, he goes to be with the Lord (Philippians 1:23–24; 2 Corinthians 5:8).
 - c. However, the real and ultimate hope of the Christian is in the return of Christ with resurrection and glorification in resurrected bodies (cf. Philippians 3:20–21; 1 John 3:2).

D. Christ’s Return Used For Mutual Encouragement. “*Therefore encourage each other with these words*” (v. 18). (See also 1 Corinthians 15:51–54).

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON SIX:

1. What four things concerning the Christian hope is discussed in these passages?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____

2. List three (3) persons who promised the return of Jesus with scripture references.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

3. What two (2) person/s or events will accompany the return of Jesus according to Paul?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____

4. In what order will events transpire at the coming of Jesus?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

5. How should Christians (the Church) use the knowledge of Christ's return?

LESSON SEVEN

THE LORD'S RETURN TIMES AND DATES OF RETURN

INTRODUCTION:

In our last study we talked about the second coming of Christ, and our study for today will also deal with the second coming of Jesus. The section we covered last time was 1 Thessalonians chapter 4 beginning with verse 13 through verse 18. In that section Paul dealt with a problem. The problem was that some of the people believed their loved ones might miss out on the blessings of Jesus because they had died before He had returned. And Paul said, “No, that’s not the way it is. You have no reason to grieve as those who have no hope.” The fact is the dead in Christ will be raised first, then we that are alive, will together with them, be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. And so, Paul says, shall we ever be with the Lord. In other words, Paul has told them that the Christians who are alive will not have any special favors. They will not be blessed more than those who have already died in the Lord, that they will be blessed together because the dead will be raised first. The contrast is not between those that are living in Christ and those who are wicked. The contrast is between those who are righteous dead and those who are righteous living. They will both be caught up to meet the Lord in the air and forever be with the Lord. In this section of his letter Paul continue to discuss the coming of Christ. The question he now deals with relates to the time of His coming.

LESSON TEXT: 1 Thessalonians 5:1–11

LESSON AIM: There will be the description of Christ’s coming as a thief in the night and exhortations and motivation to readiness in view of that coming.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. See the contrast between the believer’s view of Christ’s coming with that of the pagan’s (unbeliever’s) view.
 2. Examine the different character of the believer and unbeliever and the designation of each as sons of light and sons of darkness.
 3. Learn how to use this passage of scripture to help encourage and build up one another.
-

TIMES AND SEASONS OF CHRIST’S RETURN (5:1–3)

A. The Believers’ Knowledge Of His Coming. *“Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you” (1 Thessalonians 5:1).*

1. This is not because they already knew the times and dates. The time of His coming had not been revealed.
2. What they did know very well – “. . . *that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night*” (v. 2). They knew that no one could know the date (1843, 1844, 1875, 1914, 1975).
 - a. Jesus used this expression in His teaching: Luke 12:39–40 – “*But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.*” See also Revelation 3:3; 16:15.
 - b. Peter also spoke of that day coming like a thief: 2 Peter 3:10 – “*But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.*”
 - c. Since a thief does not announce the time of his coming but comes unexpectedly, the coming of Jesus will also be unannounced and not when men expect Him.

B. The Unbeliever’s Lack Of Knowledge Concerning His Return (5:3). “*While people are saying, ‘Peace and safety . . .’*”

1. The common concept of the unbelieving world. “*They dress the wound of my people as though it were not serious. ‘Peace, peace,’ they say, when there is no peace*” (Jeremiah 6:14). (see also Jeremiah 8:11)
2. A deceitful concept. “*Because they lead my people astray, saying, ‘Peace’, when there is no peace, and because, when a flimsy wall is built, they cover it with whitewash*” (Ezekiel 13:10).
3. The danger of wickedness in relation to that day. “*Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap*” (Luke 21:34).

C. Destruction Illustrated By The Woman In Travail. “. . . *destruction will come on them suddenly . . .*” (v. 3). The figure says three things: (cf. Isaiah 13:6–8; Micah 4:9–10).

1. It is inevitable.
2. It is sudden.
3. It is extremely painful.

Note the warning of Jesus in Luke 17:26–30.

D. No Escape When Jesus Comes. “. . . *and they will not escape*” (v. 3).

Note: The example of the destruction of St. Pierre on the Island of Martinique in 1902. Reader’s Digest 1961: “The City that died in 90 seconds.” May 8, 1902.

THE NECESSITY OF ALERTNESS BY BELIEVERS

A. Believers Are Sons Of The Day (vs. 4–11)

1. Contrast of believers with unbelievers. “*But you, brothers, are not in the*

darkness.” Three reasons why Christians are not in darkness:

- a. They have been delivered out of darkness (Colossians 1:13; 1 Peter 2:9).
 - b. They have been taught of the sudden coming of Jesus (vs. 1–3).
 - c. Their manner of life — “walk as children of light.” (cf. Ephesians 4:17, 5:8).
2. The Pagan world is pictured as in darkness (John 3:19; Acts 26:17–18; Colossians 1:13; Ephesians 5:8). “*For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light*” (Ephesians 5:8).

B. Believers Are Prepared and Alert. “. . . *that this day should surprise you like a thief*” (v. 4).

1. It is not that Christians know the time of His coming in contrast to pagans who do not.
2. It is that they are following Him who is the light. “*When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, ‘I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life’*” (John 8:12).

C. Believers Are Characterized By Light. “*You are all sons of the light and sons of the day . . .*” (v. 5).

1. As Jesus closed His public ministry to the Jews He made this final appeal: “*Put your trust in the light while you have it, so that you may become sons of light.*” (John 12:36).
2. “Sons of light” refers to people who are characterized by light. This a chief ingredient in their lives. As the apostles gave Joseph the name “Barnabas” meaning “son of encouragement” because his life was characterized by encouraging others (cf. Acts 4:36).
3. Those who are “sons of light” do not know the time of His coming, but they live as “sons of the day” and always in a state of readiness – so that day will not surprise them like a thief.

D. Believers Are Not Characterized By Darkness. “. . . *We do not belong to the night or to darkness*” (v. 5).

1. Stay awake (not only awake, but alert). “*So then, let us not be like others who are asleep*” (v. 6).
 - a. This does not refer to physical sleep or to sleeping in death.
 - b. It refers to a spiritual sleep like a spiritual death or separation from God.
2. Be alert (sober) in preparation. “. . . *but let us be alert and self-controlled.*” Note some of the frequent exhortations to alertness and watchfulness: Matthew 24:42; Matthew 24:44; Mark 13:35–37; 1 Peter 1:13; 1 Peter 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8.

E. Pagans Characterized By Deeds Of Darkness. “*For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night.*”

1. This is the normal procedure in life; under normal circumstances one sleeps during hours of darkness, and those who get drunk usually do so at night time.

2. Hence, to get drunk and to carouse in day time would indicate a more depraved attitude. (See Isaiah 5:11; Acts 2:15; 2 Peter 3:13).

F. Character Of Light Insists On Deeds Of Light. “. . . *since we belong to the day . . .*”

1. “. . . *let us be self-controlled*” (cf. Galatians 5:22–23; 1 Peter 5:8).
2. Put on Christian armor:
 - a. Faith and love as a breastplate (cf. Ephesians 6:17). They had both faith and love and had demonstrated both in great trials and adversities. They had been urged toward greater faith and love. They would serve as a breastplate in spiritual conflict.
 - b. “The hope of salvation as a helmet.” Hope is an anchor for the soul, firm and secure (cf. Hebrews 6:19), and it is the one who has this hope in him who purifies himself (cf. 1 John 3:3).
3. See Ephesians 6:13–18 for a more complete description of the “full armor of God.”
 - a. The belt of truth buckled around your waist.
 - b. The breastplate of righteousness.
 - c. Your feet fitted with the gospel of peace as a firm footing.
 - d. The shield of faith.
 - e. The helmet of salvation.
 - f. The sword of the Spirit.

