

1 Thessalonians (NASB)

1 THESS 1:1-10

1 Paul and Silvanus and Timothy,
To the church of the Thessalonians
in God the Father and the Lord Jesus
Christ: Grace to you and peace.

2 We give thanks to God always
for all of you, making mention of you
in our prayers; 3 constantly bearing
in mind your work of faith and labor
of love and steadfastness of hope in
our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence
of our God and Father, 4 knowing,
brethren beloved by God, His choice
of you; 5 for our gospel did not
come to you in word only, but also in
power and in the Holy Spirit and with
full conviction; just as you know
what kind of men we proved to be
among you for your sake.

6 You also became imitators of
us and of the Lord, having received
the word in much tribulation with the
joy of the Holy Spirit, 7 so that you
became an example to all the
believers in Macedonia and in
Achaia. 8 For the word of the Lord
has sounded forth from you, not only
in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in

1) The salutation of the book includes Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy. Who actually wrote the epistle and to whom was it written?

This book is from the apostle Paul to the believers in Thessalonica, written around 52-53 A.D.

2) How do you understand the phrase “. . . *in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ*” in vs. 1? Shouldn't it say, to the church of God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ in Thessalonica?

it implies that their lives, hopes, and their relationship to one another flow from their mutual union with God the Father through Jesus Christ – they are no longer looking at God or His church from outside.

3) In vs. 2 Paul writes that they “give thanks *always*.” How is that possible?

Paul, Silvanus and Timothy were the “church planters” in Thessalonica – they could have been proud and taken credit. Instead, they give God the credit and remain thankful to Him. “We give thanks to God always . . .”

4) Notice the sequence in vs. 3: work of faith – labor of love – steadfastness of hope. How do work and faith relate in the Christian life? How do labor and love relate? How about steadfastness and hope? Consider James 2:17-18; Jn. 14:15; Heb. 10:36.

True authentic faith produces faithfulness and good works. Faith motivates work, love motivates labor, and hope motivates steadfastness.

5) In vs. 4, Paul claims to “know” that the members of this church have been chosen by God (“His choice of you”). What evidence does he present to back up his claim?

All of the above. Discuss Jn. 1:12-13, Jn. 15:16a.

6) In verse 5 Paul says that the gospel did not come to the church in Thessalonica “in word alone.” What was also evident?

The preaching was accompanied by God powered life-change and real faith.

7) In vs. 6 Paul says that the church had become “imitators” of their teachers. In what way were they imitators? Should we be imitators as well?

Even though they had troubles they received the word with joy. (See Lk. 6:40)

8) The “so that” in vs 7 indicates purpose. What purpose is revealed here?

They are to be an example to others.

It might be noted that this is not Paul's purpose, nor the Thessalonian believer's purpose. It is God's purpose!

9) It is interesting that, even though Thessalonica is in the province of Macedonia, the faith of the Thessalonian believers was going forth not only in Macedonia, but also in Achaia (Greece) and beyond (vs. 8). Can you think of any way that your church can make application of this?

Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth . . . (Acts 1:8) Faith and faithfulness speak louder than words.

every place your faith toward God has gone forth, so that we have no need to say anything.

9 For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God, 10 and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come.

10) In vs. 9 we can see that the people turned from worshipping idols to worshipping God. The outcome of their conversion was to serve a God who is “living and true.” What does this imply about the idols they had been serving?

They were dead and false. . . . Make application to 21st Century America!

11) How is Jesus identified in vs. 10?

**God's heavenly Son
Raised from the dead
Our rescuer**

NOTES:

1 THESS. 2:1-12

1 ¶ For you yourselves know, brethren, that our coming to you was not in vain, 2 but after we had already suffered and been mistreated in Philippi, as you know, we had the boldness in our God to speak to you the gospel of God amid much opposition. 3 For our exhortation does not come from error or impurity or by way of deceit; 4 but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who examines our hearts. 5 For we never came with flattering speech, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed—God is witness— 6 nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, even though as apostles of Christ we might have asserted our authority.

7 ¶ But we proved to be gentle among you, as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children. 8 Having so fond an affection for you, we were well-pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because you had become very dear to us. 9 For you recall, brethren, our labor and hardship, how working night and day so as not to be a burden to any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. 10 You are witnesses,

1) We see in vv. 1-2 that Paul, Timothy, and Silvanus were not able to share the Gospel without opposition. Where had they been mistreated? (SEE Acts 16:12-40).

In Philippi. On his 2nd missionary journey (ca. 51 A.D), Paul went from Philippi to Thessalonica.

2) What did Paul and company do that required boldness?

Proclaimed the Gospel of God. Remember, they had been beaten and thrown into prison a few weeks earlier for doing the same thing!

3) Verse 4 explains contains a contrast about the proclamation of the Gospel. Who are these evangelists seeking to please and why?

They are seeking the approval of God not the approval of men. The Gospel is not always pleasing to men but it is always pleasing to God.

4) Paul presents a good description of their motives for ministry in verses 5-6. What three “nots” do you see in these verses? Do you think these are common problems for people in ministry? Why or why not?

Flattering speech, greed, glory from men. Common problems are a desire for: influence, power, fame, wealth. (Compare 1 Jn. 2:16).

5) Paul uses the phrase, “God is witness,” in verse 5. Can a man correctly deduce the intent of another man’s actions? Do you think we are always honestly aware of our own motives?

