

# *2 Thessalonians*

## *Leader Guide*

(NASB and ESV)

*SO YOU WON'T BE DECEIVED  
ABOUT HIS COMING*

*2 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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2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (8/2013)

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

### **Lesson emphasis:**

- 2 Thessalonians overview

You might begin this first discussion by asking your group if something in 2 Thessalonians got their attention. Keep this very short, but it can create an atmosphere among your group of sharing their thoughts with one another.

### **HISTORICAL SETTING**

Who wrote 2 Thessalonians? What type of literature is it?

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy are named in 1:1.  
Relate this to 2:5 and 3:17.

Paul probably dictated the body of the letter to either Silvanus or Timothy, one of whom was the literal scribe. Paul himself then wrote with his own hand the greeting of the letter, as was his distinguishing mark in all of his letters. It's probably 3:16-18 in this letter.

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy were in agreement with all written in this letter.

Who was this letter written to? Why?

The Thessalonian church was the recipient of this letter. Therefore, it is applicable to believers, those who are part of the church in current times. This letter is for all who are part of the body of Christ. Relate this to your group; it's to them.

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy had been to Thessalonica according to 1:10; 2:5, 15; 3:6-10. The reference in 2:15 to "by letter from us" indicates that there had been a letter previous to this one sent to the Thessalonian believers from Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy. That letter is 1 Thessalonians.

The Thessalonian church was a growing church, but one in the midst of persecution. They had received a false message regarding the day of the Lord, and this letter was written to correct that false information.

Direct your group to their At a Glance chart as a visual aid for this discussion. They can also look at the other charts they completed on each chapter.

## 2 THESSALONIANS 1

Who and what is this chapter about?

The church and what they were going through  
Persecutions, afflictions, suffering  
Jesus' second coming

### Verses 1-4

How does this letter begin?

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy sent exhortations to the Thessalonian church.

Grace and peace from the Father and Christ to the church

Then there's a description of this church—all in exhortations.

Faith greatly enlarged / growing abundantly

Love grows / increasing

Perseverance / steadfastness, faith, and endurance in persecutions and afflictions

They were used as examples in this to other churches.

There is also information about Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy.

Always gave thanks to God for Thessalonian believers

Spoke proudly / boasted of Thessalonian church among other churches

Ask about application at relevant points throughout this discussion.

Your group should be growing believers.

Some might be going through persecutions or sufferings.

These exhortations call believers to endure and love others in the midst of affliction and suffering. The Thessalonians were examples for all to follow.

How did Paul begin this letter which exhorts, instructs, and deals with problems?

He began with a lot of exhortation.

This is a pattern in his letters and is an example for anyone who needs to give correction or admonishment to others.

Try to begin with words of encouragement, building up, if possible.

Give time for your group to discuss any relevant application of this pattern.

Verses 5-10

What are these verses about?

The key repeated words in verses 4-7 are persecutions, afflictions, and suffering. This is the first problem Paul addressed in this letter.

*NOTE: The subject of “God’s righteous judgment” is in the context of believers, not unbelievers, and is related to persecutions, afflictions, and suffering. If there are questions, encourage your group to study their next lesson as it focuses on believers suffering for the kingdom.*

Ask your group what they learned from these verses.

God will give relief to believers who are afflicted.  
He’ll repay those who afflict believers.

When the Lord comes

How are persecuted believers to live until He comes?

Like the Thessalonian church did, verses 3-4.

Verse 7 says Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy were also being afflicted.

They were in the midst of affliction, but were not concerned for themselves but for other believers being persecuted. Paul wrote encouragement to those in suffering.

What did Paul write in 1 Thessalonians which relates to this?

1 Thessalonians 2:2 and 3:4

Paul had already written to the Thessalonians about the subject of affliction and opposition. Silvanus, Timothy, and he had been mistreated when they took the gospel to Philippi right before going to Thessalonica. He warned them in advance of the trials he would suffer.

Lead your discussion back to 2 Thessalonians 1.

What time are verses 7-10 about?

They’re about the coming of the Lord Jesus. It’s looking to the future. His coming gives hope to believers, and they’ll marvel at Him.

But for unbelievers, verse 8, those are who don’t know God and don’t obey the gospel, His coming brings retribution / vengeance and the penalty / punishment of eternal destruction.

How does verse 10 relate to 1 Thessalonians 1:3, 8; 2:13?

Verse 10 is the first mention of Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy communicating previously to the Thessalonians.

1 Thessalonians 2:13

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy were the ones who spoke God's Word to the Thessalonians when they believed.

1 Thessalonians 1:3, 8

These verses tell what happened when the Thessalonians heard and received the Word; they spread it throughout the region. They had a faith that worked, a love that labored, and a steadfastness of hope in Jesus.

Verses 11-12

How does 2 Thessalonians 1 end?

These verses are a prayer.

The Thessalonian believers were being afflicted by unbelievers, but they were enduring with perseverance and faith. In the midst of that, their faith was greatly enlarged / growing abundantly and their love toward one another grew greater / increased.

When Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy prayed for the Thessalonians, it was not for God to relieve their sufferings—that wasn't going to happen until Jesus comes. They prayed for the Thessalonians that God would count / make them worthy of their calling. Relate this to verse 5. This request was made so the Lord's name would be glorified in them.

Give time for your group to discuss application.

*NOTE: Encourage your group by telling them there will also be a lesson on prayer in this course, so they can learn more about it directly from God's Word.*

Ask your group what they noted on their At a Glance chart as the theme of this chapter.

Growing church persecuted; relief when Jesus comes

## **2 THESSALONIANS 2**

What is this chapter about?

Don't be deceived, day of Lord hasn't come yet, lawless one at His coming

Give time for your group to check their chapter theme on the At a Glance chart. It's probably something similar to the above.



Verses 1-2

How does it begin?

This chapter begins with a problem, a different problem from the one in chapter 1.

These verses are the first request of the letter. It's the first thing the Thessalonians were asked to do. The entire first chapter is encouragement regarding their situation and how well they were doing in their afflictions.

Paul made a request at the beginning of chapter 2, and that request was regarding the coming of the Lord and our gathering together to Him.

Verse 2 indicates there was a spirit, message / spoken word, or letter which the Thessalonians had received saying the day of the Lord had come. It seemed the message or letter had been from Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy. Some of them were shaken and disturbed / alarmed by it.

The rest of this chapter tells why they should not have been deceived by it.

Give time for your group to discuss application. What about false messages going around in churches now, especially messages about the future?

This can still cause many to be shaken and disturbed / alarmed. Continuing to study 2 Thessalonians can assure your group that they know what the Bible has to say on the subject. They don't have to be shaken or disturbed / alarmed.

What had Paul written about this in 1 Thessalonians?

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

The Thessalonians had not only been instructed by Paul when he was there with them, but he had written to them about the day of the Lord in his first letter to them.

The day of the Lord will come like a thief, but not for the brethren. He reminded them twice of what they had already been taught.

You can ask your group if they ever need to be reminded of what they already know. Give time to discuss their answers.

Verses 3-12

What is the first command or clear instruction in 2 Thessalonians? What is it about?

Let no one deceive you

It's the believer's responsibility to keep from being deceived.

This instruction was specifically related to the day of the Lord.

Verses 3-4 told the Thessalonians what has to take place before the day of the Lord comes. Since those things had not happened, then the day had not come.

There is an apostasy / rebellion and the man of lawlessness being revealed which must happen before the day of the Lord.