G. God’s Appointment For Us (v. 9)

1. Not to suffer wrath – see 1 Thessalonians 1:10.
2. To receive salvation. “*But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved:*” (Hebrews 10:39).

H. The Reason For Hope. He died for us, so that:

1. “. . . *whether we are awake or asleep,*” whether alive or asleep in Jesus when He comes – See also 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18; 1 Corinthians 15:51 – “*We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.*”
2. “. . . *we may live together with him*” (v. 10).

CONCLUSION: “*Therefore, encourage one another and build each other up.*”

1. Encourage one another – 1 Thessalonians 4:18.
2. Building each other up. “*Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified*” (Acts 20:32).
3. They were, in fact, doing this but should “do so more and more” (4:10).

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON SEVEN:

1. What did the believers at Thessalonica know about the Lord's coming? What did they not know?

What they knew: _____

What they did not know: _____

2. What was the common statement which expresses the ignorance of the unbelievers concerning the coming of the Lord?

3. What three truths about the coming of the Lord are taught by the "Woman in Travail?"

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4. How does Paul contrast the character of the believers with that of the unbelievers?

5. What two admonitions does Paul give to the believers about preparation for His coming?

1) _____

2) _____

LESSON EIGHT

FINAL INSTRUCTIONS & CONCLUSION

INTRODUCTION:



his closing section of 1 Thessalonians deals with varied instructions to a church that is generally highly commended by Paul. He had thanked God for their:

1. Work produced by faith.
2. Labor prompted by love.
3. Endurance inspired by hope.

He also thanked God for the way they received the message he preached as the very word of God (2:13). He called them his “glory and joy” (2:19–20), and exclaimed “How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy we have in the presence of our God because of you?” (3:9).

But it is not a church without flaws. He wanted to come to them to supply what was “lacking in their faith” (3:10). And in this section there are various admonitions and instructions that the Thessalonian church needed. They are also needed by us today.

LESSON TEXT: 1 Thessalonians 5:12–28

LESSON AIM: To examine the exhortations of Paul concerning proper attitudes toward elders, one another, and personal piety which would enable the Thessalonian Christians (and us) to be ready for Christ’s return.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Learn of the proper attitude church members are to have toward church leaders.
2. See several exhortations given by Paul toward various members of the church at Thessalonica.
3. Be aware of the constancy of joy, prayer, and thankfulness because of the Christian’s relationship to God.
3. Understand the Christian’s proper concept and relationship to the Holy Spirit of God.

INSTRUCTIONS WITH REFERENCE TO ELDERS OF THE CHURCH (vs. 12–13)

A. Respect For The Overseers. These men can only be elders for about them only can all these things be said:

1. They are described in verse 12 as:
 - a. “. . . *those who work hard among you.*”
 - b. “. . . *who are over you in the Lord.*”
 - c. “. . . *who admonish you.*”
2. The first and third expressions might refer to others, but the second one, “*who are over you in the Lord*” can refer only to elders.
 - a. Acts 20:28 – “*Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.*” These words were spoken to elders (Acts 2:17).
 - b. 1 Peter 5:1–3 – “*To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow-elder..., Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, serving as overseers... not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.*”
 - c. Concerning the qualifications of overseers or elders: “. . . *If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God’s church?*” (1 Timothy 3:1–5).
 - d. 1 Timothy 5:17 – “*The elders who direct the affairs...*”

B. Six Terms Which Apply To Church Leaders. The terms elders (presbyters), overseers (bishops), and pastors (shepherds) all refer to the same men.

1. Elders, overseers, shepherds. Acts 20:17 – “*From Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church. Guard yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God . . .*” (v. 28).
2. Elders, shepherds, overseers. 1 Peter 5:1–4 – “*To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow-elder . . . Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, serving as over-seers . . .*”
3. Elders, overseer. Titus 1:5–7 – “*The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you. An elder must be blameless..., Since an overseer is entrusted with God’s work, he must be blameless . . .*”

NOTE: These men are called elders or presbyters because of their age and experience. They are called overseers or bishops because they have the oversight of the congregation. They are called shepherds or pastors because they look after God’s flock, feeding and protecting it from destructive enemies.

C. The Responsibilities Of The Church Toward Such Men (vs. 12–13)

1. Respect and imitate them. Perhaps some had failed to show these men the proper respect and some tension existed there. “*Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith*” (Hebrews 13:7)
2. Esteem them in love. “*Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work*” (v. 13).
 - a. The extent of respect. Paul uses a very intensive form here – “in the highest regard” (“exceeding highly in love” ASV).
 - b. The reason for respect. Because of their work. For some of the

significance of their work see: Hebrews 13:17 – *“Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.”*

3. The result of respect. Peaceful relationship. *Live at peace with each other* (v. 13).
 - a. This would involve the brothers and their relationship with the elders.
 - b. It would also involve a peaceful relationship with the church generally. This would be most encouraging and helpful to the leaders.
 - c. For similar admonitions see: Romans 12:18; Romans 14:19; Ephesians 4:3.

INSTRUCTIONS WITH REFERENCE TO VARIOUS INDIVIDUALS (5:14–15)

A. Warning To Idle Men (v. 14). This was obviously a problem in the church at Thessalonica.

1. 1 Thessalonians 4:11 – *“Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and to work with your hands, just as we told you,”*
2. 2 Thessalonians 3:6 – *“In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, we command you, brothers, to keep away from every brother who is idle and does not live according to the teaching you received from us.”*
3. 2 Thessalonians 3:11 – *“We hear that some among you are idle. They are not busy; they are busybodies.”*

B. Encouragement To The Timid

1. The timid would be those discouraged, perhaps with “a crushed spirit” – Proverbs 18:14 – *“. . . a crushed spirit who can bear?”*
2. Concerning the Messiah: *“A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out, till he leads justice to victory”* (Matthew 12:20).
3. They need encouragement as Paul himself had given encouragement while in Thessalonica (1 Thessalonians 2:12), and as they were, in fact, giving each other (1 Thessalonians 5:11).

C. Help For The Weak (v. 14)

1. As long as the church is evangelistic and is winning the lost, we will have the weak among us.
2. There will always be some tension between “the strong” and “the weak,” and patient understanding help for the weak will always be needed.
3. Paul has extended discussions about the relationship of the strong and the weak in Romans 14–15 and 1 Corinthians 8–10. Among other things he says:
 - a. Romans 14:1 – *“Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters.”*
 - b. Romans 14:19 – *“Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.”*
 - c. Romans 15:1–2 – *“We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. Each of us should please his*

neighbor for his good, to build him up.”

- d. 1 Corinthians 8:9 – *“Be careful, however, that the exercise of your freedom does not become a stumbling-block to the weak.”*

D. Patience And Understanding For All. *“Be patient with everyone”* (v. 14).

1. It is not always easy to help people who are resistant to help, who show a lack of gratitude and keep falling back into the same situations which overcame them.
2. It takes patience and understanding, and to this the Christian is called:
 - a. Ephesians 4:2 – *“Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.”*
 - b. Colossians 3:12 – *“Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.”*
 - c. I Corinthians 13:4 – *“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.”*

E. Kindness and Justice For All. *“Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else”* (v. 15).

1. A Christian is not to have a spirit of vindictiveness or retaliation toward wrong-doers:
 - a. Romans 12:17 – *“Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody.”*
 - b. Romans 12:19 – *“Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: ‘It is mine to avenge; I will repay,’ says the Lord.”*
2. Rather a positive response of kindness is the Christian attitude:
 - a. Matthew 12:44 – *“Then it says, ‘I will return to the house I left.’ When it arrives, it finds the house unoccupied, swept clean and put in order.”*
 - b. 1 Peter 3:9 – *“Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.”*

INSTRUCTIONS WITH REFERENCE TO THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD (vs. 16–18)

A. Constant Joy. *“Be joyful always”* (v. 16).

1. Jesus had promised joy to His followers (cf. John 16:22).
2. Paul experienced in all circumstances this joy (cf. Romans 5:2–3; 2 Corinthians 6:10).
3. This joy was not based on outward circumstances. The world could not give it, and it would not take it away (See Acts 16:25).

