

A workbook aid for studying

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE
THESSALONIANS

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PREFACE

This study book is intended to aid a Bible class in the study of Paul's epistle to the Thessalonians. The material herein will not take the student on a verse-by-verse analysis of the text, but is intended to bring attention to significant portions of the text. Rather than providing textual insight from the writer, the booklet has been designed with questions to provoke thought and further study on the student's part, so that principles and lessons applicable for the Christian's life can be learned.

The usefulness of the material, and the success of the Bible class is primarily dependent upon the preparation which is given by each participant. Verse references from 1 Thessalonians are provided with each question. These are given as a starting point for answering the questions. Seldom will a question be fully answered and all the relevant points of a discussion exhausted by the given verses. Students are encouraged to look beyond the designated texts for related passages which will help to answer questions and reveal the lessons to be learned from the inspired record. Some questions given may require diligent investigation on the student's part to completely answer.

It is my hope that the questions provided will touch on all the important lessons which can be gleaned by the child of God today from these books. However, the class should not be limited to these questions. Perhaps segments of text which the given questions do not directly deal with, or detailed points which are found in the text will provoke questions on the student's part. Such questions are welcomed and encouraged. Though the intent of this class material is to benefit us for Christian living today, the class should also be conducted in such a manner that we also come to a better appreciation of the events and customs which are found in the times of old.

May this workbook be used to the glory of God and the strengthening of saints.

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Commendation of Thessalonian Growth

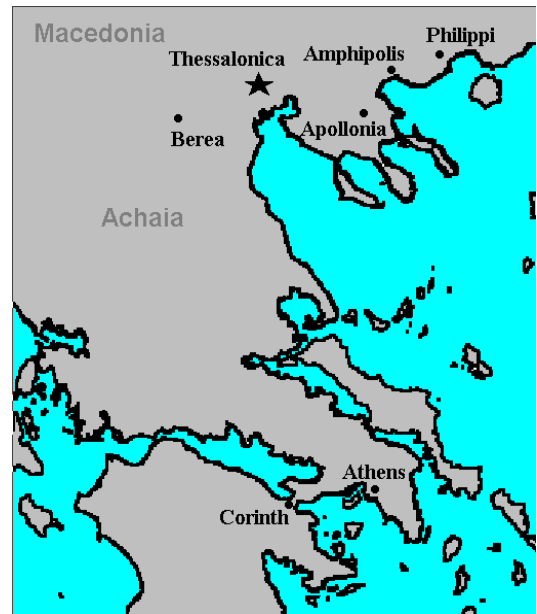
1 THESSALONIANS 1:1-1:10

"And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit." (1:6)

1. Paul's first stop in Thessalonica was on his second missionary journey, accompanied by Silas and Timothy. How were they received there?
2. Paul mentions three specific items which he, Silas and Timothy are constantly praying for with regard to the Thessalonians. Discuss each. (1:2-3)
 - "...*your work of faith*..."
 - "...*labour of love*..."
 - "...*patience of hope*..."
3. What does it mean to be "*elect of God*"? How does one become "*elect*"? (1:4)
4. Paul says that the gospel did not go to the Thessalonians in word only. What does he mean by this? Discuss the meaning and purpose of Paul's statement. (1:5)
5. What do we know about the affliction wherein the Thessalonians received the word? (1:6)

6. Discuss the power of an example. (1:7)

7. It is believed that Paul wrote this epistle from Corinth, shortly after his first visit to Thessalonica. How could these reports of them circulate so quickly in the regions of Macedonia and Achaia? (1:8-9)



8. Comment on the details of the Thessalonian conversion which were reported among the other churches in the region. (1:9)

9. The Thessalonians were waiting for Jesus to return. What lesson should we learn from this? (1:10)

10. Discuss the deliverance which is found in Jesus Christ. (1:10)

Lessons and principles:

[List and discuss what we can learn from this study to better our service before the Lord.]