Paul reminded the Thessalonians that they should not have been led astray, because he told them of those things when he was with them.

The end of the man of lawlessness is described further in verses 6-9.  
Then unbelievers at that point in time are mentioned in verses 10-12.

### Verses 13-17

Who are these verses about?

The Thessalonians again are the subject of these encouraging statements. Paul moved from correcting a problem and instructing to exhorting. Verses 13 and 14 build them up by reminding them of who they are in Christ and why they were called to follow Him.

Verse 15 gives the command which summarizes the whole message of this letter. They should not be shaken, but stand firm and hold to what they had been taught previously, either when Paul was with them or in the first letter to them.

He taught them before about afflictions, the day of the Lord, and all this letter contains. So he told them to stand firm and hold to that teaching.

“Traditions” does not have a negative connotation in the context of this letter, but is referring to what Paul had taught them.

Verses 16-17 are like a benediction. This chapter also closes with a prayer. The love and comfort of the Lord described in the previous verses are repeated in verses 16-17. After correcting the Thessalonians, Paul exhorted them.

This letter begins with encouragement in the midst of a problem, then gives instruction while dealing with another problem, then goes back to encouragement.

## **2 THESSALONIANS 3**

What is the theme of this chapter? What is it about?

Commands about the undisciplined / idle and work

Ask your group what they put on their At a Glance chart. It should be something similar to the above.

Verses 1-5

What are these verses about?

“Finally” is the first word and indicates that the letter is about to close.

These verses ask for prayer from the Thessalonians for Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy.

Pray that the Word spread / speed ahead and be glorified / honored.  
Pray for rescue / deliverance from perverse / wicked and evil men.

Then again there is exhortation—

The Lord is faithful and will strengthen / establish and protect / guard  
Confidence in the Thessalonians to keep doing what they were commanded  
Love and steadfastness to keep on

Verses 6-15

What are the repeated words in these verses? Who is this about?

The repeated words “command” and “work” are several times in these verses.

This is the main part of the letter in which instructions or commands are found.  
They relate to the problem of the unruly or undisciplined / idle brothers.

There were some who were not working and were being a burden to others.

Paul reminded them of the example Silvanus, Timothy, and he had been when in  
Thessalonica—they worked night and day to offer themselves as a model.

You might ask your group if they think there is any relationship between the problems in this letter.

Maybe the false message or letter caused some to think they were in the day of the Lord  
because of their persecutions, afflictions, and suffering. Then those might have been the  
ones who stopped working because of the false message.

Paul corrected all of the above.

He told in advance that affliction is part of a believer’s life. It makes one worthy of the  
kingdom. The day of the Lord won’t come until the man of lawlessness is revealed. Believers  
should work; and if they don’t, then they shouldn’t eat others’ bread and be a burden.

What did he write about this in 1 Thessalonians?

1 Thessalonians 2:9; 4:10b-12; 5:12-14

He reminded them of his example when he was there. He had commanded them  
previously regarding work and had given instruction to admonish the unruly / idle.

What did Paul write in 2 Thessalonians 3 about admonishing brothers?

Verse 6

Keep away from every brother who leads an unruly life / is walking in idleness

Verses 14-15

Don't associate with a person who doesn't obey the instruction in this letter.

Admonish / warn as a brother, not an enemy.

The Thessalonians needed to hold to what they had been taught on this subject as well as the other two main problems of persecution and the day of the Lord.

Verses 16-18

How does this letter end? How do these exhortations relate to the problems in this letter?

Peace in every circumstance—persecutions, afflictions, suffering

The way to know if a letter was from Paul—he wrote the greeting (the end) with his own hand. Relate to 2:2 and 15.

Review to close, asking your group to summarize this letter and how it relates to their lives.

Stand firm and hold to traditions taught / The Lord is coming

1—Growing church persecuted, relief when Jesus comes

2— Don't be deceived; day of Lord hasn't come yet; lawless one at His coming

3— Commands about the undisciplined / idle and work

## **2 THESSALONIANS LEADER GUIDE Lesson 2**

Lesson emphasis:

- 2 Thessalonians 1
- Why Christians suffer

### **REVIEW**

Tell your group to look at their At a Glance chart and ask what 2 Thessalonians is about.

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy sent exhortation and instructions to the Thessalonian church regarding their problems of persecution, a false message, and the undisciplined / idle among them. It was the second letter addressing these issues.

The Thessalonian believers were described as a growing church.

Paul wrote the greeting of the letter with his own hand, as was his way of writing. He drew attention to the fact that this was the way he signed his letters because the Thessalonians had gotten a message or letter as if from him, but it was not.

The main statement was for them to stand firm and hold to what they had been taught by Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy either when they had been in Thessalonica or in the first letter. Paul reminded them that the day of the Lord had not come as the false letter had said. The coming of the Lord is a main theme in the letter.

Chapter 1 primarily deals with the subjects of persecution and the Lord's return.

Chapter 2 teaches about the day of the Lord and the man of lawlessness.

Both chapters end with a prayer for the Thessalonians.

Chapter 3 mainly gives commands about working and the unruly / idle brethren.

This chapter begins with a request for prayer and ends with a prayer.

### **2 THESSALONIANS 1**

#### Verses 1-2

What are these verses? How does this relate to the rest of this letter?

This is a common introduction to most of Paul's letters.

The authors and recipients are stated.

Grace and peace are what the Thessalonian church needed at that time.

Grace to endure and peace in the midst of their trials

Verses 3-4

Who do these verses describe?

The Thessalonian church

Faith was greatly enlarged / growing abundantly  
Love for one another grows greater / is increasing  
Perseverance / steadfastness, faith, endurance in persecutions and afflictions

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy were thankful for their faith and love growing.

They used the Thessalonians as an example of enduring persecutions.

Ask your group what they learned about the word studies from verse 4 and how they relate to the text but also to their lives.

“persecutions”—*diogmos*, a specific term, special term for external persecutions  
“inflicted by the enemies of the gospel.”<sup>1</sup>

The Thessalonian believers were being persecuted by their enemies.

“afflictions”—*thlipsis*, a more general term<sup>2</sup>  
“primarily means ‘a pressing, pressure’...anything which burdens the spirit”<sup>3</sup>  
trouble, distress<sup>4</sup>  
“refer almost invariably to that which comes upon them from without”<sup>5</sup>

The persecutions could have been the cause of the afflictions.

Verses 5-10

What are these verses about? What is the connection between verses 4 and 5?

These are the facts about the church’s situation and the Lord’s coming.

Verse 5 seems to explain more of the thought begun in verse 4.

The reason for the persecutions and afflictions is stated in verse 5.  
It is God’s righteous judgment for believers to be considered worthy of His kingdom.

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<sup>1</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>2</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>3</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>4</sup> James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)*, electronic ed. (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).

<sup>5</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.

The word “judgment,” can also be translated “decision.” This is not a reference to unbelievers in this context.

God is in charge of believers’ refining, although it might come in the form of persecutions and afflictions.

The Thessalonian believers had perseverance and faith in the midst of their persecutions and afflictions. They were growing in their faith and love. This growth is a plain indication / evidence of God’s righteous judgment or decision to take them through the suffering, the result being that they will be considered worthy of His kingdom.

“suffering”—*pascho*, means “to experience a sensation or impression (usually painful)”<sup>6</sup>

The persecutions and afflictions were suffering.  
But it was all for being made worthy of God’s kingdom.