B. Constant Prayer. *“Pray continually”* (v. 17).

1. Paul often exhorted toward such a prayer life.
 - a. Colossians 4:2 – *“Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.”*
 - b. Philippians 4:6 – *“Do not be anxious about anything, but in*

everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God."

2. The meaning of "*pray continually*" can be understood from Paul's prayers in this letter in every conceivable situation.
 - a. Thanking God for faith, love and endurance for the Thessalonians (1 Thessalonians 1:2–3).
 - b. Thanking God for their reception of the gospel as the word of God (1 Thessalonians 2:13).
 - c. Thanking God for the joy he has because of the Thessalonian Christians (1 Thessalonians 3:9).
 - d. Praying that he may be able to see them and supply what is lacking in their faith (1 Thessalonians 3:10).
 - e. Praying that God will clear the way for him to return to Thessalonica (1 Thessalonians 3:11).
 - f. Praying for their inner strength and purity (1 Thessalonians 3:13).
 - h. Giving thanks in all circumstances (1 Thessalonians 5:18).
 - I. That God would sanctify them through an through.
 - j. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you" (1 Thessalonians 5:28).

C. Constant Thankfulness. "Give thanks in all circumstances" (v. 18).

1. This involves times of suffering and sorrow (cf. Romans 5:3; 8:28).
2. So thanksgiving and contentment are possible.
3. Joy, prayer, and thankfulness are involved in God's will for His children.
"... for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (vs 18).

INSTRUCTIONS WITH REFERENCE TO THE HOLY SPIRIT AND HIS GIFTS (vs. 19–22)

A. Walk In The Spirit. Do not put out the Spirit's fire (do not quench the Spirit) (vs. 19–22).

1. This is understood by many to refer to miraculous gifts of the Spirit given to the early church especially since "prophecy" is mentioned in v. 20.
2. This may be so, and, if so, would refer to the need to accept rather than quenching or putting out this inspired guidance.
3. But there are other ways to quench the Spirit or to put out his fire, and this can be understood in the light of the context of this letter.
 - a. In the general context it could refer to the Spirit's teaching concerning moral purity and instruction about the second coming.
 - b. In the more immediate context it could refer to proper respect for their leaders, living in peace with each other with kindness and patience, and living a joyful, prayerful life of trust in God (vs. 12–18). (See Ephesians 4:30; Hebrews 10:29)

B. Walk With Respect For Prophecies. "*do not treat prophecies with contempt*" (v. 20).

1. This could be one way of putting out the Spirit's fire.
2. Prophecy does not mean predicting the future necessarily, though it may

include that. It means a divine message or revelation, and it might be concerning the present, the past or the future.

3. A prophet was, therefore, a spokesman for God and spoke God's inspired message. There were prophets in the New Testament church (cf. Ephesians 2:20; 3:5).
4. Some were claiming to utter prophecies or to have such messages from Paul concerning the second coming (2 Thess. 2:1–2). This perhaps brought the whole prophetic office into contempt by some, and Paul warns against this.

C. Walk Carefully and With Discrimination. *“Test everything. Hold on to the good.”* (v. 21).

1. Though the Thessalonians were to accept true prophetic messages, they were not to be gullible. Every message was to be examined and tested and held only if proved to be good.
2. In the Old Testament God's people were often warned about being led astray by false teachers. (See Deuteronomy 13; Jeremiah 23).
3. In the New Testament we are also warned of this danger (1 John 4:1).
4. The standard by which every teaching was examined and tested was God's previous revelation. (See Acts 17:11)

D. Walk In Purity And Holiness. *“Avoid every kind of evil”* (v. 22). Rejection of the wrong is imperative after proper testing and examination.

CONCLUSION (5:23–28)

A. Sanctification And Preservation. A prayer for their sanctification and preservation. *“May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ”* (v. 23). This process of inward change and transformation is a process that goes on continually in our lives. (2 Corinthians 3:18).

B. Faithfulness and Action. *“The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it”* (v. 24). God's faithfulness refers to absolute dependability and reliability. He can be trusted to fulfill His promises (cf. Hebrews 10:23).

C. Paul Concludes With Three Requests:

1. *“Brothers, pray for us”* (v. 25). This was a frequent request of Paul (2 Thessalonians 3:1ff; Romans 15:30; Ephesians 6:19). He often assured Christians that he was praying for them, but he needs the prayers of his brothers in many different circumstances.
2. *“Greet all the brothers with a holy kiss”* (v. 26).
 - a. Paul also writes about the “holy kiss” in other epistles (cf. Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 16:20; 2 Corinthians 13:12).
 - b. Peter wrote to “greet one another with a kiss of love” (cf. 1 Peter 5:14).
 - c. Kissing, as a form of greeting, had been practiced in that area of the world for centuries. It is regulated that it be a “holy kiss” and should be free from all partiality or favoritism (cf. 1 Peter 1:22; James 2:1ff).

3. “I charge you before the Lord to **have this letter read to all the brothers**” (v. 27). (see also Colossians 4:16; Revelation 1:3).

D. The Benediction: “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you” (v. 28).

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON EIGHT:

1. Give six terms which apply to church leaders.

1) _____	4) _____
2) _____	5) _____
3) _____	6) _____

2. Give two (2) statements which express the responsibilities of the church toward its appointed leaders.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____

3. In verses 14–15 Paul gives instructions with reference to three groups in the church. Who are these and what are the instructions?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____

4. What three statements describe the relationship the Christian is to have toward God in verses 16–18?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____

5. Concerning Paul’s instruction with reference to the Holy Spirit and His gifts, what four admonitions does he give the believers?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____

6. With what three requests does Paul close this second letter to the church at Thessalonica?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____

THOUGHT QUESTION:

What do you think is the central theme of this letter and how do you think it will affect your life?

LESSON NINE

THANKSGIVING AND PRAYER

INTRODUCTION:

We have now come to Paul's second letter to the Thessalonians. The same group of authors (Paul, Silas and Timothy) to the same "church of the Thessalonians, who are in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." It was apparently written not long after the first letter and deals with some of the same issues. However, Paul does not need to defend their integrity again, so this issue does not come up in the second letter. There are three main topics in this second letter:

1. The steadfastness of the Thessalonians under severe persecution with a contrast between the fate of the persecutors and the fate of the persecuted when Jesus comes again – chapter 1.
2. The issue of the second coming again especially dealing with the mistaken view of some that the day of the Lord had already come. Certain events must take place before the day of the Lord (chapter 2:1–12).
3. Some of the Thessalonian Christians were living in idleness and living off others' generosity. They are to be disciplined if this practice continues (chapter 3:6–15).

LESSON TEXT: 2 Thessalonians 1:1–12

LESSON AIM: To see the faith, love, and perseverance of the Thessalonian church and the nature of Christ's coming again.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Discover that Paul, Silas, and Timothy are the authors of the book of 2 Thessalonians.
2. Learn of and appreciate the fact that the faith, love, and perseverance is a cause of Paul boasting of this church among God's churches.
3. See that Judgment and reward from God flows out of His very nature. He is just therefore those deserving judgment and reward will receive according to their actions of life.

