

# *1 Thessalonians*

## *Leader Guide*

(NASB and ESV)

YOU—BLAMELESS  
AT HIS COMING

*1 Thessalonians Leader Guide (NASB and ESV)*

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Published by Precept Ministries of Reach Out, Inc.

Chattanooga, Tennessee 37422

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1st edition (10/2019)

## USING LEADER GUIDES

Leader Guides are intended for you, the leader, to guide your Precept Upon Precept® and In & Out® discussions. They are designed to help you reason through the content of the lessons and to ensure you have understood what your group should have learned from their study. The guides offer effective plans for leading discussions.

The Holy Spirit is your guide as you prepare. He is the one who knows what your group needs to apply to their lives. Pray for them as they study and for yourself as you prepare to lead the discussion.

These guides can be used for either the NASB or the ESV edition of the courses. ESV words follow the NASB after a slash / or are set off with parentheses.

### Leader Guides include the following:

- Lesson emphasis
- A logical order for the discussion
- Discussion questions
- Suggested visual aid(s)

### Practical tips for using the Leader Guide:

- **Don't simply "do" the lesson.**  
Stay with the lesson until you have a good understanding of it. This will give you a better grasp of how the Leader Guide takes you through the lesson.
- **You don't have to ask every question in the guide.**  
Often one question will be covered while discussing another question so there is no reason to ask it. Your goal is not to ask every question, but to ask enough questions to make sure your group understood the lesson and to help them apply the truths to their lives.

### Using the Leader Guide with In & Out

#### When your entire group uses In & Out

Compare an In & Out lesson with the Leader Guide. Use what relates to the In & Out lesson as a guide for the discussion. Don't teach what's not in In & Out lessons. Remember your goal in the discussion is for your group to discuss what they've learned, not for you to lecture on what you learned.

#### For groups studying both Precept Upon Precept and In & Out

Use the Leader Guides as designed for PUP, knowing that the In & Out assignments will be covered in the discussion. Make a note in the Leader Guide of what is not in the In & Out.

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## **1 THESSALONIANS LEADER GUIDE Lesson 1**

Lesson emphasis:

- Overview of 1 Thessalonians

### **AUTHOR AND RECIPIENTS**

To begin this discussion, ask your group who wrote this letter and to whom. Tell them to look at their Observation Worksheets and 1 Thessalonians at a Glance as they discuss this lesson.

1:1 introduces Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy as who it is from. Plural pronouns are used frequently throughout the letter, referring to these three men. But 2:18; 3:5; 5:27 use the singular pronouns for only Paul as the author.

*NOTE: This is a common element in Paul's letters; he wrote them not only from himself, but also from those with him at the time of his writing.*

1:1 also introduces the church of the Thessalonians as the recipients of this letter. It was to a whole group of believers, a church, not just an individual.

Tell your group to look at the list they made about the author and ask what they learned. They should look at the map as a visual aid for this part of your discussion. As the group discusses places mentioned in the text, ask if they found them on the map.

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy were thankful for the Thessalonians as they prayed for them and thought about them.

They took the gospel to the Thessalonians and were examples to them.

Before going to Thessalonica, Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy had been mistreated / shamefully treated at Philippi. They were entrusted with the gospel and spoke it in Philippi and Thessalonica.

They deeply cared for the church and behaved blamelessly while with them. They exhorted and encouraged as a father.

Jews tried to hinder them from speaking to Gentiles for salvation.

Paul wanted to visit them again, but Satan hindered them. But he sent Timothy while he remained at Athens alone.

Timothy returned to Paul and gave a good report about the church. The result was rejoicing and earnest prayer for the Thessalonian believers.

In 5:25, Paul asked the Thessalonians to pray for Silvanus, Timothy, and him.

They asked that their letter be read to all the brethren / brothers.

Ask your group what specifically they admire in these three men that they can incorporate into their lives.

Next you can ask what your group learned about the recipients and to look at the list they made as a visual aid.

They had a work of faith, labor of love and steadfastness of hope in the Lord Jesus Christ.

They were chosen by God.

Became imitators of Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy and became an example to all believers in Macedonia and Achaia as God's word sounded forth from them.

They received the word—the gospel—in much tribulation / affliction but with the joy of the Holy Spirit.

There was a report of how they received the gospel and turned to God. They had previously been idol worshipers.

God's word was performing its work in them (ESV—was at work in them).

They also became imitators of the churches in Judea by enduring sufferings from their countrymen.

Timothy's report was that the church was thinking kindly of them and longing to see them. The Thessalonians still had their faith and love.

Again, ask an application question: Thinking about the Church in Thessalonica, what would you like to incorporate into your life?

### **KEY WORDS**

At this point you can lead your group to discuss what they observed about the key words in each chapter. Tell them to look at the list they made about the Lord's coming.

### 1 Thessalonians 1

Who and what is this chapter mainly about?

This tells what happened when Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy took the gospel to Thessalonica. The Thessalonians received God's word in tribulation / affliction but sounded it forth to others.

Ask about the second coming reference.

They were waiting for Jesus, God's Son, to return from heaven.

### 1 Thessalonians 2

Who and what is this chapter mainly about?

This goes into more detail about Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy taking the gospel to Thessalonica.

There was opposition to the gospel, but when truly received, the gospel does its work in believers.

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy suffered for it and so did the Thessalonians.

Ask about the second coming reference.

They were Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy's joy and crown of exultation / boasting at Jesus' coming.

### 1 Thessalonians 3

What is this chapter about? What did Paul do and why?

Paul sent Timothy to strengthen / establish and encourage / exhort the Thessalonians because of afflictions.

He had told them in advance / beforehand that they would suffer.  
He was comforted in his affliction by Timothy's report about them.

How do the events in Acts 16 and 17 relate to 1 Thessalonians 1–3?

Tell your group to follow along on the map and look at "Sequence of Events in Paul's Life after His Conversion" as they discuss these events.

#### Acts 16:11-12, 23-24, 40

This tells how Paul, Silvanus and Timothy were mistreated / shamefully treated in Philippi—beaten and put in prison

Acts 17:1-16

They went to Thessalonica, gave the gospel, and some believed.

The opposition to the gospel is described; a mob was formed, and Paul was sent away.  
He was in Athens alone.

You can ask your group how they have experienced or witnessed opposition to the gospel. Have they seen opposition to biblical truth on social media?

Lead the discussion back to 1 Thessalonians 3.

What is the second coming reference in this chapter?

The Lord establish your heart blameless in holiness before the Father at His coming with all His saints.

1 Thessalonians 4

What is this chapter about?

Paul turned to instructing the Thessalonians.

How are chapters 4 and 5 different from chapters 1–3 in this letter?

1–3 focus on the history of the author(s) and recipients

4–5 focus on instructions for the church

Ask about the second coming reference in this chapter.

Some will be alive at His coming, but some will have fallen asleep—the dead in Christ.  
All will be with Him when He comes.

1 Thessalonians 5

What is this chapter about?

Teaching about times and epochs / seasons, the day of the Lord.

More commands or instructions for the Thessalonians.

What is the last reference to the Lord's coming?

God sanctify believers, preserve complete, without blame (ESV—kept blameless) at Christ's coming. He will do it.

Ask your group how they personally view the Lord's coming. How are they encouraging fellow believers to be ready?

Tell them to look at their At a Glance chart and ask about a possible theme for this letter.

The gospel received—without blame / blameless at Jesus' coming  
or  
Excel still more—without blame at Jesus' coming  
(ESV—Walk and please God more and more / blameless at Jesus' coming)

Why did Paul write this letter? What was his purpose?

It might have been to encourage believers who go through suffering because of God's Word.

According to the chart "Sequence of Events in Paul's Life after His Conversion," what was the timing of this letter relative to when Paul, Silvanus and Timothy were in Thessalonica?

Both were during his second journey. So, it seems that not a lot of time had passed between.

You can also ask your group why this letter was to be read to all the brethren / brothers.

To encourage in their affliction  
To remind of the Lord's coming  
so they all would be blameless at His coming

Who are all the brethren / brothers?

Believers today are included.

Ask if anyone has a personal application from this lesson which has not been discussed.