Give your group time to discuss relevant application.

There is a short list at the end of this lesson’s guide which you might use as a visual aid for this discussion.

### **WHY DO CHRISTIANS SUFFER?**

You might ask how other Scriptures in the lesson helped define what it means that suffering prepares believers for the kingdom of God. In other words, why do Christians suffer persecutions; what are the end results, the benefits?

#### James 1:2-4

The trials, pressures are a test of faith which produce endurance / steadfastness.

#### 1 Peter 1:6-9

Trials or pressures again are tests, tests by fire for believers whose faith is proven / genuine as a result of those trials. The outcome of faith is salvation. Endurance is the proof of true salvation.

#### 1 Peter 4:12-19

The word “testing / test” is used again in this passage. Sharing in the sufferings of Christ means that believers suffer as a result of being identified with Him, for His name. The tests of suffering are only for those things which glorify the Lord, not for one’s sins.

Verse 17 relates to 2 Thessalonians 1:5. “Judgment” in this context is also referring to believers, those in God’s household, suffering.

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<sup>6</sup> James Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, Greek Dictionary* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1985), p. 56, G3958.

The contrast is those who don't obey the gospel which is also mentioned in 2 Thessalonians 1:8. Both are references to the unbelievers, the godless man and the sinner.

Verse 19 is encouraging to those undergoing sufferings; exhort your group to do the same—do what is right while entrusting one's soul to the faithful Creator.

1 Peter 5:10

This also states how the persecutions and sufferings make one worthy of the kingdom. God will perfect / restore and confirm, strengthen, and establish those who suffer.

Psalm 119:67-71

The psalmist said that before he was afflicted he went astray. The affliction was good for him because it taught him the Lord's statutes, and as a result he kept God's Word after being afflicted.

Matthew 5:10-12

There is a great reward in heaven for those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness. Relate this to 2 Thessalonians 1:10.

Give your group opportunity to discuss application at any point in this discussion.

Lead your discussion back to 2 Thessalonians 1:5-7.

Ask what they learned about God in verses 6-7 and how it relates to verse 5.

He will repay with pressure those who bring the pressure on Christians. He is the One in charge at all times. He judges how believers are refined to be worthy, but He will also repay those who bring the persecutions on believers.

He will give relief to those under the pressure of persecutions, but not until the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven. Therefore, affliction, persecution, suffering for believers will last until then. Perseverance, faith, and endurance are what the Thessalonians did well. Ask your group how they are doing.

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy were also enduring afflictions, verse 7.

### **WHO SUFFERS PERSECUTIONS AND AFFLICTIONS?**

There is a question in the lesson which asked if the Thessalonians were the only ones enduring affliction. Another question was if suffering was the lot of every Christian. Ask your group what they learned as the answers for these two questions.

Philippians 1:29-30

Suffering for the Lord's sake is granted to those who believe.

Believers have the same conflict Paul did, persecution from those opposing the gospel.



John 16:33

Jesus said believers would have tribulation in the world.

Since He overcame the world, the Thessalonians endured with perseverance and faith when they suffered tribulation from the world.

2 Timothy 3:12

All believers, those who desire to live godly, will be persecuted.

1 Peter 5:9

This says the brethren / brotherhood, all believers in the world, experience the same sufferings.

Hebrews 5:7-9

Jesus suffered while on the earth. As He learned obedience through what He suffered, so do those who follow Him. And those who obey Him receive eternal life.

Give time for application discussion.

Lead your discussion back to 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10.

What does the text say about those who afflict and unbelievers?

God will repay with affliction those who afflict believers.

Those who do not know God and don't obey the gospel of Jesus will pay the penalty of eternal destruction.

They'll be away from His presence as the believers will be marveling in it.

**THOSE WHO PERSECUTE**

Other questions in the lesson have to do with where persecutions or afflictions come from and what is going to happen to those who persecute and afflict believers. Ask your group what they learned.

Matthew 10:16-25

Jesus said that there are those who are like wolves. They attack believers because of Jesus' name. Those who endure to the end will be saved.

John 15:16-25

Jesus also said that the world would hate believers because it hated Him. He commanded for believers to love one another, even when being hated by the world. Another command was to ask for whatever is needed from the Father.

A slave is not greater than His Master; the world persecuted Jesus and will do the same to His followers, disciples.

Those who persecute are the ones who don't know the Father, verse 21.

Relate this to 2 Thessalonians 1:8. These are the people of "the world," unbelievers.

John 17:14-18

In Jesus' prayer, He mentioned that the world hates His disciples.

He asked the Father to keep them from the evil one, though He sent them into the world.

Matthew 10:34-40; Luke 12:51-53

Jesus said here that even those in one's own family might be his enemies. Households, families, are divided between those who believe in Jesus' name and those who don't. Those who don't believe persecute those who are believers.

1 Peter 5:8-10

The adversary, the devil, is the one who is behind Jesus' enemies. Therefore, he is the one behind the persecution of Christians. He is like a lion seeking to devour unsuspecting believers. His followers are like wolves seeking the unsuspecting sheep.

Believers can resist him in their faith, like the Thessalonians.

All believers all over the world are suffering the persecutions and afflictions of those who don't obey the gospel, those who don't know God, those who are under the dominion of the devil.

Matthew 5:10-12

Verbal persecution is also suffering afflictions. Insults, false accusations are also persecutions. Just because some believers are not being put in prisons or being beaten or killed does not mean they aren't being persecuted.

Jesus said the prophets were persecuted in the same way.

Those who do what is right are often spoken against by the ungodly.

Psalm 73

It might seem like there is no justice for the wicked who prosper.

Verses 17 and 18 say that their end is destruction / ruin.

Verse 27, those far from God will perish. He destroys the unfaithful.

The nearness of God is good for the faithful, those who believe.  
He is a wonderful refuge.

Lead your discussion back to 2 Thessalonians 1.

Verses 11-12

How does this prayer at the end of the chapter relate to the church being afflicted, persecuted?

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy did not pray for the Thessalonians to be removed from their suffering. They prayed that the Lord would count them worthy in the midst of it.  
Relate this to verse 5.

Faith is mentioned again in the prayer.

Their faith was greatly enlarged / growing abundantly.

They had faith in the midst of persecutions and afflictions.

The prayer is that God would fulfill their desire / resolve for goodness and the work of faith with power. That work of faith related to their persecutions, that power for faithful endurance and perseverance.

The end result of the prayer is the Lord's name is glorified.

And the believers are glorified in Him.

To end this discussion, ask your group what lessons for life they've learned.

**Why persecutions, afflictions and suffering?**

To be worthy of the kingdom

Test, proof of faith

**Who suffers?**

All believers, Christians

**Who persecutes?**

Unbelievers

Repaid by God with affliction

## **2 THESSALONIANS LEADER GUIDE Lesson 3**

Lesson emphasis:

- 2 Thessalonians 2

### **REVIEW**

Tell your group to look at their At a Glance chart and ask what 2 Thessalonians is about.

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy had taken the gospel to Thessalonica.  
A church developed.  
Paul had written to them before, 1 Thessalonians.

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy sent exhortation and instructions to the Thessalonian church regarding their problems of persecution, a false message, and the undisciplined / idle among them. It was the second letter addressing these issues.

The Thessalonian believers were described as a growing church.