THE GREETING–THE SENDERS & RECEIVERS. (1:1–2)

A. The Senders Of The Letter. Paul, Silas and Timothy are the senders as in the first epistle.

1. They were the ones who had preached in Thessalonica and established the church there.
2. They are the ones whose ministry had been attacked by enemies in Thessalonica.
3. And it is their ministry there which Paul defends in his first letter. This issue

seems to have been taken care of and no further defense is made.

B. The Recipients Of The Letter. “. . . *To the church of the Thessalonians, who are in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ*” (v. 1).

1. This is the same as in the first letter with one change – *God our Father* rather than *God the Father* (1 Thessalonians 1:1).
2. This emphasizes the fatherhood of God for the Christians there.

C. The Greeting Extended and Received. “*Grace and peace to you from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ*” (v. 2).

THANKSGIVING FOR THEIR FAITH, LOVE AND PERSEVERANCE (1:3–4)

A. Paul’s Deep-felt Responsibility In Prayer (v. 3)

“*We ought always to thank God for you . . .*” (See also 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 3:9; 2 Thessalonians 2:13 for expressions of Paul’s attitude toward prayer and the church at Thessalonica.)

B. The Growth Of Their Faith (v. 3). “*...because your faith is growing more and more.*”

1. They had evidenced earlier their faith. “. . . *your work produced by faith . . .*” (1 Thessalonians 1:3).
2. But Paul expressed his desire to see them again. Purpose: “. . . *and supply what is lacking in your faith*” (1 Thessalonians 3:10).
3. Now Paul thanks God that even though he had not the opportunity to see them personally, their faith was continuing to mature.
4. Lessons we can learn from this:
 - a. Faith is relevant – it must not be static. It is an abounding, increasing, growing thing.
 - b. Pray for an increase in faith (cf. Luke 17:5).
 - c. How God increases our faith?
 - 1) Through the study of the Word.
 - 2) Through trials and tribulations.

C. The Increase Of Brotherly Love. “. . . *the love every one of you has for each other is increasing*” (v. 3).

1. Paul had specifically prayed for this in his first letter to them. “*May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you.*” (1 Thessalonians 3:12 NIV)
2. Their love was recognized and commended but they were exhorted by Paul to practice this love even more fully. “*Now about brotherly love we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other... Yet we urge you, brothers, to do so more and more*” (1 Thessalonians 4:9–10).
3. This shows that we can never be satisfied with having loved in the past.
 - a. There is the continuing debt of loving others and growing in that love.
 - b. Romans 13:8 – “*Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing*

debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law.”

D. Boasting Among God’s Churches (v. 4). *“Therefore, among God’s churches we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring.”*

1. Paul boasted to other congregations in other areas about the perseverance and faith of the Thessalonians.
2. Paul challenged and encouraged churches by relating the faith and generosity of other congregations. (cf. 2 Corinthians 8:1–7; 9:2; 1 Corinthians 16:1–2)
3. This is not boasting in men rather than boasting in God. (See 1 Corinthians 1:31; 2 Corinthians 8:1)

THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT OF GOD (vs. 5–10)

At the revelation of Jesus Christ from heaven God’s righteous judgment will result in vengeance upon the wicked and reward for the saint.

A. Their Patient Endurance An Evidence Of God’s Righteous Judgment (v. 5). *“All this is evidence that God’s judgment is right . . .”*

1. Christians’ view of suffering. Not looked upon as necessarily evil. *“Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope”* (Romans 5:3–4). (see also Hebrews 12:11)
2. Christians’ testimony in suffering. Their patient endurance of such severe opposition was “evidence that God’s judgment is right. See also Philippians 1:28 and Matthew 5:11–12.
3. Christians’ reward in suffering. They are worthy of the kingdom. *“ . . . as a result you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering”* (v. 5).
 - a. Accounted righteousness. God makes us or counts us worthy in Christ where we are forgiven and cleansed from all sin.
 - b. Assigned responsibility. This high calling in the gospel puts upon us this responsibility to live lives that glorify Him (v. 11). *“ . . . that our God may count you worthy of his calling . . .”*

B. God’s Righteous Judgment (vs. 6–10). God is just (v. 6) therefore, He will not let wrong be always on the throne and right always on the scaffold.

1. Retribution on the wicked. *“ . . . He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you.”*
 - a. Therefore, Christians have no right to personal vengeance and retaliation (Romans 12:19–21).
 - b. God does take seriously His will and will punish those who do not do His will.
2. Relief for the righteous. *“ . . . [He will] give relief to you who are troubled.”*
 - a. This indicates a freedom from restraints and tension.
 - b. There is a rest for the people of God (cf. Hebrews 4:9; Revelation 14:13).

- c. Paul included himself and his fellow-workers in the category of those who would be given rest after faithfully enduring persecution. “. . . *and to us as well.*” See 1 Corinthians 4:9–13.
- d. He looked forward to such relief and rest at the Lord’s coming.

C. The Time Of Judgment (vs. 7–8) “. . . *when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels.*” Christ will be revealed:

- 1. From Heaven – place.
- 2. With the angels – attendants.
- 3. In flaming fire taking vengeance – manner.

D. The Nature Of Judgment (v. 9)

- 1. Punishment (v. 9) or tribulation (v. 6).
 - a. Those who do not know God. These are further described by Paul in Ephesians 2:1–2, 11–12.
 - b. The disobedient. “. . . *And do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.*”
- 2. The punishment: Everlasting destruction (Greek – OLETHROS). For further description see: Matthew 25:41; 25:46; Revelation 20:15; 2 Peter 2:9.
- 3. Exclusion from the Lord. “. . . *and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power*” (v. 9). This shows that the “eternal destruction” is not annihilation but an exclusion from the Lord’s presence. Remember Matthew 25:41 “. . . *Depart from me . . .*”
- 4. On the day He comes to be glorified in His holy people and to be marveled at among those who have believed (v. 10).
- 5. He will reward others:
 - a. He will “. . . *be glorified in His holy people . . .*” (v. 10).
 - b. He will “. . . *be marveled at among all those who have believed . . .*”
What will take place then will far surpass our fondest dreams and hopes. 1 John 3:2 – “*Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.*”
 - c. Paul’s readers included – “. . . *This includes you, because you believed our testimony to you.*” They had come to know God and to obey His gospel (v. 8). They had received the testimony or message of Paul for what it was – the word of God (cf. 1 Thessalonians 2:13).

PAUL’S PRAYER FOR THE THESSALONIANS (1:11–12)

A. The Setting (v. 11). “*With this in mind.*”

- 1. The truths just stated about their love, faith and patient endurance of suffering.
- 2. Also the fact of God’s righteous judgment: punishment upon the lost and glorification of God’s holy people.

B. The Petitions. “. . . *we constantly pray for you . . .*” Two-fold nature of the request:

- 1. May God count you worthy. “. . . *That our God may count you worthy of*

his calling . . .” Paul will not be content with an indifferent response to the high calling of God. A response of trusting, obedient faith is required.

2. To fulfill your desire and work of faith. “. . . *that by his power he may fulfill every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your faith*” (vs. 11). Their purposes were noble and their faith active (1 Thessalonians 1:3). They needed to fulfill or complete what had already begun.