To end your discussion you might read/pray 1 Thessalonians 3:11-13 and 5:23-24.



## 1 THESSALONIANS LEADER GUIDE Lesson 2

Lesson emphasis:

- 1 Thessalonians 1

### REVIEW

Tell your group to look at their At a Glance charts and ask what they remember about 1 Thessalonians. Who wrote the letter, to whom, and why? What is the letter about?

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy to the church of the Thessalonians  
They wrote to encourage and instruct the believers at Thessalonica.

A repeated theme is the Lord's second coming.

### 1 THESSALONIANS 1

#### Verses 2-5

How does the letter begin? What is the first thing written to the believers?

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy prayed for and thanked God for the Thessalonian believers.

They remembered the Thessalonians' work of faith, labor of love, and steadfastness of hope in Christ.

Ask what your group learned about each of these three things. Discuss cross-references.

Work of faith

“work,” *ergon*—“anything done or to be done *deed, work, action*”<sup>1</sup>

#### Titus 1:16–2:14

Although some might profess to know the Lord, if what they do is not sound according to God's Word, then they deny they know Him by their disobedient deeds /works.

The older believers are to be examples for the younger ones—sound in faith and love and perseverance. The older women specifically are to encourage the younger ones how to be workers at home. Even the slaves can show their faith.

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<sup>1</sup>Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg, and Neva F. Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, Baker's Greek New Testament Library (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), p. 171.

The grace of God instructs /trains one to deny /renounce ungodliness and live righteously / uprightly.

A lifestyle of good deeds / works gives evidence that believers have been redeemed from lawless deeds / lawlessness.

Here, as in 1 Thessalonians, looking / waiting for the appearing of Jesus in hope is an encouragement to godly, blameless living.

Ephesians 2:8-10

Believers are saved by grace through faith, but there are works which God prepared for each believer to walk in or live out. No one is saved as a result of works, but the good works come after conversion, salvation.

James 2:14-26

Faith without works is dead, not living, not true faith, not real salvation.

Abraham's offering of Isaac is the example of faith working / active with works. He believed, and his faith resulted in good works, obedience to the Word of the Lord. So works were part of his salvation as was justification, although he was not saved by his works.

Hebrews 11

Without faith it is impossible to please God.

Men / people of old gained approval (ESV—received their commendation) by their faith. The whole chapter lists example after example of men who proved their faith by their works.

How can believers now show they have a work of faith? You might ask your group to name some specifics from their lives showing they are truly saved.

Then ask what they learned about the labor of love, including cross-references.

Labor of love

“labor,” *kopos*, “as exhausting physical or mental exertion *toil*,”<sup>2</sup>

1 John 5:1-3

Love God by keeping His commandments. That is also how one knows that he loves his brothers—how one knows if he is truly saved.

Obedience is connected with faith and love.

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<sup>2</sup>Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg, and Neva F. Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, Baker's Greek New Testament Library (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), p. 235.

1 Corinthians 13:4-8a

This gives a description of how love is demonstrated and defined. Patience, kindness, not seeking one's own (ESV—insisting on one's own way) or being arrogant, etc., are the ways in which love is lived out toward others. Love is a choice, choosing to be patient, kind, etc.

The Thessalonians had a labor of love commended by Paul, Silvanus and Timothy.

Encourage your group to share how they are doing in this. And ask about the difference between “work of faith” and “labor of love.”

“Work of faith” seems to refer to those deeds that are common to all true believers; what God works within for them to work out—sharing the gospel, etc.

Labor is more strenuous than work.

What is last in the list in verse 3? Ask what your group learned from the cross-references.

Steadfastness of hope

“hope,” *elpis*, “a looking forward to in confident expectation.”<sup>3</sup>

Romans 8:18-25

This is encouragement for believers to focus on what is to come when going through present sufferings.

1 Corinthians 15:58

More encouragement for believers to be steadfast . . . because their labor is not in vain; it's the Lord's work that they are to be doing.

Hebrews 3:6-14; 6:9-12

These are warnings that true believers will hold fast their hope until the end. It is the unbelieving who fall away when things get hard to handle. Believers might give way to temporary feelings of despair, but their hope is until the end.

Ask the group if others see these things in their lives. Do they have work that proves their faith, labor that demonstrates their love, steadfastness that shows their hope? What shows these things?

Lead your discussion back to 1 Thessalonians 1. How are the Thessalonians described in verse 4?

Loved and chosen by God

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<sup>3</sup>James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).

What does verse 5 teach about the gospel?

This verse explains how it came to the believers at Thessalonica:  
in word  
in power  
in the Holy Spirit  
with full conviction  
and by example

You might ask your group how they are giving the gospel in word, in power, led by the Spirit, convinced of it, and by example. Give time for discussion.

*NOTE: In case someone in your group brings it up, “conviction” in verse 5 refers to how Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy gave the gospel. It means “to be fully assured, convinced.”<sup>4</sup> In this context it doesn’t refer to the Thessalonians being convicted by the Spirit when they heard the gospel.*

#### Verses 6-10

How did the Thessalonians receive the gospel? And what happened when they did?  
Tell your group to look at the map as a visual aid for this part of your discussion.

They received the word with the joy of the Holy Spirit, but it was in much tribulation / affliction.

After receiving the gospel, they imitated Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy and the Lord.

They sounded forth God’s Word to Macedonia and Achaia.  
The Thessalonian believers became examples because of sharing the Word.

The Thessalonians’ salvation was much talked about as Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy heard reports about it. Faith changes lives.

They had been pagan idol worshipers but were transformed to serve the living God and wait for His Son’s return.

How does this chapter show true conversion or true salvation? And ask if those in your group are sure of their salvation. What changes have come because of their salvation?

Who were imitators in this chapter and who were examples?

Paul, Silvanus and Timothy were examples who first imitated the Lord.  
The Thessalonian church became imitators of them, then became examples to others.

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<sup>4</sup>James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).

What did Paul write about being an example to the Thessalonian church in 2 Thessalonians?

2 Thessalonians 3:7-9

He told them to follow his example regarding work. Silvanus, Timothy, and Paul worked when they were with the Thessalonians so they wouldn't be a burden to them. They provided for themselves and offered their behavior as a model / example for the church.

Ask your group what they learned from the cross-references about imitators.  
Tell them to look at the chart in the lesson.

1 Corinthians 4:16

Paul clearly told this church to imitate him.

Ephesians 5:1-2

Imitate God as His children. Walk or live in love like Christ did.

Philippians 3:17

Paul called believers to imitate him and other mature believers who walk or live by the pattern / example he lived by—Christ Jesus the Lord.

You can ask your group who they have imitated as God has brought more mature believers into their lives. What have they imitated from their lives?

What do the cross-references say about examples?

1 Corinthians 10:6, 11

There are events in the Old Testament that are examples for New Testament believers. They were written for our instruction. Some of the examples are what not to do and why.

1 Timothy 4:12

Paul called Timothy—a young man—to be an example to other believers.

Philippians 3:17

Paul was a mature example who called others to follow his example / imitate him.

1 Peter 5:1-3

Peter called church elders to be examples to God's flock as they shepherd them.

To end your discussion, you might ask your group if they are imitators or if they are examples and how are they doing with imitating and being examples.

Can even young believers be examples?

Then ask what they listed on their At a Glance chart for the theme for chapter 1.

The gospel came, was received, sounded forth



## 1 THESSALONIANS LEADER GUIDE Lesson 3

Lesson emphasis:

- 1 Thessalonians 2

### REVIEW

Tell your group to look at their At a Glance chart and ask what they remember as the main points of 1 Thessalonians 1.

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy took the gospel to the Thessalonians.

The Thessalonians received the gospel, became imitators of Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, and even became examples to other believers.

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy heard reports about how the Thessalonians' lives were different; they turned from idols to serve God.

### 1 THESSALONIANS 2

#### Verses 1-8

How does this chapter relate to chapter 1? How does it begin?

It's still about Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy going to Thessalonica. They had suffered and been mistreated / shamefully treated at Philippi but spoke the gospel to those at Thessalonica even amid opposition (ESV—in the midst of conflict).

They had been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, and they spoke to please Him not men.