He wrote this second letter to them because of a false message or letter saying that the day of the Lord had already come. This letter corrected that false message and gave reasons, or teaching, as to why the day of the Lord had not come.

But he began this letter with much exhortation about the Thessalonian believers standing firm and enduring in persecutions. He even told them about the relief coming, but not until Jesus is revealed from heaven, the second coming.

Jesus will also at that time deal out retribution, repayment, to those who have afflicted believers.

Paul's main statement, or instruction, in this letter is for them to stand firm and hold to the traditions he had taught them before. He had taught them about being persecuted, about the end times, and about work.

Chapter 1 primarily deals with the subjects of persecution and the Lord's return.

Chapter 2 teaches about the day of the Lord and the man of lawlessness.  
Both chapters end with a prayer for the Thessalonians.

Chapter 3 mainly gives commands about working and the unruly / idle brethren.  
This chapter begins with a request for prayer and ends with a prayer.

## 2 THESSALONIANS 2

You could ask how this chapter is divided, and what the subjects of the paragraphs are.

Verses 1-12 are about the events surrounding the day of the Lord.

Verses 13-15 are doctrinal statements concerning the believers.

Verses 16-17 are a benediction or prayer for them.

### Verses 1-2

What are these verses about?

Paul made a request of the Thessalonian believers.

It concerned the coming of the Lord and the gathering together of believers to Him.

“coming,” *parousia*— “literally, ‘a presence,’ *para*, ‘with,’ and *ousia*, ‘being’ . . . denotes both an ‘arrival’ and a consequent ‘presence with’”<sup>7</sup>

“gathering together,” *episunagoge*—means “a complete *collection*”<sup>8</sup>; “ ‘to gather together,’ suggesting stress upon the place at which the ‘gathering’ is made”<sup>9</sup>

How does verse 2 relate to the coming and gathering?

Evidently they are closely related to the day of the Lord since the message that the day had come could have caused some of the believers to be shaken and disturbed.

Paul said in verse 1 that the request was regarding the coming and gathering, then proceeded to talk about the day of the Lord.

So whatever the connection, there was potential for the believers to be concerned about the coming and gathering if the day of the Lord had already come.

### Verses 3-12

Ask your group what they learned from these verses and the related word definitions.

You can use the simple timeline at the end of this lesson’s guide as a visual aid.

The first point Paul stated was that the day of the Lord had not come.

The first command, or direct instruction, in the book is also in verse 3.

It is the individual believer’s responsibility not to be deceived.

It comes by knowing the Word of truth.

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<sup>7</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), p. 111.

<sup>8</sup> James Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, Greek Dictionary* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1985), p. 32, G1997.

<sup>9</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), p. 261.

He gave a list of some events which have to happen before the day of the Lord.

- The apostasy / rebellion comes first.  
*apostasia*—means “defection, revolt,”<sup>10</sup> “departure . . . ‘a falling away’ ”<sup>11</sup>

*NOTE: Some teach that this is a reference to the “rapture” of the church since the root word *aphistemi* (apo-from and histemi-to stand) can mean “remove” or “put away.”*<sup>12</sup>

- The man of lawlessness must also be revealed before the day of the Lord.

“lawlessness,” *anomia*—means “violation of Law”<sup>13</sup>; “*a*, negative, *nomos*, ‘law’ ”<sup>14</sup>  
“In most cases in the NT it means not the absence of the Law, but the violation of Law.”<sup>15</sup>

“revealed,” *apokalupto*—“to take off the cover”<sup>16</sup>; “to uncover, unveil”<sup>17</sup>

- But the one who restrains has to be taken out of the way before the man of lawlessness is revealed.

“restrains,” *katecho*—“to hold down”<sup>18</sup> “hold firmly,”<sup>19</sup> “to hold back, detain”<sup>20</sup>

In verse 7 it is literally “the restrainer.” “V. 6 speaks of a principle, v. 7 of the principle as embodied in a person or series of persons.”<sup>21</sup>

*NOTE: The one who restrains might bring up some interesting discussion. Many teach that he is the Holy Spirit dwelling within believers, and when He is taken away at the “rapture,” then there is no more restraint and the man of lawlessness will be revealed.*

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<sup>10</sup> R. L. Thomas, *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek Dictionaries: Updated Edition*, G646 (Anaheim: Foundation Publications, Inc., 1998, 1981).

<sup>11</sup> Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary, New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 1992), G646.

<sup>12</sup> Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary, New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 1992), G868.

<sup>13</sup> James Strong, *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2001), G458.

<sup>14</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. 326.

<sup>15</sup> Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary, New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 1992), G458.

<sup>16</sup> James Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, Greek Dictionary* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1985), G601.

<sup>17</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), p. 531.

<sup>18</sup> James Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, Greek Dictionary* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1985), G2722.

<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. 306.

<sup>20</sup> James Strong, *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2001), G2722.

<sup>21</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), p. 530.

The mystery of lawlessness, violation of God's law, is already at work.

And the revealing of the man of lawlessness is being restrained now.

“mystery,” *musterion*—“a secret”<sup>22</sup>

What is the description of the man of lawlessness?

The son of destruction

*apoleia*—“ruin or loss”<sup>23</sup>; “waste”<sup>24</sup>; “indicating ‘loss of well-being, not of being’ ”<sup>25</sup>  
“The Semitic construction means, ‘he who is destined to be destroyed.’ ”<sup>26</sup>

He opposes and exalts himself above all gods and objects of worship.

His coming, *parousia*—“presence,”<sup>27</sup> is connected with the activity of Satan.

At his time there will be power, signs, and false wonders to deceive with wickedness those who are unsaved, those who perish.

How will he be revealed?

When he takes his seat in the temple of God, and says / proclaims that he is God

Therefore a temple must exist at the time of the man of lawlessness.

*NOTE: If your group studied Daniel PUP before this course, there might be some discussion concerning the abomination of desolation or the events of Daniel 9:24-27. But if they haven't studied Daniel inductively together, then don't allow for discussion of it at this time.*

If it has not already been discussed, ask about the end of the man of lawlessness.

Verse 8 says that it will be by the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming of the Lord.

The breath of His mouth will slay / kill the lawless one.

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<sup>22</sup> James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).

<sup>23</sup> James Strong, *The New Strong's Dictionary of Hebrew and Greek Words* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1996), G684.

<sup>24</sup> James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).

<sup>25</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), p. 165

<sup>26</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. 484.

<sup>27</sup> James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).



Review your chronological order using your time line, but do it by asking questions so that your group is doing the review.

Who are verses 10-12 about? What is the description?

Those who perish / are perishing

They are people living at the time when the man of lawlessness is revealed.

They are not saved because they will not receive the love of the truth.

They are deceived by wickedness, by the deluding influence / strong delusion of that time.

They believe what is false because of not believing the truth, being deceived and deluded by wickedness / unrighteousness in which they took pleasure. They succumb to the activity of Satan, the false wonders and signs of that time.

According to verses 10 and 12, they will perish and be judged / condemned.

*krino*—“to distinguish, i.e. decide”<sup>28</sup>; “to separate, select, choose”; hence, ‘to determine’ and so ‘to judge, pronounce judgment’<sup>29</sup>

Relate to chapter 1. What will happen when Jesus is “revealed” from heaven at His 2<sup>nd</sup> coming?

Those who afflict believers now will receive repayment and retribution / vengeance from the Lord. They will pay the penalty (ESV—suffer the punishment) of eternal destruction away from the presence of the Lord.