C. The Desired Result (v. 12). Two-fold:

1. The name of God glorified. “. . . *so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him . . .*” God may be glorified in faithful men (John 17:10; Galatians 1:24; 1 Peter 2:9).
2. That you may be glorified in Him (cf. John 17:22–24).
3. “. . . *according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.*”
 - a. The human responsibility is always there, and it is ever present in these two epistles as well as in the rest of Scripture.
 - b. However, it is always true as well that what is accomplished is “according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON NINE:

1. Who are the authors of this epistle and what difference is there in the greeting of this letter from the first letter?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
2. For what two characteristics of their Christian life were the Thessalonians commended?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
3. Paul boasted to other congregations in other areas about what two things concerning the Thessalonian Christians?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
4. What about the Thessalonian Christians was spoken of by Paul as evidence of God's righteous judgment?

5. What in this context would indicate that the Christian has no right to personal vengeance? _____

6. When the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven, what two things/beings will accompany His appearance?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
7. What two things will Jesus do when He comes?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
8. What two things characterize those who will receive punishment at the Lord's appearing?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
9. What is the two-fold punishment promised for the disobedient?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____

LESSON TEN

THE MAN OF LAWLESSNESS

INTRODUCTION:

In our study of the Thessalonian letters, we are now ready for lesson number ten. This lesson is based on 2 Thessalonians 2:1–12, and we have entitled this, “The Man of Lawlessness.” There are some preliminary thoughts that we would like to share.

First of all, as we look at this very difficult passage. Peter’s statement about Paul’s writings comes in mind here. Paul had written some things that Peter says are hard to understand. In 2 Peter 3:15–16, Peter wrote: *“Bear in mind that our Lord’s patience means salvation just as our dear brother Paul also wrote with the wisdom that God gave him. He writes the same way in all of his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other scriptures to their own destruction.”* This passage about the man of lawlessness is obviously one of those difficult passages. But notice that Peter expects people to explain and to understand even the difficult passages. In fact, he says, men can distort even these difficult passages to their own destruction. And so we need to try to understand in the light of the context and in the total context of Holy Scripture what Paul is talking about when he talks about the man of lawlessness or the man of sin.

The Thessalonians had information regarding this matter that we do not have. In verse 5 he says, *“Don’t you remember that when I was with you I used to tell you these things?”* The tense there implies that he had said over and over again these things to them. Also notice in verse 6 he says, *“And now you know what is holding him back . . .”* So they knew that power or influence or individual that was holding back the development and the manifestation of the man of sin. We are not absolutely sure, and we cannot be perhaps as dogmatic or as absolutely certain about this passage as we can about some of the others. It is certainly one of those passages that comes from the category of some of the difficult things that Paul wrote, one of the most difficult sections of scripture, perhaps, that Paul ever wrote in any of his letters.

LESSON TEXT: 2 Thessalonians 2:1–12

LESSON AIM: To examine and understand the writings of Paul and other New Testament writers concerning a religious apostasy.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Examine Paul’s teaching concerning the day of the Lord’s coming.
 2. Study the facts surrounding the “Man of Lawlessness.”
 3. Investigate certain doctrines about who the “Man of Lawlessness” might be.
-

CONCERN ABOUT THE DAY OF THE LORD (2:1–3a)

- A. The Lord's Coming & Our Gathering To Him.** *"Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him . . ."* (vs. 1–2). (see also Matthew 25:31–32; 1 Thessalonians 4:17)
1. Paul's admonition: Don't become easily unsettled or alarmed. (Cf. Ephesians 4:14; Mark 13:7).
 2. The means of the disturbance (v. 2).
 - a. **Some prophecy** (cf. 1 John; 1 Thessalonians 5:20–21; Revelation 2:2) — false teachers.
 - b. **Some report** – false word or message (cf. Acts 15:1, 24).
 - c. **Some letter** (cf. 3:17) — false writing.

Note: God holds us responsible for what we accept as truth.
- B. The Misunderstanding:** *" . . . that the day of the Lord has already come"* (v. 2). In the face of continuing misunderstandings about the second coming, Paul disclaims having taught that the "parousia" is upon us.
- C. Events Which Must Precede The Second Coming.** *" . . . that day will not come until . . ."*
1. **The rebellion (apostasy) will occur** (v. 3).
 2. **The man of lawlessness will be revealed** (v. 3).

THE MAN OF LAWLESSNESS (vs. 3–12)

- A. The Rebellion (apostasia)**
1. Old Testament use of the word (Greek Septuagint.)
 - a. Rebellion – "apostasia". Joshua 22:22 – *"...this has been in rebellion or disobedience to the LORD, do not spare us this day."* (See also Jeremiah 29:32)
 - b. Unfaithfulness – "apostasia." 2 Chronicles 29:19 – *"We have prepared and consecrated all the articles that King Ahaz removed in his unfaithfulness while he was king . . ."*
 - c. About king Manasseh: *" . . . all his sins and unfaithfulness . . ."* (2 Chronicles 33:19).
 - d. Backsliding – "apostasia." Jeremiah 2:19 – *" . . . your backsliding will rebuke you . . ."*
 2. New Testament use of the word – "apostasia."
 - a. Acts 21:21 – *" . . . to turn away from Moses . . ."*
 - b. See the similar word in 1 Timothy 4:1 – *" . . . some will abandon the faith . . ."* and in Hebrews 3:12 – *" . . . a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God."*
 3. Hence, the use of the word "apostasia" in the Bible and the context of this passage point to a religious apostasy.
 4. Paul and other New Testament writers warn about a religious apostasy of great proportions which was already beginning:
 - a. In the leadership. Acts 20:29–30 – *"I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from*

your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them.”

- b. From false teachers (prophets). 2 Peter 2:1–2 – *“But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you . . .”*
- c. Men may deny in practice what they confess with their mouths! (See Luke 6:46).
- d. From deceiving spirits and demons. 1 Timothy 4:1 – *“The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.”*
5. The apostasy had already begun: *“For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work . . .”* (v. 7).
6. This is in harmony with New Testament teaching that we are in “the last days” (Acts 2:16–17; Hebrews 1:1–2; 2 Timothy 3:1–5).
7. The context does not indicate this apostasy would develop at the end-time but that it was already in its beginning stages. See also: Jude 3–4; Galatians 1:6–8.

B. The “Man Of Lawlessness” Described (vs. 3–4). (Some manuscripts call him the “man of sin”) See 1 John 3:4 – “Sin is lawlessness.”

1. **He is called the “son of destruction.”** He is “the man doomed to destruction.” The same expression is used for Judas in John 17:12. See Acts 1:25 – “Judas left to go where he belongs.”
2. **He is set in opposition to all that is called God** (v. 4). *“He opposes and exalts himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped . . .”*
3. **He sits in the temple of God** (v. 4). *“He even sets himself up in God’s temple . . .”*
4. **He claims to be God** (v. 4). *“. . . proclaiming himself to be God.”* Remember again: one may do this without necessarily verbalizing it (Luke 6:46). He claimed three things in claiming to be God:
 - a. He claims their worship.
 - b. He claims the authority of God.
 - c. He claims the identity of God.
5. **He is called the wicked one** (v. 8).
6. **His coming will be in accordance with the work of Satan** (v.9).
Three things about his activity.
 - a. Lying power (Gk. DUNAMIS) – “Work of a supernatural origin or character such as could not be produced by natural agent or means” — how the work was done.
 - b. Lying signs (Gk. SEMEION) – “A sign, mark or token is used of miracles and wonders as signs of divine authority” – what is approved.
 - c. Lying wonders (Gk. TERAS) – “Something strange causing the beholder to marvel” — the effect upon the viewer.
7. **It will be displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders** (v. 9).
8. **He works with all wicked deception** (v. 10).