Ask what your group learned about “approved.” How does it relate to 1 Thessalonians 1 and 2?

approved, *dokimazo*—“to recognise as genuine after examination, to approve, deem worthy”<sup>5</sup>

According to 1 Corinthians 15:1-8, what are the main points of the gospel?

Christ died for sins according to / in accordance with the Scriptures. His burial supports His death.

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<sup>5</sup>James Strong, *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon* (Woodside Bible Fellowship, 1995), G1381.

He rose from the dead three days later according to / in accordance with the Scriptures.  
He appeared to many, supporting His resurrection.

Lead the discussion back to 1 Thessalonians 2. What do verses 4-6 say?  
Tell your group to look at the chart in Day Two of the lesson as a visual aid here.

Their speech was not in error, impure or deceitful, not flattering or for greedy purposes.

And though they were apostles, they didn't seek glory from men or assert their authority /  
make demands.

Ask your group how this relates to church leadership or Bible teachers now. Give time for  
discussion.

How do verses 7-8 describe what happened in Thessalonica?

They were gentle as a mother caring for her children.  
The Thessalonians became dear to them—fondness in affection / affectionate.  
Paul and the others gave of their lives / selves when they were there.

Other than words, what was involved in Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy giving the gospel to the  
Thessalonians? Give you group time to discuss the things on the chart and how those relate to  
them giving the gospel.

#### Verses 9-12

What do these verses describe? At the appropriate point, ask about the word studies in verse 11  
and also the cross-references.

The believers at Thessalonica saw the labor and hardship / toil of the apostles as they  
worked night and day, supporting themselves while they spoke the gospel there. There  
was no burden on the Thessalonian believers to support or provide for Paul, Silvanus, and  
Timothy during their stay.

#### Acts 18:1-5; 20:33-35

In Corinth Paul worked as a tent-maker with Aquila and Priscilla until Silas and Timothy  
came from Macedonia; then he devoted himself completely to (ESV—was occupied  
with) the word.

Paul reminded the Ephesian elders that he ministered to his own needs and those men  
with him. He was an example of working hard and helping the weak.

The believers at Thessalonica were also witnesses of how the apostles lived among them.  
Their behavior / conduct was devout / holy, upright / righteous, and blameless. God also  
witnessed, verses 5 and 10.

They exhorted, encouraged, and implored / charged the Thessalonians as a father would  
his own children. Compare this with the illustration of a mother in verse 7.

“exhorting,” *parakaleo*—“It is used for every kind of calling to a person which is meant to produce a particular effect, hence, with various meanings, such as ‘comfort, exhort, desire, call for,’ in addition to its significance ‘to beseech.’”<sup>6</sup>

“encouraging,” *paramutheomai*—“to encourage, comfort”<sup>7</sup>; “as rousing up someone’s will about what ought to be done *encourage, strengthen*”<sup>8</sup>

“imploing,” *marturomai*—“making an emphatic demand *implore, insist, urge*”<sup>9</sup>

The desired result of the apostles speaking the gospel and living godly among the Thessalonians was that the believers there would live the same way. The Thessalonians imitated them and became examples themselves.

To walk worthy of God is to walk in a way pleasing to Him.

You might ask your group if God can give the same witness of their lives.

#### Verses 13-16

What are the results in these verses?

The Thessalonian believers received the Word for what it really is—God’s Word. Relate this to the first chapter’s description of them receiving God’s Word.

His Word performs its work / is at work in those who believe—then and now. There is a life change for believers in our day as with the Thessalonians turning from their idols.

Ask how this compares with Romans 1:16 and Philippians 1:6.

#### Romans 1:16

The gospel is the power of God for salvation to those who believe.

#### Philippians 1:6

God will be faithful to complete the work He began in believers. His Word is one way He performs His work.

Ask what your group learned from the cross-references about the gospel.

On the last page of this lesson’s guide is a list you might use as a visual aid for this discussion. Add to it as your group discusses.

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<sup>6</sup>W. E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger, and William White Jr., *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Nashville, TN: T. Nelson, 1996), p. 62.

<sup>7</sup>Robert L. Thomas, *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek Dictionaries: Updated Edition* (Anaheim: Foundation Publications, Inc., 1998), G3888.

<sup>8</sup>Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg, and Neva F. Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, Baker’s Greek New Testament Library (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), p. 297.

<sup>9</sup>Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg, and Neva F. Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, Baker’s Greek New Testament Library (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), p. 254.

What did Jesus preach? Ask about the word study.

Mark 1:14-15 and Luke 24:44-49

Jesus preached the good news about God's kingdom.  
Repent and believe because the kingdom was at hand.

repent, *metanoeo*—“to change one's way of life as the result of a complete change of thought and attitude with regard to sin and righteousness.”<sup>10</sup>

Jesus said He was written about in the Law and Prophets and Psalms of the Old Testament. He said to repent for forgiveness of sins.

The elements were that He should suffer and rise again from the dead on the third day. Relate this to 1 Corinthians 15, “according to / in accordance with the Scriptures.”

How did the Thessalonians show repentance?

Repentance is connected with believing the gospel. The Thessalonians turned to God from idols. Jesus called men to repent of their sins. If there is no repentance, there is no true salvation, and there is no forgiveness.

What did the apostles preach?

Acts 2:22-42

Peter gave the gospel to the Jews in Jerusalem.

*NOTE: This was only 50 days from Jesus' crucifixion in the same city. Peter spoke on Pentecost to most of the same group who had been in Jerusalem at Passover when Jesus was killed.*

He told of their sin and called them to repent and believe that God had raised Jesus from the dead. They knew He had died because they put Him to death.

Peter quoted Scripture from the Old Testament which those Jews would have been familiar with. He explained that the coming of the Holy Spirit to indwell those who believed was promised by the Father and sent by Jesus after His ascension.

Acts 3:12-26

Again, Peter preached to the Jews in Jerusalem. He pointed out their sin—they put to death Jesus. But God raised Him from the dead. Peter called them to repent and believe so that their sins would be wiped away / blotted out. A changed life is the result of faith in Him. And again, Peter quoted Scripture to them.

Ask your group how this can apply to what they tell people as they give the gospel. Give time to discuss this. Does what they learned in this lesson change anything they've been doing?

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<sup>10</sup>Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, electronic ed. of the 2nd edition. (New York: United Bible societies, 1996, c1989). 1:509.

What did Paul preach to the Gentiles?

Acts 17:22-34

This is an account of the gospel being presented to Gentiles, who might be paralleled with those outside the church today, people who have no knowledge of the Word of God.

Paul began by stating that God is the creator of the world. He also presented to them that God will judge the world, another basic truth of the Scripture.

He called the men of Athens to repent and believe in the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Acts 26:1-29

Paul gave his defense before King Agrippa, a man knowledgeable of the Scriptures. Again Paul presented to those listening that Jesus died and rose according to the Scriptures. He called them to repent and believe.

Perform deeds appropriate to / in keeping with repentance.

Believing the gospel turns one from darkness to light.

It gives forgiveness of sins. The Thessalonians turned from their sins.

It gives an inheritance with others sanctified by faith.

What does preaching the gospel include?

Jesus, Peter, and Paul all preached repent and believe the gospel—  
Jesus' death and resurrection according to the Scriptures.

How does a person effectively present the gospel?

Luke 24:49 and Acts 1:8

Witness in the power of the Holy Spirit like the men in the New Testament did.

1 Corinthians 1:17–2:5

Paul witnessed in demonstration of the Spirit and power, not in clever speech / eloquent wisdom or human wisdom. It was simply the word of the cross, the gospel.

Knowing God's Word and being led by His Spirit tells the believer what to say in a witnessing situation, although one might be in fear, trembling and weak—as Paul was.

1 Corinthians 9:16-17

Paul also said he was entrusted as a steward with the gospel.  
He was only giving out what had been given to him.

How did Paul feel about preaching the gospel?

Paul said he was entrusted with the gospel, 1 Thessalonians 2:4.

Romans 1:14-17

He was under obligation, eager, not ashamed.

The gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek, Gentile.

The message, regardless of the messenger, has power to save people.