This takes place while believers are in His presence and marvel at His coming.

His righteous judgment, decision, is for believers now—allowing them to be refined by the affliction, persecutions, and sufferings they endure.

Ask your group if this gives them more compassion for unbelievers.

One way to stir interest in unbelievers is to bring up the subject of prophecy.

If they can draw the simple time line, it could possibly be used as a witnessing tool.

Verse 5 states that Paul taught the Thessalonian believers about these things when he was with them, and that was when they were first saved. So, it is good for new believers to know these things, too.

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<sup>28</sup> James Strong, *The New Strong's Dictionary of Hebrew and Greek Words* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1996), G2919.

<sup>29</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. 336.

Verses 13-15

Ask about the contrast between the previous verses and these. Who are these verses about?

The brethren, beloved by the Lord  
Chosen by God for salvation, sanctified by the Spirit

Have faith / belief in the truth

Called through the gospel

Gain / obtain the glory of the Lord

Paul draws a stark contrast between those who perish and the believers.

Verses 16-17

How does he close his teaching in this chapter?

Paul's benediction or prayer for the Thessalonian believers relates to believers now.

It is a request for the Lord to comfort and strengthen them.  
There was the potential for them to be led astray by the false teaching which had come to them.

The teachings of the end times should give eternal comfort and good hope because they come from God, the Father of believers.

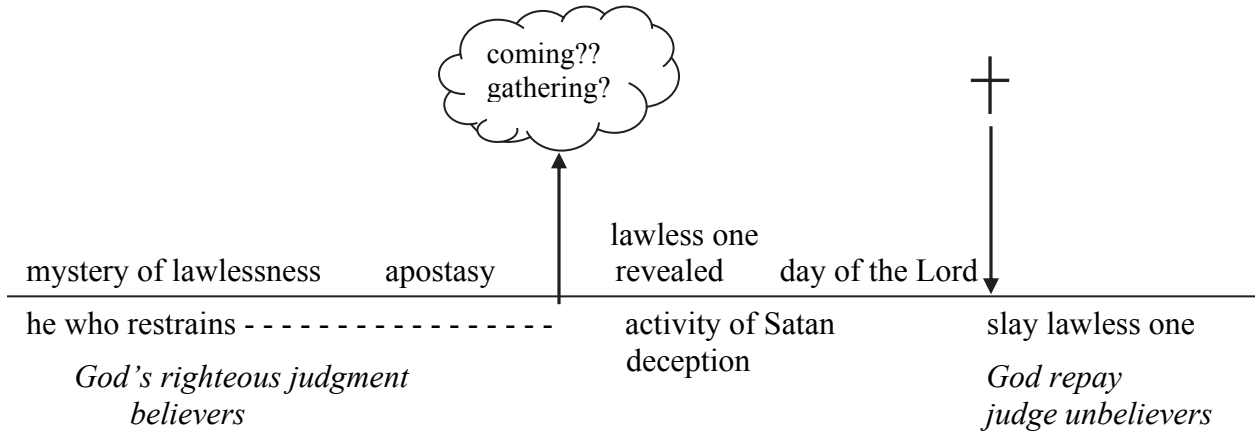
They were to continue in their good works and their good words.

Verse 15 is the summary statement of the letter, but in its immediate context it means that no false teaching should shake or disturb believers. They are to stand firm in the truth of what they've been taught in the Word of God, especially about prophecy in this context.

You could ask if this verse has any relevance for them.

It is so important that they know for themselves what God's Word says so that they can live by it and not be shaken. Knowing for themselves enables them to stand firm in the midst of any persecution or trial they may be experiencing.

Encourage your group that if they've never been taught, then they are off to a good start now. And they'll do even better by finishing the course.





**2 THESSALONIANS**  
**LEADER GUIDE**  
**Lesson 4**

Lesson emphasis:

- Future of the church
- Day of the Lord

**REVIEW**

Ask what your group remembers about why Paul wrote to the Thessalonian church.

They had received a spirit, message / spoken word, or letter supposedly from Paul, Silvanus and Timothy. It said the day of the Lord had already come.  
As a result, some were shaken and disturbed / alarmed.

What was his request at the beginning of chapter 2 about?

The coming of the Lord Jesus Christ  
Our gathering / being gathered together to Him

Next ask what they remember from 2 Thessalonians 1:3-10 and 2:1-12 as the chronology of future events. As they answer, you might begin a simple timeline like the one at the end of this lesson's guide. Add to it throughout your discussion.

At present time:

Mystery of lawlessness is at work  
Restraint is restraining the revelation of the man of lawlessness  
Unbelievers are persecuting believers, 2 Thessalonians 1  
God's righteous judgment for believers

Then the apostasy / rebellion comes first.

The restrainer is taken out of the way.

The man of lawlessness is revealed.

The day of the Lord comes.

Jesus comes and slays the lawless one.

Unbelievers pay the penalty (ESV—suffer the punishment) of eternal destruction, chapter 1.

**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

How does what Paul wrote the Thessalonians before compare with what he said in this letter?

First he told them about the hope regarding believers who die.

Ask what they learned in the other cross-references about this. What happens to a believer in Jesus when he or she dies?

Philippians 1:21-24 and 2 Corinthians 5:6-8

To die is gain for believers.

Christians die, or depart this world, and are with Christ.

When a Christian dies and is absent from his body, then he is at home with the Lord—that has to be his spirit and soul.

So believers depart from this world and their bodies of flesh when they die.

But their spirit and soul go to be “at home” with the Lord Jesus Christ immediately.

Lead your discussion back to 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. What else did Paul write about believers who die? Tell them to look at the chart in the lesson as a visual aid here.

Those who have fallen asleep in Jesus, believers who died, won’t be left behind when He comes.

He will descend from heaven

With a shout / cry of command

With the voice of the / an archangel

With the sound of God’s trumpet

The dead in Christ will rise first

Their bodies will rise since their souls and spirits are with the Lord when they die.

Verse 14 says Jesus will bring them with Him when He comes—their souls and, or spirits.

Then those believers who are alive at that time will be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air. He doesn’t come to earth at that time.

Relate this to “the coming” and “gathering together” to Him in 2 Thessalonians 2:1. Ask if anyone remembers the meaning of the word “coming.”

*parousia*, emphasizes a presence with.

Maybe they were shaken and disturbed because they thought that they missed this “gathering” if the day of the Lord had already come.

Ask what else they learned about “the rapture.” Tell them to look at the chart for Day One as they compare the order of events from Thessalonians and 1 Corinthians 15:51-54.

Jesus died and rose again.

Some believers died, bodies buried and spirit/soul went to be home with the Lord.

Not all Christians die; some remain alive.

The Lord will descend from heaven.

The dead in Christ will rise.

The living believers are caught up with them.

All bodies are changed to immortal ones.  
They all meet the Lord in the air and are with Him always.

Lead your discussion back to 1 Thessalonians 4:18.  
What did Paul say to do with this information? Relate it to 2 Thessalonians 2:1-2.

Comfort one another with these words.  
What an encouragement for all Christians.

*NOTE: There are those who do not believe in a “rapture” of the church, so there could be some debate in your discussion if any have been taught that there isn’t one or have read it in a commentary. The only safe way to deal with that is to focus on what God’s Word clearly says.*

In both 1 and 2 Thessalonians Paul addressed the coming and gathering, or being caught up together, and then the day of the Lord. There were no chapter divisions when he wrote these letters.