- C. Not A New Warning (vs. 5–6).** Paul had given previously detailed information about this development to the Thessalonians.
- D. The Apostasy Was Already In Process (v. 7; Cf. Galatians 1:8–9; Jude 3–4).** Similar quick apostasy took place among the Israelites who entered the promise land under Joshua (Judges 2:10–11, 17).
- E. The Revelation Of The Man Of Lawlessness Held Back For A Time**
1. A proper time for revealing the Man of Lawlessness. “. . . *you know what is holding him back, so that he may be revealed at the proper time.*”
 2. The holding back had already begun. “. . . *but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way.*” Note that Paul describes the holding back being done by a “what” and a “one who”.
 3. When the one holding it (the secret power of lawlessness) would be removed, the lawless one would be revealed.
- F. The Man Of Lawlessness Will Be Overthrown And Destroyed (v. 8).** By the splendor of Christ’s coming. So the man of lawlessness:
1. was already in a stage of development,
 2. was being held back in Paul’s day,
 3. would be fully revealed later and,
 4. destroyed at Jesus’ second coming.
- G. The Followers Of The Man Of Lawlessness (vs. 10–12).**
1. The man of lawlessness will be manifested “in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing.” note again the tense – “are perishing.” Not something reserved for the end-time. (See 1 Corinthians 1:18; 2 Corinthians 2:15; 4:3).
 2. Why they perish:
 - a. They “refused to love the truth” (v. 10).
 - b. They “have not believed the truth” (v. 12).
 - c. They “have delighted in wickedness” (v. 12).
 3. God sends a powerful delusion to such people that they will believe the lie and be condemned. (See 1 Kings 22:23; Romans 1:24, 26, 28; John 12:37, 39).

INTERPRETATIONS CONCERNING THE MAN OF LAWLESSNESS

- A. Not The Antichrist.** There is no reason to identify him with “the antichrist.”
1. This is often assumed but without scriptural evidence.
 2. Most of these identifications come from non-biblical writers.
 3. John alone used the imagery of the “antichrist.” He does so in four passages:
 - a. 1 John 2:18 – “*Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour.*”
 - b. 1 John 2:22 – “*Who is the liar? It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a man is the antichrist—he denies the Father and the Son.*”

- c. 1 John 4:3 – *“but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.”*
- d. 2 John 7 – *“Many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist.”*

B. Not The Sea-Beast of Revelation. There is no reason to identify him with the beast out of the sea of Revelation 13.

- 1. The beast out of the sea is a composite beast drawn from Daniel’s four beasts in Daniel 7.
- 2. The four beasts of Daniel 7 are identified as representing four world kingdoms – Daniel 7:17 – *“The four great beasts are four kingdoms that will rise from the earth.”*
- 3. Hence, the beast out of the sea of Revelation 13 represents world government, civil persecuting power, at that time in the Roman Empire, which persecuted the early church.
- 4. The “man of lawlessness” is a religious apostate who claims divine honors for himself. Note: he “sets himself up in God’s temple.” Paul is writing about the church when he writes about the temple of God. (Note: 1 Corinthians 3:16–17; 2 Corinthians 6:16).

CONCLUSION: The apostasy from the New Testament Church, often warned about in the writings of Paul and the other New Testament writers, that produced the papacy fits the facts better than other interpretations.

- 1. The New Testament predictions of widespread apostasy.
- 2. The development of the hierarchy from the local elderships of the church in harmony with New Testament predictions.
- 3. The usurpation of the authority of God by human traditions and commandments.
- 4. The use of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders to substantiate false doctrines about the papacy, and especially the exaltation of Mary.
- 5. Fits the requirements by beginning stages of apostasy in the first century.
- 6. It was held in check by the Roman government; when it (Roman government) was taken out of the way, the papacy developed much more fully in power and claims.
- 7. It is still here and apparently will be until Jesus comes.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON TEN:

1. Describe the **nature**, **theme** and **purpose** of the instruction and warning against deception concerning the day of the Lord.

2. From verse 3, list two events Paul said would precede the day of the Lord.

1) _____

2) _____

3. Describe the characteristics of the “*man of sin*.” _____

4. What honors does the “*the man of sin*” take to himself? _____

5. By interpretation who is “*the man of sin*?” _____

6. Give a detailed description of the “*apostasy*” _____

7. Were the Thessalonian Christians knowledgeable concerning the apostasy and the man of sin? Give proof of your answer.

LESSON ELEVEN

THANKSGIVING, ENCOURAGEMENT AND PRAYER

INTRODUCTION:

We welcome you to lesson number eleven in our study of the Thessalonian letters. This study today is based on 2 Thessalonians 2:13 – 3:5. We have entitled this, “Thanksgiving, Encouragement, and Prayer,” because these are the things that we find in this section of Scripture.

LESSON TEXT: 2 Thessalonians 2:13 – 3:5

LESSON AIM: To understand the interpretation of the apostasy, the man of sin, the restraining force and the overthrow by the Lord.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Learn to be thankful for God’s election and blessing in Jesus Christ.
 2. Understand Paul’s admonition to be steadfast in faith and obedience.
 3. Know the reasons for giving thanks. Know the basis and nature for Paul’s admonition to the brethren at Thessalonica.
-

THANKSGIVING FOR THE THESSALONIANS (2:13–14)

A. Brothers, Loved By The Lord. *“But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers, loved by the Lord . . .”* (v. 13).

Note the contrast between the followers of the man of lawlessness and their doom and the followers of Jesus and their salvation.

1. Followers of lawlessness: Two characteristics:
 - a. **Refuse to believe the truth** (vs. 10, 12).
 - b. **Are perishing, will be condemned** (vs. 10, 12).
2. Followers of Jesus: Two characteristics:
 - a. **Belief in the truth** (vs. 13).
 - b. **Are saved, share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ** (vs. 13, 14).

B. Brothers, Chosen By God. *“. . . because from the beginning God chose you to be saved . . .”* The two-fold medium:

1. The power agent: Through the sanctifying work of the Spirit. *“who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit . . .”* (1 Peter 1:2).

2. The power channel: Through belief in the truth. *“He called you to this through our gospel . . .”* (2:14).

C. Brothers, Called By The Gospel. *“He called you to this through our gospel.”*

1. The Thessalonians had been chosen and called by God:
 - a. The assurance of being called. 1 Thessalonians 1:4, *“For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you.”*
 - b. *“. . . encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory”* (1 Thessalonians 2:12).
 - c. *“The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it”* (1 Thessalonians 5:24).
2. The universal nature of this call. They had been called to this salvation through the gospel which is addressed to all men for their acceptance or rejection.
 - a. Its nature: It is *good news* (Mark 16:15).
 - b. Its effect: It pleases God (1 Timothy 2:3–4).
 - c. Its scope: Romans 1:16, *“I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.”*
 - d. Its boundaries: Acts 13:46, *“Then Paul and Barnabas answered them boldly: ‘We had to speak the word of God to you first. Since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles.’”*

D. Brothers, Sharers In God’s Glory. *“. . . that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

1. 1 Thessalonians 2:12, *“encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.”*
2. Romans 8:17, *“Now if we are children, then we are heirs— of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.”*
3. Colossians 3:4, *“When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.”*

AN EXHORTATION TO THE THESSALONIANS

“. . . stand firm and hold to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter.” (2:15).