1 Corinthians 9:16-17

He was under compulsion (ESV—necessity was laid upon him); woe to him if he didn't preach it. He had no choice. Paul was God's steward to give the gospel.

Lead the discussion back to 1 Thessalonians 2.

What do verses 14-16 say?

The Thessalonians became imitators of the churches in Judea, enduring sufferings from their countrymen like those from Judea did from the Jews.

The opposing Jews killed Jesus and the prophets and “drove us out,”—Paul and others giving the gospel—hindering them from giving the Gentiles the message of salvation. The result for those Jews was that they faced the wrath of God.

How does Acts 17:5 compare?

The Jews of Thessalonica also opposed the gospel, formed a mob, and caused an uproar.

Verses 17-20

You might ask your group what these last verses in chapter 2 are about.

Paul's stated desire to revisit the believers at Thessalonica must have been an encouragement to them as they read this letter.

The Thessalonian believers were the hope, joy, and crown of exultation /boasting for Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy. In verse 20 it says that they were their glory.

These statements must have comforted the Thessalonians who were undergoing opposition.

The Lord's coming is mentioned at the end of this chapter as it was at the end of the first chapter.

The Lord will come from heaven and rescue / deliver believers from the wrath to come. In His presence, the Thessalonians will be Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy's glory and joy, crown of exultation / boasting.

To end this discussion, ask your group how knowing about Jesus' coming and His wrath encourages them to give the gospel to the lost.

Then ask how they summarized the chapter on their At a Glance chart.

Paul, Silvanus and Timothy imparted the gospel and their lives / selves to the Thessalonians

**The gospel**

Christ died  
He was raised

Speak it by the Holy Spirit

## **1 THESSALONIANS LEADER GUIDE Lesson 4**

Lesson emphasis:

- 1 Thessalonians 3

### **REVIEW**

To begin this discussion, ask your group what they remember about 1 Thessalonians 1–2. Tell them to look at their At a Glance chart if they can't remember.

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy took the gospel to the people in Thessalonica.

Chapter 1 reminded the Thessalonians of how they received and sounded forth the gospel.

Chapter 2 reminded them of how Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy had behaved among them and their hearts toward the new believers in Thessalonica.

2:17-20 tells of Paul's desire to see the believers and Satan's hindrance.

How does chapter 3 relate to the first two chapters?

Chapters 1 and 2 tell how Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy gave the gospel and the Thessalonians received it. They wanted to return, but Satan had hindered. In chapter 3, Timothy was sent to see how about their faith.

### **1 THESSALONIANS 3**

#### Verses 1-5

What happened in these verses? Also, ask about the word study.

There is a short list at the end of the lesson's guide that you might use as a visual aid.

Paul was alone in Athens but had sent Timothy to Thessalonica.

Concern for them and to strengthen and encourage (ESV—establish and exhort)

Paul wanted to be sure that those new believers were remaining faithful, that no one be disturbed / moved by afflictions—those of the Thessalonians and maybe even Paul's.

“Afflictions,” *thlipsis*, is “more general and denotes tribulation of any kind.”<sup>11</sup> It “primarily means ‘a pressing, pressure’ . . . anything which burdens the spirit”<sup>12</sup>; “trouble, distress.”<sup>13</sup> Afflictions “refer almost invariably to that which comes upon them from without.”<sup>14</sup>

Verse 5 indicates that if the Thessalonians had turned away from the faith, then Paul’s labor had been in vain; the Thessalonians would not have really believed the gospel but only have appeared to.

Who is the tempter in verse 5? What does 2:18 say about him?

The tempter is called Satan in 2:18. He hindered Paul from going to Thessalonica. Paul feared he had tempted them to lose faith.

Ask what your group learned from the cross-references about Satan, the tempter.

Matthew 4:1-11

Jesus was in a weakened state physically. But He was led by the Spirit before, during, and after the temptations.

The devil, also called the tempter, tempted Jesus to turn stones into bread, but Jesus replied or resisted with God’s word about living not by bread alone but by every one of God’s words.

Then the devil tempted Jesus to test God by throwing Himself off the temple. Again, He resisted by quoting God’s word specific to the temptation.

The devil also tried to get Jesus to worship him, but again was resisted by the word. He told Satan to be gone.

Revelation 12:9

the great dragon  
the serpent of old (ESV—ancient serpent)  
the devil and Satan  
the deceiver

James 4:7-8a

Submit and draw near to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee—like he did from Jesus. But that doesn’t mean he won’t come back at another time.

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<sup>11</sup>Cleon L. Rogers Jr. and Cleon L. Rogers III, *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1998), p. 482.

<sup>12</sup>W. E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger, William White, Jr., *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Nashville, Tennessee; Thomas Nelson Publishers, Inc., 1985), New Testament, p. 17.

<sup>13</sup>James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)*, electronic ed. (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).

<sup>14</sup>W. E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger, William White, Jr., *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Nashville, Tennessee; Thomas Nelson Publishers, Inc., 1985), New Testament, p. 17.

1 Corinthians 7:3-5

Husbands and wives are not to withhold themselves sexually from their spouses.  
Withholding themselves gives an opportunity for the devil to tempt.

Ephesians 2:1-3

He is the prince of the power of the air, the spirit working in the sons of disobedience.

John 8:44

He is the father of lies and unbelievers are his children.  
He deceives them because he is the father of lies and no truth is in him.

2 Corinthians 11:3

Satan deceived Eve by his craftiness / cunning.  
Believers need to be alert so they aren't led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ (ESV—a sincere and pure devotion to Christ).

1 Peter 5:8-10

The devil is the believer's adversary, like a roaring lion seeking to devour.  
He can cause suffering. This relates to what Paul said in 1 Thessalonians 3 about afflictions.

2 Corinthians 11:13-15

His servants are disguised as servants of righteousness, apostles of Christ, but they are false apostles, deceitful workers / workmen.

Satan uses unbelievers, as well as his demonic host, to do his will.  
Unbelievers persecute believers, etc.

2 Corinthians 4:4

He has blinded the minds of the unbelieving.  
The whole world is under his control; he's the god of this world.

How do believers overcome the devil?

1 John 4:4

The Holy Spirit of God dwells in believers, and He is greater than Satan—the god of this world.

1 Peter 5:8-9; 1 John 5:4-5

Resist the devil, firm in faith. Because of being born of God by faith, the believer has victory, overcomes the world. Therefore, all believers are overcomers when it comes to the devil and the world.

Ephesians 6:10-18

Believers are commanded to be strong in God's strength and put on His armor.  
They can stand firm against the devil's schemes.

Believers need to remember that spiritual forces of wickedness / evil are behind flesh and blood unbelievers. The battle is not with people but the forces of the devil.

After giving time for your group to discuss how to apply these principles in their lives, lead your discussion back to 1 Thessalonians 3.

#### Verses 6-10

What was the result of Timothy's report?

Paul was comforted by the report, although in affliction himself.

Verse 8 is an encouragement to stand firm / fast in all situations. Another result of the report was rejoicing in the Lord because of the Thessalonians' faith and love.

According to verse 10, Paul still wanted to see the Thessalonians again to "complete / supply what is lacking in your faith."

He meant to keep on teaching, encouraging, strengthening, and exhorting them in their faith. He wanted them to be without blame at the Lord's coming, to excel more in their sanctification and love. (ESV—to do more and more in their sanctification and love).

Before discussing the end of 1 Thessalonians 3, ask what your group learned from the cross-references about "follow-up of new believers."

#### Acts 14:21-23

After giving the gospel, Paul and Barnabas returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch where believers were so they might strengthen and encourage them. They appointed elders in the cities and prayed for the new believers.

#### Acts 15:36

Paul wanted to return to the cities where new believers were to see how they were doing. Barnabas and he had preached the gospel in the cities, then he wanted to see them again. This relates to 1 Thessalonians where Paul said he wanted to see them again.

#### Acts 20:1-3

As Paul was about to leave Ephesus, he called for the disciples to exhort them. Then he exhorted the believers in Greece for three months before returning to Macedonia.