Paul's Work And Thessalonian Conversion

1 THESSALONIANS 2:1-2:16

"So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us." (2:8)

1. What are the sufferings, spiteful treatment and conflicts of which Paul associates with his trip to Thessalonica? How did they (Paul and his companions) react to these things? (2:1-2)
2. Notice, Paul uses a series of negative statements to characterize the work which was done in Thessalonica. Discuss each. (2:3-6)
 - "...our exhortation did not come from error or uncleanness, nor was it in deceit."
 - "...even so we speak, not as pleasing men..."
 - "...neither at any time did we use flattering words..."
 - "...nor a cloak for covetousness..."
 - "...nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others..."
3. Investigate this word "*approved*". What is Paul saying about himself and those who preached with him? Discuss the responsibilities of those "*approved by God*". (2:4)
4. What manner of relationship did the apostle have with the Thessalonians? How long did he and his companions stay in Thessalonica? (2:7-8, 11)
5. How did Paul keep himself from being a burden to the Thessalonians? Was this necessary? (2:9)

6. Paul uses three adverbs to describe his conduct among the brethren. Identify and discuss them (**2:10**)

7. The Thessalonians received the message preached as the word of God, not as the word of men. What factors will determine how one receives the gospel? (**2:13**)

8. Paul compares the Thessalonians and their struggles to the Judean churches and their struggles. Why do the opponents of Christianity, whether Jewish or Gentile, seek to persecute the brethren? (**2:14**)

9. Paul makes the statement about the Jews, “...*they do not please God and are contrary to all men...*” Discuss the evidence for this statement. (**2:15-16**)

10. What “*wrath*” has come upon the Jews? When did this occur? (**2:16**)

Lessons and principles:

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Present Encouragement For The Thessalonians

1 THESSALONIANS 2:17-3:13

“For this reason, when I could no longer endure it, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter had tempted you, and our labor might be in vain..” (3:5)

1. Having left Thessalonica, Paul and his companions desired to return, but Paul states, “*Satan hindered us.*” Discuss this phrase and the implications of it. **(2:18)**
2. How are the Thessalonian brethren a “hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing” to Paul and his companions? What does this statement reveal of Paul’s thoughts for the Thessalonians? **(2:19-20)**
3. Paul speaks about being in Athens when Timothy was sent back to Thessalonica. Cross-reference the details here with the book of Acts. How does this further give us a picture of what is taking place? **(3:1-2)**
4. Paul reveals that Christians are appointed to suffer afflictions. Discuss other texts where Paul makes this clear, and consider Paul’s own life as an example. **(3:3-4)**
5. Was Paul’s curiosity about their faith for his own benefit or theirs? **(3:5)**
6. How does the report which Timothy brings from Thessalonica compare with that which was spread throughout Macedonia and Achaia? **(3:6)**

7. Paul wrote, “For now we live, if you stand fast in the Lord.” What does the Thessalonians stand in the Lord have to do with Paul, Silas and Timothy’s ability to live? **(3:7-8)**

8. Paul wanted to “perfect what is lacking” in the Thessalonian faith. With all these good reports out of Thessalonica, what could be lacking? **(3:9-10)**

9. Paul attributes the direction of their travelling to the Lord. Could Paul not return to Thessalonica when he so desired? **(3:11)**

10. Paul wanted the Thessalonians love for one another and for all to be patterned after his own love for them. What do we know about the apostle’s love for these brethren? **(3:12)**

11. What is the end goal of all that Paul had done and commands to be done in Thessalonica? How should this mold our focus? **(3:13)**

Lessons and principles:

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Instruction For Christian Living

1 THESSALONIANS 4:1-4:12

“For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness.” (4:7)

1. Is it possible to walk pleasing before the Lord without having received instruction from His word? Discuss the implications of your answer. (4:1-2)
2. What is the association between the will of God and the sanctification of the believer? (4:2-3)

SANCTIFICATION – Gr. *hagiasmos*
“...consecration, purification...the effect of consecration, sanctification of heart and life...” (Thayer’s)
3. Paul says that “*each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor*”. Discuss the basis of this knowledge, and why it is vitally important. (4:3-5)
4. There are numerous areas wherein one might “*take advantage of and defraud*” another. Take a few moments to discuss some specific applications of this prohibition. How does such a command fit with the context in which we find it? (4:6-7)