He went from the saints being caught up to the day of the Lord in 1 Thessalonians 4 and 5, just as he did in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-2.

### **THE DAY OF THE LORD**

What did Paul write the Thessalonians about the day of the Lord?  
Tell your group to look at the charts in the lesson on Day Two.

#### 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

The day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night on those saying, “peace and safety / security” The pronouns in 1 Thessalonians 5:3 are not indicating believers, but those who are not.

According to verse 2 believers know that the day is going to come, but the unbelievers will be taken by surprise at it. They’ll not escape, and destruction will come upon them suddenly.

Verse 4 says the day of the Lord will not overtake believers.

Verse 9 states that believers are not destined for wrath.

#### 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10 and Romans 5:9

Jesus rescues / delivers believers from the wrath to come.

Believers are saved from God’s wrath.

At this point you might ask what Joel said about the day of the Lord.

Joel 2 and 3 give a description of it:

A day of darkness and gloom; relate this to 1 Thessalonians 5.

There has never been anything like it and won't be after it to the years of many generations.

Verses 11 and 31 say the day is great and very awesome, who can endure it?

Joel 3:9-14 speaks of the judgment of the nations at the day of the Lord.

Ask about the relationship of Acts 2 to the end of Joel 2 and what has to happen before the day of the Lord from these passages.

The Lord will pour forth His Spirit on all of His bondslaves / servants, and this happened on Pentecost in Acts 2 when the church was born.

The "all mankind" is a reference to the Gentiles as well as Israel, and it's qualified by "My bondslaves," believers, servants of the Lord Jesus Christ.

That part of Joel 2 has been fulfilled.

But there are other things which must take place before the day of the Lord.

Wonders in the sky and on earth  
Fire, blood, and smoke  
Sun turned to darkness and moon into blood

These things have not happened yet. The day of the Lord has still not come.

What does 2 Peter 3:7-13 add?

The present heavens and earth are being reserved for judgment of ungodly men.  
Relate to 2 Thessalonians 1 and 2.

The day of the Lord will come like a thief, then destruction.

It's called the day of God in verse 12.

*NOTE: Your group could possibly get off track by discussing things from 2 Peter 3:7-13 which are not part of this study on the day of the Lord. So you should be careful about allowing for too much discussion on something not studied.*

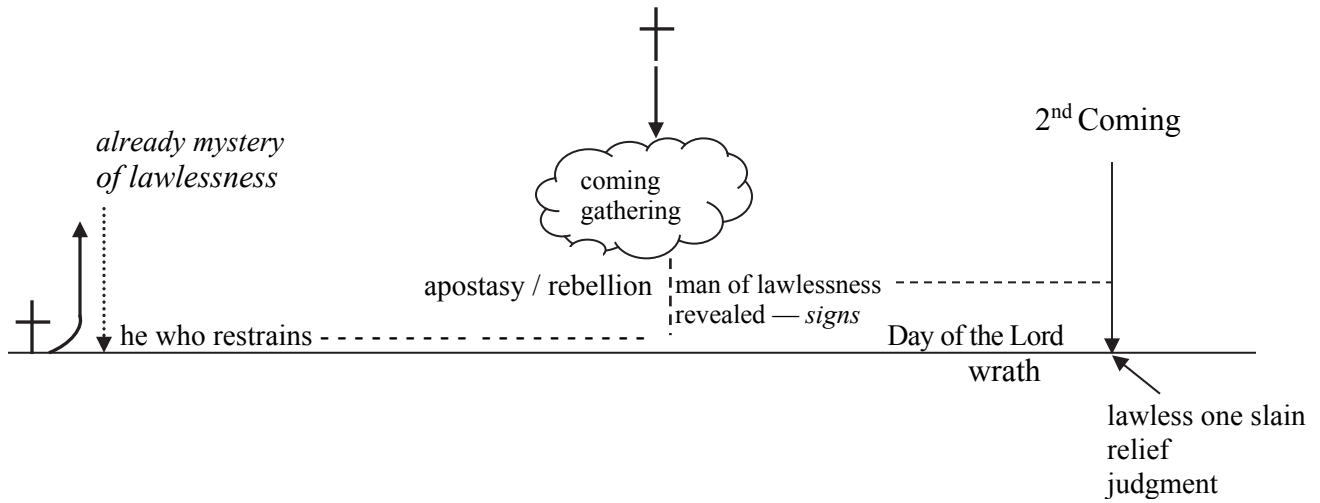
Now you could ask if it makes sense why the Thessalonians might have been shaken and disturbed when they heard that the day of the Lord had already come.

The fact that they were in times of persecution, along with the false statement that the day of the Lord had come, could have been too persuasive for some of them.

Encourage your group not to let false teaching and their circumstances dictate what they believe. Their doctrine should come from a thorough study of what God says in His Word.



You might close by asking them how knowing all these truths is comforting to them. Why would these truths encourage them to call another to repentance?



## **2 THESSALONIANS LEADER GUIDE Lesson 5**

Lesson emphasis:

- 2 Thessalonians 3
- Prayer and thanksgiving

### **REVIEW**

Tell your group to look at their At a Glance chart and ask what 2 Thessalonians is about.

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy had taken the gospel to Thessalonica.  
A church developed.  
Paul had written to them before, 1 Thessalonians.

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy sent exhortation and instructions to the Thessalonian church regarding their problems of persecution, a false message, and the undisciplined / idle among them. It was the second letter addressing these issues.

The Thessalonian believers were described as a growing church.

He wrote this second letter to them because of a false message or letter saying that the day of the Lord had already come. This letter corrected that false message and gave reasons, or teaching, as to why the day of the Lord had not come.

But he began this letter with much exhortation about the Thessalonian believers standing firm and enduring in persecutions. He even told them about the relief coming, but not until Jesus is revealed from heaven, the second coming.

Jesus will also at that time deal out retribution, repayment, to those who have afflicted believers.

Paul's main statement, or instruction, in this letter is for them to stand firm and hold to the traditions he had taught them before. He had taught them about being persecuted, about the end times, and about work.

Chapter 1 primarily deals with the subjects of persecution and the Lord's return.

Chapter 2 teaches about the day of the Lord and the man of lawlessness.

Both chapters end with a prayer for the Thessalonians.

## 2 THESSALONIANS 3

What is this chapter about?

It has several commands, especially regarding the unruly or undisciplined / idle brother.

### Verses 1-5

How does it begin?

Paul asked the Thessalonians to pray for Silvanus, Timothy and him.

The request was:

The Lord's word would spread rapidly  
And be glorified as it was with the Thessalonians.

They be rescued from perverse and evil men, unbelievers

Then he told the Thessalonians about the Lord's faithfulness.  
The faithful Lord would strengthen and protect them from the evil one.

Again in verse 4 he encouraged them by stating his confidence in them to continue doing what they were commanded.

Verse 5 is another request of the Lord for the Thessalonians.

That the Lord direct their hearts into God's love.  
Relate to chapter 1. Their love was growing.

And into the steadfastness of Christ  
Relate to chapter 1. They were enduring in persecutions.

Before discussing what your group observed about the rest of this chapter, ask what they learned about prayer and thanksgiving. Tell them to look at their chart in the lesson as a visual aid. At any point, give opportunity for your group to discuss application.

You might begin by asking what 2 Thessalonians says.