A. Paul’s Exhortation – Stand Firm, Do Not Be Moved

1. 1 Thessalonians 3:8, *“For now we really live, since you are standing firm in the Lord.”*
2. 1 Corinthians 16:13, *“Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be men of courage; be strong.”*
3. 1 Corinthians 15:58, *“Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain.”*

B. Paul's Method – Hold To The Teachings

1. There are human traditions which make void the word of God, and we are often warned against them:
 - a. Mark 7:8, *"You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to the traditions of men."*
 - b. Mark 7:13, *"Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like that."*
 - c. Colossians 2:8, *"See to it that no-one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ."*
 - d. Colossians 2:22, *"These are all destined to perish with use, because they are based on human commands and teachings."*
2. But the word **"tradition"** means that which is handed down, and there were apostolic traditions handed down from them by word of mouth and by letter. They were to be kept because they were the very word of God.
 - a. 1 Corinthians 11:23, *"For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread."*
 - b. 1 Corinthians 15:3, *"For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures."*
 - c. 1 Corinthians 4:17, *"For this reason I am sending to you Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord. He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church."*
 - d. 1 Thessalonians 2:13, *"And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe."*

PRAYER FOR THE THESSALONIANS (2:16–17)

A. The Source for Answered Prayer – God and Christ. *"Our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father"* (v. 16.)

1. 2 Corinthians 13:14 – *"May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all."*
2. 1 Thessalonians 3:11 – *"Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus clear the way for us to come to you."*

B. The Gifts of Answered Prayer – Grace, Encouragement and Hope. Because of the love of God and His grace, we have an encouragement that will last through this life and into eternity. This hope is *"... an anchor for the soul, firm and secure"* (Hebrews 6:19).

C. The Power of Answered Prayer – Encouragement and Strength for Every Deed and Word (v. 17)

1. 1 Thessalonians 2:11–12, *"For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory."*
2. 1 Thessalonians 3:2, *"We sent Timothy, who is our brother and God's"*

fellowworker in spreading the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you in your faith.”

3. 1 Thessalonians 5:11, *“Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.”*
4. 1 Thessalonians 3:13, *“May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones.”*
5. Ephesians 3:16, *“I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being.”*
6. 2 Thessalonians 1:11, *“With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may count you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may fulfil every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your faith.”*
7. Hebrews 13:20–21, *“May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.”*

PRAYER REQUEST (2 Thessalonians 3:1–2)

A. “Brothers”: Used By Paul 22 Times In First And Second Thessalonians

B. “Pray For Us.” In This Context

1. For the spread of the Gospel. *“... that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly . . .”* (v.3).
 - a. Isaiah 55:11 – *“So is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.”*
 - b. Acts 6:7 – *“So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.”*
 - c. Acts 12:24 – *“But the word of God continued to increase and spread.”*
2. For our deliverance from evil men. *And pray that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men, for not everyone has faith”* (v. 2).
 - a. Romans 15:31, *“Pray that I may be rescued from the unbelievers in Judea...”*
 - b. Acts 17:5, *“But the Jews were jealous; so they rounded up some bad characters from the market-place, formed a mob and started a riot in the city. They rushed to Jason’s house in search of Paul and Silas in order to bring them out to the crowd.”*
 - c. Acts 17:13, *“When the Jews in Thessalonica learned that Paul was preaching the word of God at Berea, they went there too, agitating the crowds and stirring them up.”* See also 2 Corinthians 11:23–29.

THE LORD’S FAITHFULNESS (2 Thessalonians 3:3–5)

A. The Lord Is Faithful, Trustworthy And Reliable

1. 1 Corinthians 1:9, *“God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.”*

2. 1 Corinthians 10:13, *“No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.”*
3. 2 Timothy 2:13, *“If we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself.”*
4. Hebrews 10:23, *“Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.”*

B. God’s Strength and Protection From the Evil One (v. 3)

1. 1 Thessalonians 3:13 – *“May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones.”*
2. Matthew 6:13 – *“And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.”*
3. Jude 24 – *“To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy.”*
4. 1 John 2:14 – *“. . . I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God lives in you, and you have overcome the evil one.”*
5. 1 John 5:18 – *“We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin; the one who was born of God keeps him safe, and the evil one cannot harm him.”*

C. Confidence In God (v. 4). From these two letters we can see that Paul had good reasons for his confidence in the continued faithfulness of the Thessalonian Christians:

1. 2 Thessalonians 1:3 – *“We ought always to thank God for you, brothers, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love every one of you has for each other is increasing.”*
2. 1 Thessalonians 1:6–7 – *“You became imitators of us and of the Lord; in spite of severe suffering, you welcomed the message with the joy given by the Holy Spirit. And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia.”*
3. 1 Thessalonians 5:11 – *“Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.”*

Note: Paul could not express the same confidence for the Galatian Christians who were in danger of returning to the Law for justification and falling from grace.

“May the Lord direct your hearts into God’s love and Christ’s perseverance.”

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON ELEVEN:

1. List two reasons, stated by Paul, for giving thanks.

a. _____

b. _____

2. What is the reason for God's election and when did it take place? _____

3. Describe two things salvation involves (v. 13) _____

4. How were the Thessalonians called, (2:14)? _____

5. What is meant by the word "**TRADITIONS?**" _____


6. What is the **SOURCE, CAUSE, ACT** and **ANTICIPATION** of grace (2:16).

7. What three things does Paul pray for, (2:17)? _____

LESSON TWELVE

WARNING AGAINST IDLENESS

INTRODUCTION:

 Paul has expressed his confidence in their obeying his commands (vs. 4) and prays for their continued commitment to the Lord (vs.5). That expressed confidence and prayer will prepare the Thessalonians for what follows in verses 6–15. The command has to do with individual cases of “disorderly conduct.” The expression “every brother” seems to indicate that the instances were probably isolated, but frequent enough to have a negative effect on other members. The concept of “disorderly conduct” could cover a wide range of conducts. But in the context of both letters to the Thessalonians it refers to the refusal to work to provide for their own needs and to “win the respect of outsiders.” See 1 Thessalonians 4:11–12; 5:14; 2 Thessalonians 3:6–13.

1. **LOAFING** (3:11). Thinking the return of Christ was eminent some were just doing anything but being productive.
 2. **SPREADING GOSSIP** (2:2). Spreading exciting gossip about Christ’s impending return.
 3. **SEEKING CHURCH SUPPORT** (3:12). Implies they did not want to earn their keep and wanted to eat through the labor of others.
 4. **BUSYBODIES** (3:11). Meddling in things that were not their business and thus causing problems.
 5. **OPEN DEFIANCE** (3:14–15). Refusing to follow the example and command of Paul.
-

LESSON TEXT: 2 Thessalonians 3:6–18

LESSON AIM: To recognize and understand the problem of disorderliness and disobedience. How to correct these problems when they occur.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Learn the importance of not forsaking the teaching of God’s Word.
 2. See that being “DISORDERLY” is being out of step with God.
 3. Understand what it means to practice congregational discipline.
 4. Learn the attitude in which discipline is rendered and the righteous intent of it’s application.
-

PAUL’S EXHORTATION TO DISCIPLINE THE DISORDERLY (3:6–13)

The problem of disorderliness and disobedience existing in the church in Thessalonica needed to be disciplined.

A. Previous Admonitions About Idleness

1. 1 Thessalonians 4:11–12, *“Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and to work with your hands, just as we told you, so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.”*
2. 1 Thessalonians 5:14, *“And we urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone.”*

B. Paul’s Command In Christ’s Name

1. Paul’s teaching and practice. Note another similar appeal to the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ in another case of discipline:
1 Corinthians 5:4–5, *“When you are assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present, hand this man over to Satan, so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord.”*
2. Paul’s teaching methods.
 - a. Verbal teaching – “by mouth” (1 Thessalonians 2:15; 3:6).
 - b. Visual teaching – his life model (2 Thessalonians 3:7–9).
 - c. Written instruction – his epistles (2 Thessalonians 3:14; 2 Thessalonians 2:15).