#### Acts 20:17-38

Paul called the elders from the church at Ephesus to meet him at Miletus. He spoke to them about what was to come. He warned them to be on guard for the flock (ESV—pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock), the church. Verse 32 is his commendation. Then before he left, in verse 36 he prayed with them.

How are believers now to "follow-up" with new believers? You might ask your group if there are new believers in their lives and how they are following up with them.

Lead your discussion back to 1 Thessalonians 3.

Verses 11-13

What are these verses and what do you learn?

Paul wrote his prayer for the Thessalonians in his letter to them.

First, he asked for the Lord to direct their way to the Thessalonians. He wanted to visit them again.

Then he prayed for them. That God would cause / make them to increase and abound in love for one another and all people.

His desired result was for God to establish their hearts without blame in holiness at Jesus' coming.

Give time for your group to discuss how they should and will pray this for other believers.

Ask what they learned about prayer from 1 Thessalonians and cross-references.

1 Thessalonians 1:2; 3:9-13; 5:17-18, 23-25

Thanksgiving in prayer

Earnestness in prayer night and day

Prayer without ceasing

Paul asked for prayer

Proverbs 15:8 and Psalm 34:15

God accepts and hears the prayers of the upright.

Matthew 6:5-13; 7:7-8

Using meaningless repetition (ESV—heaping up empty phrases) is useless in prayer. The Lord's Prayer has become to some a meaningless repetition.

Jesus gave a pattern for prayer, and it begins with praise of the Lord, His name.

This puts one's focus on the Lord and takes it off of self.

The requests come next.

Believers are to come to their heavenly Father to ask of Him what they need for their daily existence, both physical and spiritual.

The prayer also ends with a focus on God.

Romans 8:26

The Holy Spirit leads believers in prayer. The Spirit leads believers to pray according to the Lord's will, even when they don't know how to pray.

James 4:1-3; 5:16

One does not receive what is requested from God because of wrong motives in asking for it (ESV—asking wrongly), to spend it on pleasures / passions.

The prayer of the righteous, one who does right, is effective and accomplishes much (ESV—has great power as it is working).

John 14:13-14; 15:7, 16; 16:23

Jesus told believers to ask of the Father in His name for whatever they need. He also said the Father will answer those requests. Glory for His name is a result.

Asking in Jesus' name means asking for what He would ask. That comes from abiding in His Word.

1 John 5:14-15 and Hebrews 4:16

Confidence in prayer

It is related to knowing the Lord's will, and coming to Him as the One who answers. Knowing who God is gives confidence to ask Him for whatever His children need.

Luke 18:1 and Philippians 4:6

Pray always and don't lose heart.

Take everything to God in prayer. This keeps one from being anxious.

Psalm 65:2

God is the one who hears prayer. There is no one else for people to pray to.

To end your discussion, ask your group what they pray or ask for and why. Then ask if they need to change their requests and why? How should they pray? What will they change? How will they use prayer as follow-up for other or new believers?

Ask for some specific ways they can follow-up.

Then ask your group how they summarized chapter 3 on their At a Glance chart. Maybe something like one of the following:

Timothy sent to find out about their faith

Timothy sent to strengthen and encourage

Timothy brought good news of Thessalonians' faith and love

**Follow-up**

Paul's concern

Sent Timothy to strengthen and encourage

Prayer

## 1 THESSALONIANS LEADER GUIDE Lesson 5

Lesson emphasis:

- 1 Thessalonians 4

### REVIEW

To begin this discussion, you could ask your group about the segments of 1 Thessalonians.

In chapters 1–3, Paul reminded the Thessalonians of how Silvanus, Timothy, and he gave the gospel and how the Thessalonians received it and imitated their example of godly living.

Then chapter 4 begins with “Finally then, brethren / brothers . . . .” Chapters 4 and 5 are about excelling still more (ESV—do so more and more) in godly living so that the Thessalonian believers would be without blame when the Lord comes.

How does 1 Thessalonians 3:11-13 connect with chapter 4?

The benediction at the end of chapter 3 petitions the Lord to cause / make them to increase and abound in love for one another; then in chapter 4 the Thessalonians are urged to excel / do more in their sanctification and love for one another.

3:13 also asks that the Lord establish their hearts in holiness at His coming.

Although chapter 4 begins a new segment in the letter, these subjects continue from the first three chapters.

### 1 THESSALONIANS 4

#### Verses 1-8

What are these verses about and what did you learn about these subjects? Ask about the word studies at the appropriate point.

This begins with Paul’s request and exhortation for the Thessalonians to excel / to do more in their walk with the Lord. They were walking to please Him, but Paul encouraged them to do so even more.

His specific topic was sanctification in sexual purity.

sanctification, *hagiasmos*—“holiness, *i.e.*, dedication to the Lord”<sup>15</sup>

holiness (3:13), *hagiosune*—“dedication, consecration”<sup>16</sup>

Abstain from sexual immorality.

Don’t transgress or defraud / wrong a brother in this matter.

transgress, *huperbaino*—to overstep the proper limits”<sup>17</sup>

defraud / wrong, *pleonekteo*—“take advantage of”<sup>18</sup>

If anyone rejects / disregards this command, he’s rejecting God. God gives His Holy Spirit to lead in sanctification. And God is the avenger.

Paul had told them these things when he was with them.

They lived among Gentiles who practiced deeds of lustful passion—as they used to do before being saved.

Ask what your group learned about this from the cross-references.

Exodus 20:14

One of the Ten Commandments which God spoke is don’t commit adultery.

Hebrews 13:4

This is a New Testament command about adulterers and fornicators (ESV—sexually immoral). God will judge them because they live against His commands.

Matthew 5:27-32

Jesus said that to keep on looking at a person with lust in the heart is the same as committing adultery. He also said that marrying a divorced person is adultery, if that one divorced for a reason other than those given in Scripture.

Revelation 21:8

Immoral persons / the sexually immoral will suffer the second death which is the lake of fire.

Give time for your group to discuss how these principles relate to their society, and specifically to them.

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<sup>15</sup> James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).

<sup>16</sup> James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).

<sup>17</sup> James Strong, *Enhanced Strong’s Lexicon* (Woodside Bible Fellowship, 1995). G5233.

<sup>18</sup> James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).

Lead the discussion back to 1 Thessalonians 4, and ask what they learned from verses 9-12.

Verses 9 and 10 are about excelling (doing more and more) in love.

The Thessalonians practiced love toward one another, but again Paul encouraged it more.

What does 1 Thessalonians say about love?

*NOTE: These references are provided for your information, but your group might not bring up all of them. Don't think you need to ask about each one, just go with what your group says.*

1:3

The Thessalonians had a labor of love which was directed toward the brethren not only in Thessalonica but also in Macedonia and Achaia.

1:4

They were loved by God, which shows the source of the love.

Chapter 2

Love is not named in this chapter, but the chapter describes the love demonstrated by Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy when they were with the Thessalonian believers.

3:6

The Thessalonians continued in love.

3:12

In Paul's prayer, he asked the Lord to cause / make the believers increase and abound in love for one another and all people. Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy also had this kind of love.

4:9-10

They were doing well in loving others because they had been taught by God. The message was to increase in this love.

5:8

Faith and love are connected again. The two seem to go together.

5:13

The Thessalonians were instructed to highly esteem those who had charge over them in the Lord. They were to do this in love.

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy demonstrated God's love toward the Thessalonian believers, and the Thessalonians demonstrated their love for others in their labor of love toward their surrounding areas.

Ask what your group learned about love from Romans 13:8-10.

Love fulfills the law because it does no wrong to a neighbor.

If one loves his neighbor as himself, then there is no adultery, murder, theft, or coveting toward that neighbor.

The only thing believers are to owe one another is love.

Give time for your group to discuss how they can excel (do more and more) in their love. What will they change?

Lead the discussion back to 1 Thessalonians 4 and ask what verses 11 and 12 are about. How do they fit the flow of thought?

These verses are about work and proper behavior.

Lead a quiet life / live quietly

Attend to your own business / mind your own affairs

Work with your hands

Behave / walk properly toward outsiders—those outside the church

Not be in need / dependent on no one

You might ask how this relates to 1 Thessalonians 2:9-12.

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy were examples of work and proper behavior.