2 Thessalonians 1:3, 11-12

Paul told the Thessalonian church how thankful he was for them, and he told them why. He used his thanksgiving to the Lord as an encouragement for other believers.

Then he told them specifically what he was praying for them as they were enduring affliction, persecution and suffering. His request was for them to be counted worthy and their desire / resolve for goodness to be fulfilled. All of this resulted in the Lord being glorified.

## 2 Thessalonians 2:13-17

Again Paul stated his thanksgiving for the Thessalonians, even in the midst of correcting them. His thanksgiving was because of what the Lord did for them.

He used his thanksgiving as a reminder to them in this passage, again the result being the Lord's glory.

The request is in verses 16-17. He asked the Lord to comfort and strengthen / establish them. Silvanus, Timothy and he personally knew about the Lord's love, comfort and hope in the midst of trials.

## 2 Thessalonians 3:16

The last prayer request for the Thessalonians was for the Lord of peace to grant them peace, peace in every circumstance: persecutions and suffering, not being deceived, dealing with the undisciplined / idle brothers.

Next, you might ask what 1 Thessalonians says about prayer and thanksgiving.

### 1 Thessalonians 1:1-2

Paul began his first letter to the Thessalonians like he did the second, with thanksgiving for them. And again, it was specific.

### 1 Thessalonians 2:13

Paul was thankful for people hearing and believing God's word. Relate this to 2 Thessalonians 3:1—his prayer request.

### 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13

They were thankful and prayed to see the Thessalonians and complete their faith.

His request was for the Lord to direct their way to the Thessalonians, but also for the Thessalonians' love to increase more. Relate this to 2 Thessalonians 1:3. The request was answered.

The result of the request is being without blame and holy at the Lord's coming.

### 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18, 23-25

Pray without ceasing.  
Give thanks in everything.

The last prayer request in 1 Thessalonians was for sanctification to be without blame at Christ's coming. It's similar to the one at the end of chapter 3.

Paul said in this letter, too, that God is faithful and He's the one who will answer the requests.

In verse 25 he asked for prayer—general prayer.

Ask your group what else they learned about prayer and thanksgiving from the other cross-references in this lesson.

1 Timothy 2:1-4

Paul urged Timothy, and all believers, to pray and be thankful on behalf of all men and those in authority / high positions. The desired result is for believers to be able to live a tranquil / peaceful and quiet life in godliness and dignity.

Romans 1:8-12

Paul also began this letter with thanksgiving for a church and what he knew about their faith. His request was to go to them.

1 Corinthians 1:4-9

Paul thanked the Lord, and told the people, for what He was doing in them and what He had given them.

Ephesians 1:15-23; 3:14-21

This is thanksgiving and request based on a church's faith. The prayer is for knowing the Lord better and what He gives believers.

The prayer in chapter 3 is for strength and an understanding of God's love.  
This is encouragement in the form of prayer.

Philippians 1:3-5, 9-11

Thanksgiving for partnership in the gospel.  
The request is about love and being blameless in the day of Christ.  
Several of Paul's prayers are alike, but all specific to the church he wrote.

Colossians 1:3-14

The thanksgiving is very like that of 2 Thessalonians 1.  
Again the request has to do with knowledge for the church. Spiritual knowledge for growth and strength.

2 Timothy 1:3-4

Paul was thankful for Timothy and prayed for him constantly. He was his son in the faith.

Philemon 4-7

Another personal prayer: thankful for his love and faith, request for sharing faith and full knowledge.

Hebrews 13:20-21

This might be a good one to have someone read aloud. A prayer for equipping, as others have been also. This prayer has doctrine in it.

How should believers value the prayers offered by others for them?

Romans 15:30-33 and Philippians 1:19-20

Paul's requests for personal deliverance were for on-going ministry to others.

Relate this to 2 Thessalonians 3:1-2.

2 Corinthians 1:8-11

Praying for other believers helps them.

When the requests are answered by the Lord, all involved are thankful.

Hebrews 13:18-19

This is another prayer for deliverance or restoring to the believers. It's also for honorable living in bad circumstances.

Lead your discussion back to the observations of 2 Thessalonians 3.

Verses 6-13

What are these verses about?

These are Paul's commands to the Thessalonians.

Keep away from every unruly / idle brother.

The example Paul, Silvanus and Timothy left when with them was working to pay for their own bread. They didn't take advantage of the Thessalonians feeding them. They wanted to be an example to them, not a burden.

When they were with the Thessalonians, they gave them this order / command:  
If a person is not willing to work, then he's not to eat, either.

Work in quiet fashion  
Eat own bread / earn own living  
Don't grow weary of doing good

According to verse 11, why would he give such commands?

He heard some were living like busybodies; living undisciplined life and not working.

Verses 14-15

What other commands did Paul write?

Pay attention to anyone who doesn't obey what's in this letter. Don't associate with (ESV—have nothing to do with) such a person, so he'll be ashamed.

Admonish / warn him as a brother, not an enemy.

Verses 16-18

What did Paul say as he closed this letter?

Peace from the Lord  
Paul's distinguishing mark in his letters  
Grace from the Lord

To end this discussion, you might ask why the Thessalonians needed peace and grace.



## 2 THESSALONIANS LEADER GUIDE Lesson 6

Lesson emphasis:

- 2 Thessalonians 3
- The evil one
- The unruly or undisciplined (ESV—idle) brother

### REVIEW

Tell your group to look at their At a Glance chart and ask what 2 Thessalonians is about.

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy had taken the gospel to Thessalonica.  
A church developed.  
Paul had written to them before, 1 Thessalonians.

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy sent exhortation and instructions to the Thessalonian church regarding their problems of persecution, a false message, and the undisciplined / idle among them. It was the second letter addressing these issues.

The Thessalonian believers were described as a growing church.

He wrote this second letter to them because of a false message or letter saying that the day of the Lord had already come. This letter corrected that false message and gave reasons, or teaching, as to why the day of the Lord had not come.

But he began this letter with much exhortation about the Thessalonian believers standing firm and enduring in persecutions. He even told them about the relief coming, but not until Jesus is revealed from heaven, the second coming.

Jesus will also at that time deal out retribution, repayment, to those who have afflicted believers.

Paul's main statement, or instruction, in this letter is for them to stand firm and hold to the traditions he had taught them before. He had taught them about being persecuted, about the end times, and about work.

Chapter 1 primarily deals with the subjects of persecution and the Lord's return.

Chapter 2 teaches about the day of the Lord and the man of lawlessness.

Chapter 3 mainly gives commands about working and the unruly / idle brethren.

## THE EVIL ONE

What does 2 Thessalonians 3:3 say about the evil one?

The faithful God will strengthen and protect them from (ESV—establish and guard them against) the evil one. This applies to all believers.

Ask your group what they learned from their study of the evil one.  
As a visual aid you can list the main points they discuss.

### Matthew 6:9-13

Jesus taught His disciples to pray for deliverance from the evil one.

### John 17:14-22

Jesus prayed for His disciples that the Father keep them from the evil one while they are in the world and hated by it.

Prayer is one of the main defenses believers have against him.

### John 8:23, 40-44

The devil is the father of unbelievers.

They do his desires.

He was a murderer from the beginning.

He is a liar and the father of lies; there is no truth in him.

### Ephesians 6:10-13

The strength of the Lord is mentioned in Ephesians 6:10 as well as 2 Thessalonians 3:3.  
He gives Christians the inner force to stand against the devil.