TAKE ADVANTAGE – Gr. *hyperbaino*
“...to step over, go beyond...to overstep the proper limits, to transgress, trespass, do wrong, sin...” (Thayer’s)

DEFRAUD – Gr. *pleonekteo*
“...to gain or take advantage of another, to overreach...” (Thayer’s)
5. Paul warns, “*...he who rejects this does not reject man, but God...*” Comment on the implications of such a statement. (4:8)

6. The apostle acknowledges that God has “...given us His Holy Spirit.” What significance does this context hold with regard to the receipt of the Spirit? (4:8)

7. How are Christians “taught by God to love one another”? (4:9)

BROTHERLY LOVE – Gr. *philadelphia*
“...love of brothers (or sisters)...in the NT the love which Christians cherish for each other as ‘brethren’...” (Thayer’s)

LOVE – Gr. *agapao*
“...to be full of good will and exhibit the same...to have preference for, wish well to, regard the welfare of...” (Thayer’s)

8. Paul admonishes the Thessalonians to do certain things, that they might be sanctified servants before the Lord. Discuss:

– “...increase more and more...” (4:10)

– “...aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business...” (4:11)

– “...work with your own hands, as we commanded you...” (4:11)

9. What specific benefits does Paul ascribe to the one who walks according to the instruction which he left with the Thessalonians? (4:12)

Lessons and principles:

[List and discuss what we can learn from this study to better our service before the Lord.]

The Coming Day Of The Lord

1 THESSALONIANS 4:13-5:11

"For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night." (5:2)

1. Who are those which Paul refers to as "*fallen asleep*"? What hope does the Christian have which others do not?(**4:13-14**)
2. The apostle gives instruction regarding the order at the second coming of Christ. Discuss what is revealed to us about this event. What other Scriptures shed light on these happenings? (**4:15-17**)
3. What is the intent of Paul's message? How will it be accomplished? (**4:18**)
4. Why do the Thessalonians not need Paul to write to them regarding "*the times and the season*"? Why does he do so then? (**5:1-2**)
5. What does the context reveal about the Lord's coming? (**5:2-4**)

6. What separates one who is of the light/day from one who is of the night/darkness? (5:5-8)

7. In the latter verses of **Ch. 4**, Paul spoke of those who have “*fallen asleep*”. Now, he commands the Christian “*let us not sleep*”. What are we to make of this? (5:6-8)

8. Paul writes, “*God did not appoint us to wrath*”. Who is “*us*”? Are any appointed to wrath? Who has been appointed for salvation? (5:9)

9. How can one “*live together with Him*” whether awake (alive) or asleep (dead)? (5:10)

10. Summarize the comfort which a Christian can derive from our text today. (5:11)

Lessons and principles:

[List and discuss what we can learn from this study to better our service before the Lord.]

Closing Exhortations

1 THESSALONIANS 5:12-5:28

"Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." (5:23)

1. Paul speaks of those who "*labour among you*", "*are over you in the Lord and admonish you*". Who are these people? Can you think of any parallel texts to this? (5:12-13)

2. Discuss the responsibilities Paul commits to the saints regarding one another (5:14-15):
 - "*warn those who are unruly*"
 - "*comfort the fainthearted*"

 - "*uphold the weak*"
 - "*be patient with all*"

 - "*see that no one renders evil for evil to anyone*"

3. The apostle gives many short-worded exhortations. Discuss each (5:16-22):
 - "*rejoice always*"
 - "*pray without ceasing*"

 - "*in everything give thanks*"
 - "*do not quench the Spirit*"

 - "*do not despise prophecies*"
 - "*test all things; hold fast what is good*"

 - "*abstain from every form of evil*"

4. What does Paul (likely without intending to do so) teach us about the nature of man? (5:23)

5. What makes for our sanctification? (5:23-24)

6. What is a “holy kiss”? (5:26)

Lessons and principles:

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