What do the cross-references say about this subject?

2 Thessalonians 3:7-15

In this chapter, those who don't work and who eat off of others' labors are called the unruly and the undisciplined / idle. They are to be admonished / warned by the church. Paul also said that if one won't work, then let him go without food.

Paul again related that Silvanus, Timothy, and he worked while with the Thessalonians so as not to be a burden to them. They worked for the food they ate so that they would be a model / example.

Genesis 2:15

God put man in the garden to cultivate / work it and keep it. Work was his plan for man from the beginning.

Exodus 20:9

The workweek is six days according to God.

Ecclesiastes 5:12

This shows that when one works hard for what he has, he is doing what is right. His sleep should be pleasant / sweet.

Acts 20:33-35; Ephesians 4:28

Other reasons to work hard according to the New Testament passages are to share with those who have need and to help the weak. Believers are to work in order to take care of one another, to support those believers who are not able to provide for themselves.

But if one is able to work, then he is not to be supported by the church, by other believers.

Lead the discussion back to 1 Thessalonians 4.

Verses 13-18

How does verse 13 begin?

There is a contrast with the things the Thessalonians already knew—things they were taught when Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy were with them.

Paul didn't want them to be uninformed about those who were asleep.

There is a drawing at the end of this lesson's guide which you can use as a visual aid. Add to it as your group discusses these verses.

He didn't want the church to grieve those who were asleep as though there was no hope.

Who are these verses about?

Those who have fallen asleep in Jesus / fallen asleep—the dead in Christ, believers who had died.

Those believers who are alive and remain / who are left—those still alive on earth

Ask what the cross-references add about asleep or believers' death.

Relate this to what Acts 7:60 and 1 Corinthians 15:16, 18 say about "asleep."

"Sleep" is a term which sometimes refers to a believer's death.

The immediate context determines if it does or does not.

2 Corinthians 5:1-8 and Philippians 1:21-24

When a believer dies, then he is at home with the Lord. As long as a believer is in his earthly body, he lives by faith, but when he dies he is with the Lord. To die, depart from the body, is gain.

From these passages it can be concluded that when a Christian dies, his spirit goes to be with the Lord, but his body does not. The spirit leaves the body at physical death. There is no need to grieve without hope for the dead in Christ because they are with Him.

Paul then encouraged the Thessalonians to comfort / encourage one another with that teaching. Relate this to chapter 1, verse 3. They had a steadfastness of hope in the Lord Jesus Christ, but he encouraged them to be hopeful even about those who died in Jesus.

What is the hope, according to verses 14-18?

There is hope because Jesus died and rose again.  
The dead in Christ will rise again and be with the Lord always.

Their spirits were with the Lord as soon as they died, but their bodies won't be with Him until He comes.

God will bring them, their spirits, with Jesus when He comes.

They, their spirits, are always with Him.

Ask about the events of the Lord's coming in 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17 along with the word studies.

This coming of the Lord is still future, something to look forward to in hope.

The Lord will descend from heaven  
with a shout / cry of command  
with the voice of the archangel  
with the trumpet of God

He will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus.

The dead in Christ will rise first.

Then those alive at that time will be caught up with them  
to meet the Lord in the air.

So both will always be with the Lord.

“coming”—*parousia*, “literally, ‘a presence’”<sup>19</sup>  
It is from two Greek words, “*para*, ‘with,’ and *ousia*, ‘being.’”<sup>20</sup>

Christians, dead or alive at the time, will be present with the Lord.  
This is His coming from which time His presence will continue with all believers.

“caught up”—*harpazo*, “to seize, catch up, snatch away”<sup>21</sup>; “to seize, carry off by force”<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>W. E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger, and William White Jr., *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Nashville, TN: T. Nelson, 1996), p. 111.

<sup>20</sup>W. E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger, and William White Jr., *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Nashville, TN: T. Nelson, 1996), p. 111.

This is what has come to be known as the “rapture” of the church.  
“Rapture” comes “from the Latin word *rapio*, meaning ‘to seize.’”<sup>23</sup>

*NOTE: Be aware that there is controversy surrounding this teaching; therefore, keep your discussion focused on exactly what the text says, comparing scripture with scripture and letting scripture interpret scripture.*

Those believers who are alive at the time of this coming of the Lord from heaven will be snatched away, taken by force, caught up with those dead whose bodies have just been raised to meet the Lord in the air.

The bodies of the dead in Christ will be raised and reunited with their spirits who came with the Lord.

Those alive will be caught up with them.  
All will be caught up in the clouds.  
Both will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air.  
All will always be with the Lord from that time in spirit and in body.

How does 1 Corinthians 15:50-54 relate to these events?

Verses 50-53 tell of the changing from the perishable to the imperishable.

Paul tells a mystery here.

Flesh and blood can't inherit the kingdom of God.

All believers will be changed from perishable bodies to imperishable,  
but  
all believers will not sleep, die physically.

Relate this to 1 Thessalonians 4 and compare the order in 1 Corinthians 15:51-52.

The trumpet will sound.

The dead will be raised.

All will be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.

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<sup>21</sup>Robert L. Thomas, *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek Dictionaries: Updated Edition* (Anaheim: Foundation Publications, Inc., 1998). G726.

<sup>22</sup>James Strong, *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon* (Woodside Bible Fellowship, 1995). G726.

<sup>23</sup>H. L. Willmington, *Willmington's Bible Handbook* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1997), p. 724.

This takes place when the Lord comes from heaven and the dead in Christ are resurrected; their spirits are reunited with their resurrected bodies.

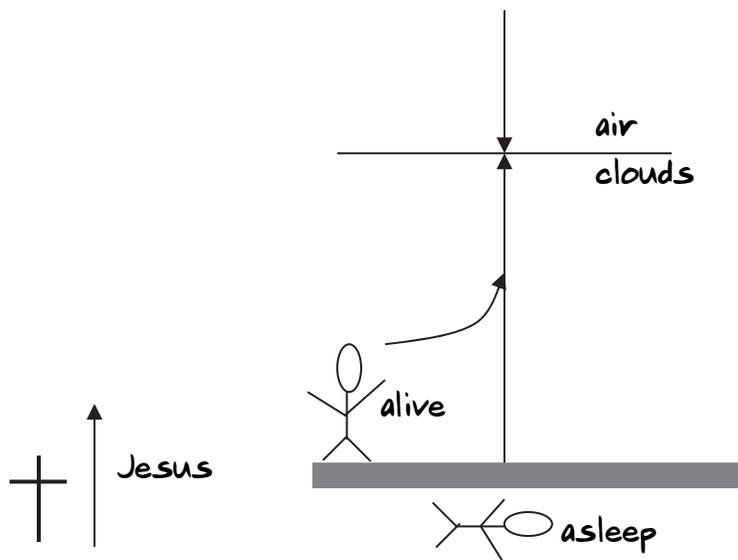
It will be the same time that believers who are alive will be changed. They won't die, but their bodies will be changed from perishable to inherit the imperishable kingdom.

All believers then will be with the Lord from that time onward.

You might ask your group if they can understand why this can be an encouragement. How will they use this teaching to encourage others?

End your discussion by asking about the chapter theme.

Sanctification, love, work, those asleep in Jesus / those asleep



**1 THESSALONIANS  
LEADER GUIDE  
Lesson 6**

Lesson emphasis:

- 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

**REVIEW**

To begin this discussion, you can ask your group what they remember from 1 Thessalonians about the Lord's coming.

Chapter 1 says Jesus will come from heaven and rescue / deliver believers from the wrath to come.

In chapter 2, Paul said the Thessalonians were Silvanus, Timothy, and his joy and crown of exultation / boasting in the Lord's presence at His coming.

The first part of the letter closes with a prayer for them to be without blame / blameless at the Lord's coming. That's at the end of chapter 3.

Then in chapter 4, verses 13-18 are about His coming for believers.

Paul informed them about what would happen to the dead in Christ, but they already knew about the day of the Lord. Although the subject still relates to the times of the end, it is not the same event as in chapter 4.

Then this segment closes with a prayer for them to be without blame / blameless at the Lord's coming.