C. Do Not Associate With Ungodly Brethren

1. Wrong concept. This idleness could have come from the heightened sense that the day of the Lord had come and there was no need to provide for the future.
2. Wrong motives. There may have been a distribution of food and other goods to the poor according to the practice of the church in Jerusalem in its early days. See Acts 2:44–45; 4:32–35; 6:1–6.
3. Wrong practice. Some were perhaps taking advantage of such a situation and abusing the generosity of some of the other members.
4. Correcting instructions. They are to turn from such idleness and laziness and live according to the tradition, the apostolic teaching handed down to the Thessalonians. See – 2 Thessalonians 2:15 – *“So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter.”*

D. The Example Of Paul, Silas, and Timothy (3:7)

1. The pattern to follow. “. . . how you ought to follow our example” (vs. 7–10). see also 1 Thessalonians 1:6; Philippians 3:17; 1 Corinthians 11:1).
2. Not a pattern of idleness. “. . . we were not idle when we were with you” (v. 7).
3. Not a pattern of greediness. *“nor did we eat anyone’s food without paying for it. . .”* (v. 8).
Acts 20:33–35 – *“I have not coveted anyone’s silver or gold or clothing. You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions. In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”*
4. A pattern of work and labor. “. . . we worked night and day laboring and

toiling so that we would not be a burden to any of you” (v. 8). (see also 1 Thessalonians 2:9).

E. The Nature Of Their Example (vs. 5–9)

Note:

- a. Their example was a matter of knowledge (v. 7).
- b. Their example should have been imitated (v. 7).
1. They (Paul and Silas) were not disorderly (v. 7).
2. They were not parasites (v. 8a).
3. They did not demand their rights (v. 8b).
4. They were characterized by constant labor (v. 8). See the following scriptures for Paul’s practice in preaching the gospel. (Matthew 10:9–10; 1 Corinthians 9:13–14; 2 Corinthians 11:7–12). Paul often reminded the Thessalonians of what he taught them while he was with them.

F. Commands To The Disorderly (vs. 11–12)

1. The command is joined with an exhortation.
2. Three things they are commanded to do.
 - a. Live in quietness.
 - b. Work with diligence.
 - c. Eat your own bread.
3. *“They are not busy; they are busybodies”* (v. 11). (See also: 1 Timothy 5:13; 1 Peter 4:15; 1 Thessalonians 4:11–12; Ephesians 4:28).

COMMANDS TO THE CHURCH (vs 13–14)

A. The Action Commanded. *“And as for you, brothers, never tire of doing what is right”* (v. 13). (See also Galatians 6:9; 1 Corinthians 15:58).

1. Note (Greek. **SEMEIOO** – means literally *to set a mark on*, v. 14).
2. Withdraw (vs. 6, 14).
3. Admonish (v. 15; 1 Thessalonians 5:14; Romans 15:14; Acts 20:31).

B. Treatment of The Disobedient

1. Nature of discipline – No fellowship. *“. . . Do not associate with him . . .”* (v. 14).
2. Purpose of this discipline – shame and repentance. *“that he may feel ashamed”* (v. 14).
 - a. In certain situations Paul wrote to cause brothers to feel ashamed. (See 1 Corinthians 6:5; 1 Corinthians 15:34)
 - b. But in other circumstances Paul insisted that he was not writing to shame them (1 Corinthians 4:14).
3. The attitude commanded – brotherliness.
 - a. Count him not as an enemy. *“Yet do not regard him as an enemy . . .”* (v. 15). (See also Galatians 6:1–2).
 - b. Admonish him as a brother. *“. . . but warn him as a brother”* (v. 15). (See also Acts 20:31; 1 Thessalonians 5:14; Proverbs 27:6).
4. The purpose of the command – restoration (v. 14; cf. 1 Corinthians 5:5) – that he might be ashamed. This entire action is to be *remedial* not vindic-

tive.

FINAL GREETINGS (3:16–18)

Paul concludes this chapter and epistle with a prayer (v. 16).

A. The Lord Of Peace (v. 16)

1. Uttered to the Lord of peace. 1 Thessalonians 5:23, *“May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*
2. Romans 15:33, *“The God of peace be with you all. Amen.”*
3. Romans 16:20, *“The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.”*
4. Philippians 4:6–7, *“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”*

B. God’s Peace Be With You (v. 16). Uttered in behalf of you all.

1. Ephesians 2:14, *“For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility.”*
2. Philippians 4:6–7, *“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”*

C. The Lord Will Be With You (v. 16). The Lord’s *peace* and the Lord’s *presence* be with you all the time in all places.

Hebrews 13:5–6, *“Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, ‘Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.’ So we say with confidence, ‘The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?’”*

D. Paul’s Personal Greeting (v. 17). Paul’s signature (v. 17) which is the mark of genuineness. Cf. the following passages.

1. Galatians 6:11, *“See what large letters I use as I write to you with my own hand!”*
2. Philemon 19, *“I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand. I will pay it back—not to mention that you owe me your very self.”*
3. 1 Corinthians 16:21, *“I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand.”*
4. Colossians 4:18, *“I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you.”*

Note: Romans 16:22, *“I, Tertius, who wrote down this letter, greet you in the Lord.”*

E. God’s Grace Be With You (v. 18)

1. 1 Thessalonians 5:28, *“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.”*
2. 2 Timothy 4:22, *“The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.”*
3. Matthew 28:20, *“And teaching them to obey everything I have commanded*

you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

STUDY NOTES

Paul’s Exhortation To Discipline the Disorderly (3:6–15)

A. The Problem – Some Were:

1. Disorderly (vs. 6, 11) – out of step (cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:14).
2. Rejecting the traditions (v. 6).
3. Idle (v. 11) – not working.
4. Busybodies (v. 11) – a person who putters around.
5. Disobedient (v. 14) – Seven areas of their disobedience.
 - a. Disobedient to the authority of the Lord (v. 6); cf Luke 6:46).
 - b. Disobedient to Paul’s repeated teaching while he was in Thessalonica (v. 10).
 - c. Disobedient to the examples of the teachers (vs. 7–9).
 - d. Disobedient to the admonition of First Thessalonians (v. 11; cf 1 Thessalonians 4:11–12).
 - e. Disobedient to admonition from their brethren (1 Thessalonians 5:14).
 - f. Disobedient to Timothy’s teaching while there (1 Thessalonians 3:10).
 - g. Disobedient to the present command and exhortation of this letter (v. 14).

B. The Number to Be Disciplined

1. From *every* disorderly brother (v. 16).
2. From *any* disobedient man (v. 14).

C. The Basis for the Action of Discipline

1. The authority of Christ (vs. 6, 12, 14).
2. The examples of their teachers (vs. 7–9).
 - a. Their example was a matter of knowledge (v. 7).
 - b. Their example should have been imitated (v. 7).
 - c. The nature of their example.
 - 1) They were not disorderly (v. 7).
 - 2) They were not parasites (v. 8a).
 - 3) They did not demand their rights (v. 8b).
 - 4) They were characterized by constant labor (v.8).

**“Farewell, Dear brothers,
beloved in the Lord”**

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON TWELVE

1. Identify the problems that describe some people in Thessalonica_____
2. What does Paul mean by “disorderly?” _____
3. List seven areas of disobedience by some of the Thessalonians_____
4. List two things Paul says are the basis of discipline.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
5. List the examples that had been given the Thessalonians by Paul.
6. What is the action, attitude and purposes of a congregation in regard to exercising discipline?
7. How would you describe Paul’s closing prayer for the Thessalonians?_____

Study Guide

Doyle Gilliam



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The Gilliam family served nearly 20 years in Malawi, Kenya, and Zimbabwe, returning to the United States in 1977. Since then Doyle has taught at Sunset International Bible Institute and in the Sunset School of Missions. He still makes frequent teaching trips back to the African mission field. He and Louise are the parents of five children.



1 & 2 Thessalonians NIV
commentary by College Press is
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