The commands are:

Be strong

Put on

Take up

The results of obeying those commands are that the believer will be able to stand firm against and resist the devil's schemes.

Evil spiritual forces from the evil one rule evil men, but believers can resist them.

When there is a struggle, Christians need to remember who the struggle is with.

### 1 Peter 5:8-10

This passage gives similar instructions to Christians

Be sober / sober-minded, alert / watchful, resist him.

Resist him by being firm in faith and knowing that these things happen to all believers in the world.

What is the relationship between the evil one and evil men?

The evil one rules over the evil men, causing them to do his will.

Relate the above information to the Thessalonians' situation stated in 2 Thessalonians 1.

How does 2 Thessalonians 3:4-5 relate?

Paul's prayers for them were based on what he knew of the Lord, but he also called them to obedience in the midst of their trials.

In verse 5 he prayed for love and steadfastness. Steadfastness is synonymous with standing firm. They needed to continue in obedience, even when things got worse.

Ask your group how all of this applies to them. Give time for discussion.

#### **THE UNDISCIPLINED OR UNRULY / IDLE BROTHER**

Ask your group about 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15 and what they learned from the word studies. As a visual aid, you can list the main points.

The first command is to keep away from every brother who leads an unruly life (ESV—walking in idleness).

“keep away”

*Stello* means “set in order”<sup>30</sup>; “to arrange . . . gather up, hence to restrain,”<sup>31</sup> “From this comes the sense of an inner gathering-up or withdrawal, and so of flinching and avoiding.”<sup>32</sup>

“leads / walking”

*peripateo* simply means “to walk about”

This would be a brother, a Christian, who is living out of order, disorderly, slack. According to the context, he would be out of order by not working.

“unruly / idleness”

*ataktos*—The basic meaning is to be out of order or rank, disorderly.<sup>33</sup> It can mean idleness<sup>34</sup> or slackness,<sup>35</sup> “to neglect one’s duties.”<sup>36</sup>

<sup>30</sup> James Strong, *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2001), G4724.

<sup>31</sup> Robert L. Thomas, *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek Dictionaries: updated edition* (Anaheim: Foundation Publications, Inc., 1998), G4724.

<sup>32</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. 485.

<sup>33</sup> James Strong, *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2001), G814.

<sup>34</sup> James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).

This teaching might be new to some in your group, but help them to understand what the outcome of keeping away from such a brother is—to correct him.

How do verses 7-9 explain what Paul meant?

Paul, Silvanus and Timothy didn't act in an undisciplined manner when they were with the Thessalonians. That's the example.

They didn't eat anyone's bread without paying for it.

With labor and hardship (ESV—toil and labor), they kept working night and day so they weren't a burden to anyone.

“kept working”  
*ergazomai*, a form of *ergon*, to “work, labor”<sup>37</sup>

They had a right for the Thessalonians to provide for them. But they didn't use that right.

1 Corinthians 9:3-15

The apostles had the right to refrain from working to meet their own physical needs and just work at teaching the gospel, the Word of God.

Those who teach the Word full time should get their living from those they teach. Paul chose not to use this right either in Thessalonica or Corinth.

Instead they wanted to offer themselves as a model / example to be followed / imitated by the Thessalonians.

“follow / imitate”  
*Mimeomai* is “to imitate.”<sup>38</sup>

“model / example”  
*Tupos* is an interesting word meaning the mark, impression, of a blow or stamp.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> *W.E. Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* (electronic edition), published in 1940 and without copyright, G814.

<sup>36</sup> Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary, New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000), p. 285, G812.

<sup>37</sup> Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000), p. 915, G2038.

<sup>38</sup> R. L. Thomas, *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek Dictionaries: Updated Edition*, G3401 (Anaheim: Foundation Publications, Inc., 1998, 1981), G3401.

<sup>39</sup> R. L. Thomas, *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek Dictionaries: Updated Edition*, G5179 (Anaheim: Foundation Publications, Inc., 1998, 1981), G5179b.

Philippians 3:17 and 1 Corinthians 11:1

These are two other places where Paul called fellow believers to follow his example and that of those who held the standard, Christ.

How do verses 10-12 fit with verses 6-9?

This was not a new command for the church.

If anyone doesn't work, then he shouldn't eat what others work for.

Paul heard that there were some like that. They were undisciplined / idle and acting like busybodies.

“acting like busybodies”

*periergazomai*—“to be working round about, instead of at one's own business (*peri*, around, *ergon*, work)”<sup>40</sup>

Paul commanded and exhorted them to work in quiet fashion (ESV—do their work quietly) and eat their own bread (ESV—earn their own living).

“work in quiet fashion,” *hesuchia*, “quiet” means “quietness . . . stillness.”<sup>41</sup> “The expression suggests a manner of life which is to characterize an activity and signifies the calm and contentment which are the opposite of being a busybody.”<sup>42</sup>

What other reasons did Paul give for working?

1 Thessalonians 4:9-12

To behave / walk properly toward outsiders (unbelievers)

To meet your needs (ESV—be dependent on no one)

1 Timothy 5:3-5, 8

To provide for one's widowed mother or grandmother

To provide for one's relatives, family / household

Lead your discussion back to 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15.

Who do these verses address?

If anyone does not obey what Paul wrote—and that still applies to believers

*hupakouo* means “to harken [listen] to a command”<sup>43</sup>; “to listen to, to obey.”<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> *W.E. Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* (electronic edition), published in 1940 and without copyright, p. 162

<sup>41</sup> Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000), G2271.

<sup>42</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. 486.

<sup>43</sup> James Strong, *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2001), G5219.

“take special note,” *semeioo*—“to signify, to mark out . . . ‘put a tag on that man’ ”<sup>45</sup>

“do not associate with / have nothing to do with,” “associate with/ have to do with” is *sunanamignumi*—“to mix up together,”<sup>46</sup> is “to have fellowship or keep company with.”<sup>47</sup>

Relate this to the definition of “keep away” in verse 6.

The goal is for the shame of the body not associating with the disobedient brother to bring him to obedience. It is a method of correction within the body of believers.

How do the cross-references in 1 Corinthians compare with this?

1 Corinthians 5:1-13 and 15:33

Clean out the sin among believers before it affects others. The Corinthians were admonished for being tolerant and arrogant of sin in their church, and that is still an admonition for churches now.

In this situation the man was a “so-called” brother, a wicked man. He was to be put out of the church so that he might be saved and so that sin didn’t spread within the church.

Christians are to judge those who are inside the church. God judges those outside.

Bad company corrupts good morals.

Give time for your group to discuss application.

Lead the discussion back to 2 Thessalonians 3:15.

The disobedient brother who is being admonished / warned is not to be treated as an enemy.

“admonish / warn,” *noutheteo*—“means ‘to put in mind’ ”<sup>48</sup>; “to warn”<sup>49</sup>

To end this discussion, you can ask your group what lessons for life they learned from studying 2 Thessalonians. You might also ask how 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a fits with this lesson.

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<sup>44</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. 486.

<sup>45</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. 486.

<sup>46</sup> R. L. Thomas, *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek Dictionaries: Updated Edition*, G4874 (Anaheim: Foundation Publications, Inc., 1998, 1981) G4874.

<sup>47</sup> Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary, New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 1992), G4874.

<sup>48</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), p. 13.

<sup>49</sup> Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary, New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 1992), G3560