**1 THESSALONIANS 5**

Verses 1-2

What did Paul say that the Thessalonian believers already knew?

They knew about times and epochs / seasons.

They knew full well / were fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief—unexpectedly.

What are the definitions for “times” and “epochs / seasons”?

times, *chronos*—“an extended period”<sup>24</sup>

epochs / seasons, *kairos*—“a definite space of time.”<sup>25</sup>

“. . . the first (Gr *chronos* [times]) denotes chronological extension or ‘periods of time.’ The second (Gr *kairos* [epochs / seasons]) denotes ‘specific points’ in time when designated events occur.”<sup>26</sup>

Have your group look at the page “Day of the Lord” as a visual aid for this discussion.

### Verse 3

Who and what is this verse about?

“They” and “them” are pronouns referring to unbelievers who will be saying “Peace and safety / security” when the destruction of the day of the Lord suddenly (ESV—sudden destruction) comes on them. And they’ll not escape.

Ask what your group learned about the day of the Lord from what Paul wrote the Thessalonians in his second letter to them.

### 2 Thessalonians 2:1-5

Paul again addressed the Lord’s coming and the believers’ gathering / being gathered to Him, which seems to parallel what he wrote in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

Then he addressed a false message they received that the day of the Lord had come. He reminded them that he had taught them about the day of the Lord when he was with them, and he wrote to them about it in 1 Thessalonians.

The day won’t come until certain events happen first.

Apostasy

Man of lawlessness, son of destruction, revealed by taking his seat in the temple and displaying himself as being God (ESV—proclaiming himself to be God)

What do the other cross-references say about the day of the Lord?

### Isaiah 13:1-13

Almighty God will send the day as destruction from Him. People will be terrified / dismayed and astonished / aghast. The description is cruel, with fury / wrath and burning / fierce anger—God’s anger. He’ll make the land desolation and exterminate / destroy sinners.

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<sup>24</sup>A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1933), 1 Th 5:1.

<sup>25</sup>A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1933), 1 Th 5:1.

<sup>26</sup>Edward E. Hindson and Woodrow Michael Kroll, eds., *KJV Bible Commentary* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1994), p. 2480.

The stars, sun, and moon will be affected when God's punishes the world for its evil, wickedness, iniquity. The heavens will tremble and the earth shaken from / out of its place in the day of His burning / fierce anger.

This gives a lot more detail than the destruction in 1 Thessalonians 5:2-3.

### Joel

The day of the Lord will come as destruction from Almighty God.

Darkness, gloom, clouds, thick darkness...

There has never been anything like it. (ESV—Their like has never been before.)

It's great and very awesome. Who can endure it? First Thessalonians 5:3 says the unbelievers will not escape.

### Obadiah

This is a prophecy about Edom's destruction. But it also tells about the day of the Lord on all nations. In the day of the Lord, He will return the nations' dealings / deeds back on their own heads. As they did, it will be done to them.

### Zephaniah 1:1–2:3

The day will come quickly / hasten fast, and it's a day of wrath. Battle is part of the day of the Lord.

On the day of the Lord's wrath, which is a period of time, He will make a complete / full end of the earth's inhabitants. The fire of His jealousy will devour / consume the earth.

God's call to people is to seek Him before the day of His anger comes.

### Acts 2:14-21

Peter quoted Joel when he preached in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. God pours out His Spirit on all His bondslaves / servants before the great and glorious / magnificent day of the Lord begins. Verse 19 lists things to happen before the day.

### 2 Peter 3:7-12

Peter spoke in Jerusalem about the day of the Lord, and he wrote about it in his last letter to believers. It's a day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly. It will come like a thief, which is also what Paul wrote to the Thessalonians. The earth and its works (ESV—the works that are done) will be destroyed by fire, intense heat (ESV—set on fire and dissolved). Even the heavens will burn to destruction.

Ask your group what this information about the day of the Lord does for them. Do they know this full well? How can they use it to reach out to others?

Lead your discussion back to 1 Thessalonians 5:4-7.  
How does verse 4 contrast with verse 3?

The day will not overtake / surprise believers because Christians are not destined for the wrath of the day of the Lord but for salvation—1:10; Jesus will deliver / rescue believers from the wrath to come, the wrath of the day of the Lord. Related to chapter 4, believers will be with Him always.

The day of the Lord is a time of wrath against unbelievers.

What do verses 4-7 say about believers? Discuss the word study.

The day will not overtake / surprise believers.  
Believers are sons / children of light who are to be alert / awake and sober.

sober— “to be calm and collected in spirit”<sup>27</sup>; “*self-controlled*”<sup>28</sup>

Believers can see—they’re not living in darkness. The breastplate and helmet help protect believers—faith, love, and hope of salvation.

Ask your group how these things relate to their lives now. Do their lives show that they have hope?

What are verses 8-11 about?

Verses 8-10 describe the hope in salvation for believers who are still alive and for those who are asleep in the Lord Jesus Christ—together with Him.

Verse 10 connects with 4:13 to relate the whole teaching about coming events. Whether dead or alive physically, believers will live together / live with the Lord Jesus Christ. That is the main point of all of 4:13–5:11—encouragement for believers.

Encourage one another.

Build up one another.

Do believers need to be afraid of the future? Why not?

Let your group share how they have been encouraged or built up by this study.

*NOTE: You should briefly discuss what your group observed in the rest of this chapter, but don’t spend a lot of time on it. This will be studied in more depth in the next lesson.*

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<sup>27</sup>James Strong, *Enhanced Strong’s Lexicon* (Woodside Bible Fellowship, 1995), G3525.

<sup>28</sup>Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg, and Neva F. Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, Baker’s Greek New Testament Library (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), p. 271.

Verses 12-21

Ask what your group observed in these verses.

Requests / asking and urgings for the believers

First about appreciating / respecting and loving those who labor and work to lead and teach them

Then how to live with each other

Verses 16-18 are about prayer.

The Spirit, prophecies—examine carefully / test

Hold fast to good and abstain from evil

Verses 22-24

What are these verses? And you might ask what your group learned about God from these verses.

The last prayer in the letter

The God of peace  
sanctifies  
calls  
brings to pass / does it  
He is faithful

Verses 25-28

How does the letter close?

A prayer request and greeting

Instruction to have this letter read to all brethren

Tell your group to look at their At a Glance chart and ask about a possible chapter theme.

Day of the Lord not overtake / surprise believers; therefore, build up one another

To end your discussion, you might ask your group what are some practical take-aways from this lesson.



**1 THESSALONIANS  
LEADER GUIDE  
Lesson 7**

Lesson emphasis:

1 Thessalonians 5:12-24

**REVIEW**

To begin your last discussion, you might ask your group what they remember from 1 Thessalonians. Tell them to look at their At a Glance chart if they need help. Give a brief time for them to discuss what they've learned from this study.

**1 THESSALONIANS 5:12-28**

Verses 12-13

What are the specific instructions? Also, ask about word study.

Appreciate / respect those who diligently labor among you  
and have charge over you (ESV—are over you) in the Lord  
and give you instruction / admonish you

“Appreciate / respect,” is *eidō* from *oida*, “to know . . . strictly means to have seen, perceived, apprehended.”<sup>29</sup> *Eidō* in 1 Thessalonians 5:12 means “to acknowledge the high status of a person or event—‘to honor, to show honor to, to respect.’”<sup>30</sup>

Esteem them very highly in love because of their work

Live in peace with one another (ESV—Be at peace among yourselves)

How do these instructions relate to the church now? Ask how your group can appreciate / respect and esteem their leaders? Ask if they do, and if not, will they.

How do the cross-references add to these instructions?

Romans 12:6-8

This is in the context of spiritual gifts in the body of Christ. There are those whom the Spirit has gifted to be leaders in the church; some are leaders and some are followers. And some are teachers, but not all are.

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<sup>29</sup>Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000), G1492.

<sup>30</sup>Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), p. 734.

Leading is not something to be attained or sought after. Those with the spiritual gift of leading are raised up by the Lord. They are exhorted to lead with diligence / zeal.

Hebrews 13:7, 17

Leaders keep watch over souls and speak the Word of God to believers.  
They will give an account to the Lord for how they do this.

Those who follow are to obey and submit.  
Causing grief for spiritual leadership is unprofitable for the one who does it.  
(ESV—causing groaning ... no advantage)

As with the illustration in 1 Thessalonians, leaders are imitated.  
But the caution is to consider the result of their conduct / way of life.  
There are those who would lead them astray.

Lead the discussion back to 1 Thessalonians 5.

Verses 14-15

Who and what are these verses about? Discuss definitions and cross-references in 2 Thessalonians 3 also. Tell your group to look at the chart in the lesson on Day Two and Day Three.

- Admonish the unruly / idle

“admonish”—*noutheteo*, means to “to admonish, warn, exhort.”<sup>31</sup>; “to advise someone concerning the dangerous consequences of some happening or action.”<sup>32</sup>

“unruly / idle”—*ataktos*, “out of order”<sup>33</sup>  
“lazy, idle”<sup>34</sup>  
“neglect of duty”<sup>35</sup>

Contrast this with the diligent labor of the others.

2 Thessalonians 3:6-9, 14-15

This specifically relates to the unruly as far as not working.

It became a problem with the Thessalonians by the time Paul wrote his second letter to them.

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<sup>31</sup>James Strong, *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon* (Woodside Bible Fellowship, 1995). G3560.

<sup>32</sup>Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), p. 436.

<sup>33</sup>Robert L. Thomas, *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek Dictionaries: updated edition* (Anaheim: Foundation Publications, Inc., 1998), G813.

<sup>34</sup>Barclay M. Newman Jr., *A Concise Greek-English Dictionary of the New Testament*. (Stuttgart, Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1993) p. 28.

<sup>35</sup>Cleon L. Rogers Jr. and Cleon L. Rogers III, *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1998), p. 480.

What did the cross-references say about admonishing other believers?

Romans 15:14

Paul encouraged believers to admonish one another because they were full of goodness and all knowledge. They knew how to admonish for one another's good.

1 Corinthians 4:14

This letter was written to admonish the church as Paul's children.

Colossians 3:16

God's word is to richly dwell in believers so they can admonish one another.

Acts 20:31

Paul's reminded the Ephesian elders that for three years he didn't cease to admonish each of them day and night with tears.

Ask your group for some specifics of how to do this. You might also ask if any of them have an example to share.

What else does verse 14 say?

- Encourage the fainthearted

encourage—*paramutheomai*, “from *para*, ‘with,’ and *muthos*, ‘counsel’”<sup>36</sup>  
“to speak to, address one, whether by way of admonition and incentive, or to calm and console”<sup>37</sup>

fainthearted—*oligopsuchos*, “despondent, discouraged”<sup>38</sup>  
“literally, ‘small-souled’”<sup>39</sup>; “timid”<sup>40</sup>

There are believers in the body who are, for whatever reason, fainthearted. These are ones who need to be verbally encouraged by the stronger brothers. Sometimes the tendency might be to avoid them, but the opposite needs to happen.

Hebrews 12:1-3

There are those who lose heart when they become weary.

They need to be encouraged by the brethren, but keeping one's eyes on Jesus prevents the individual believer from growing weary and losing heart, being fainthearted.

<sup>36</sup>W. E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger, and William White Jr., *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Nashville, TN: T. Nelson, 1996), p. 198.

<sup>37</sup>James Strong, *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2001), G3888.

<sup>38</sup>Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg, and Neva F. Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, Baker's Greek New Testament Library (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), p. 280.

<sup>39</sup>W. E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger, and William White Jr., *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Nashville, TN: T. Nelson, 1996) p. 222.

<sup>40</sup>James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).

You might ask the questions in the lesson regarding this command. Are you bold or fainthearted? Do you have a friend with whom you can align yourself? What has been your attitude toward those who are opposite of you?

What is the other command in 1 Thessalonians 5:14? Discuss the cross-references.

- Help the weak

Matthew 26:41

The flesh is weak, and all believers live in bodies of flesh.

Alertness and prayer are weapons against the weakness of the flesh facing temptation.

Luke 22:31-32

This was before the coming of the Holy Spirit to indwell believers, specifically Peter. He later was a pillar, a leader in the church, a strengthener of the brothers.

Prayer for others is also a strengthener against the devil's schemes.

Romans 14:1–15:2

In this passage the weak brothers are those who follow the law regarding certain things. Paul said they were weak in faith. The strong brothers are not to pass judgment on their opinions or do things to cause them to stumble.

Regarding one day of the week above another  
Not eating meat  
Not drinking wine

Strong brothers can help the weak by lovingly bearing their weaknesses.

1 Corinthians 8:7-13

A weak conscience can lead to it being defiled. The weak brothers in this context were those leaning toward legalism. The strong are the ones who understand their liberty / right in the Lord. The strong should help the weak, not cause them to stumble.

At that time in Corinth, the weak brothers were the ones who thought that they would be defiled by eating meat which had been sacrificed / offered to an idol. Those who were the strong in the Lord knew that meat is meat.

Acts 12:25, 15:36-40 and 2 Timothy 4:11

These references are about John who was also called Mark. He had gone with Paul and Barnabas on the first missionary journey in Acts. He had deserted / withdrawn from them in Pamphylia, had not gone with them to the work.

When Barnabas wanted to take him with them on the second journey, the one when Paul went to Thessalonica, Paul disagreed. They had such a sharp disagreement that they separated and went to two different areas. Paul took Silas, Silvanus, and later found Timothy.

Barnabas took Mark with him. Evidently, he so helped Mark that Paul requested Mark's service later in his life. This was the Mark who wrote the Gospel of Mark.

Ask your group how they have helped the weak. Or how they can.

Lead your discussion back to 1 Thessalonians 5.

How does the command at the end of verse 14 relate to the others in that verse?

Be patient with everyone. Everyone includes the unruly, fainthearted, and weak.

#### Verse 15

What is the encouragement in this verse?

Christians should always seek:  
Not to repay anyone with evil  
To do good for everyone

How do the cross-references add to this?

#### Romans 12:17-21

Respect what is right (ESV—give thought to do what is honorable), and as far as is possible be at peace with all men.

Don't take revenge—God is the avenger.

Don't be overcome by evil.

#### 1 Peter 3:8-9

Don't return evil, but be harmonious (ESV—have unity of mind), sympathetic, brotherly (ESV—brotherly love), kindhearted (ESV—a tender heart), and humble in spirit toward one another.

Give a blessing instead of insult / reviling.

How do unbelievers usually respond to a Christian doing good for them? How can believers practice doing good for everyone? You might ask for some specifics or examples.

#### Verses 16-22

What are these verses about?

Rejoicing and prayer and thanksgiving are subjects Paul interwove throughout this letter.

The Thessalonian believers began their walk by the Spirit, 1:5-6 and 4:8.  
Paul warned them not to quench the Spirit in their walk.

“Prophetic utterances / prophecies” from God are those of His Spirit and according to His Word.

But the Thessalonians were instructed to examine / test everything carefully. But don’t just apply the test; hold fast to that which is good.

How does verse 22 relate to or fit with verses 16-21?

Rejoicing, praying, giving thanks ... hold fast to good—abstain from evil.  
By the Spirit even examine words spoken as prophecies.

Verse 22 is a good verse for your group to memorize.  
It can prevent misunderstanding.

What do the cross-references add about rejoicing and prayer?

Philippians 4:4; Ephesians 6:18; and Colossians 3:17

Rejoice in the Lord always.

Pray at all times in the Spirit.

Whatever believers do, they’re to do in Jesus’ name giving thanks.

Verse 23-28

How does this letter close?

Verses 23 and 24 are another of Paul’s prayers for the Thessalonians regarding sanctification and the Lord’s coming.

God brings about the sanctification because He is faithful.

Then verse 25 is a prayer request.

And verses 26-28 close the letter.

According to 1 Thessalonians 1:8, who might all the brothers be in 5:27?

It seems Paul wanted this letter read to those in Macedonia, Achaia, and all the places the Thessalonians had given God’s Word to people.

Ask your group if anyone wants to share what this study has meant to them.

A good way to end your discussion is to pray verses 23-24 together for one another.