1 Sam. 16:7 – “The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.”

6) At the end of verse 6 Paul talks about authority. What is the difference between *having* authority and *asserting* authority?

Having authority = having the right and the power to rule. Asserting authority = using that power and authority for one’s own benefit.

7) There is a simile in verse 7. What is it? What does it mean?

“Like a nursing mother caring for her children.” They have been loving, careful, forgiving so that the church might grow and be healthy. This church was “their baby.”

8) In verse 9, how does the relationship between the apostles and the church affect their ministry?

They loved the church and were determined not to be a burden to it.

9) In verse 9 [and 10] Paul reminds the church what the proclamation of the Gospel required of the apostles? Compare 2 Cor. 6:3-11. It is pretty clear from these passages that sharing the Gospel is far more than just explaining the plan of salvation.

What are the other components of Gospel ministry?

In vs. 9 we see labor and hardship. In 2 Cor. we see personal pain and sacrifice, but also patience, kindness, and love. Ministry is to the whole person.

and so is God, how devoutly and uprightly and blamelessly we behaved toward you believers; 11 just as you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children, 12 so that you would walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

10) In verse 11 Paul uses the words “exhorting, encouraging, and imploring.” What do these words mean? What does he compare this to?

exhorting – coming along side to bring comfort or help

encouraging – giving consolation and motivation

imploring – giving direction or correction based on experience

= the way a father loves and disciplines and teaches his own children.

11) Verse 12 begins with a “so that” which indicates purpose. What is the purpose of the apostle’s ministry?

To enable the church to live in a way that honors God.

1 THESS. 2:13-16

13 ¶ For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe. 14 For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea, for you also endured the same sufferings at the hands of your own countrymen, even as they did from the Jews, 15 who both killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out. They are not pleasing to God, but hostile to all men, 16 hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles so that they may be saved; with the result that they always fill up the measure of their sins. But wrath has come upon them to the utmost.

1) What does Paul say the apostles are thankful for in vs. 13?

That the church received the word of God (the proclaimed message of the Gospel) as God's word, not simply as the ideas of man. DISCUSS the Bereans in Acts 17:10-13.

2) Why would they thank *God* for this response on the part of the Thessalonian church?

Because God enables the reception of His Word. READ AND DISCUSS 1 Cor. 2:12-14.

3) Do you think that the Word of God and the word of man can be easily confused? Why or why not?

There are certainly false teachers/prophets who present their own ideas as being from God. This is why believers should pray for discernment (1 Jn. 4:1-3)

4) At the end of vs. 13 it says that the Word "also performs its work in you who believe." What *work* does God's Word perform? Is it performing that work in you?

Jn. 17:17 – It produces holiness in us.

Heb. 4:12 – It judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

Eph. 5:25-26 – It makes us clean.

SEE ALSO Ps. 119: 11, 105

It is God's word and it is God's work – YES.

5) According to vs. 14-15a, in what way(s) is the church in Thessalonica *imitating* the church in Judea?

They are enduring persecution from their own countrymen.

6) What three charges does Paul make against the Judean Jews in vs. 15?

1. Killed the Lord Jesus

2. Killed the prophets

3. Drove out the church (see Acts 8:1)

7) Consider vv. 15-16. Are the actions of the Jews pleasing to God? How has their activity affected the mission to the Gentiles?

No. Their actions have hindered (but not thwarted) the salvation of the Gentiles.

8) Read the following passages and notice how the word "wrath" is used:

Isa. 48:9-10, Jn. 3:36, Rom. 5:9, Col. 3:5-6,

1 Thess. 5:9-10. What is the meaning of the word "wrath" in vs. 16?

God's wrath ≠ troubles or persecutions or suffering in this life. God's wrath = His final judgment upon those who reject the Christ. (SEE Jn. 3:18.)

Isa. 48:9-10 – "For my own name's sake I delay my wrath; . . . I have tested you in the furnace of affliction.

Jn. 3:36 – "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him."

Rom. 5:9 – "Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!"

Col. 3:5-6 – "Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.

1 Thess. 5:9-10 – "For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ."

1 THESS. 2:17-3:13

17 ¶ But we, brethren, having been taken away from you for a short while—in person, not in spirit—were all the more eager with great desire to see your face. 18 For we wanted to come to you—I, Paul, more than once—and yet Satan hindered us. 19 For who is our hope or joy or crown of exultation? Is it not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming? 20 For you are our glory and joy.

1 ¶ Therefore when we could endure it no longer, we thought it best to be left behind at Athens alone, 2 and we sent Timothy, our brother and God's fellow worker in the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you as to your faith, 3 so that no one would be disturbed by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we have been destined for this. 4 For indeed when we were with you, we kept telling you in advance that we were going to suffer affliction; and so it came to pass, as you know. 5 For this reason, when I could endure it no longer, I also sent to find out about your faith, for fear that the tempter might have tempted you, and our labor would be in vain.

6 ¶ But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and has brought us good

1) In vs. 17 Paul writes about their absence from Thessalonica for a time. What does he mean "in person, not in spirit?"

They were separated physically, but were still thinking about and praying for the church.

2) In vs. 18 Paul says that he wanted to return "yet Satan hindered . . ." How do you understand Satan's power to hinder or limit Christian ministry? (Consider 1 Peter 5:8-9; James 4:7; and 1 Jn. 3:8).

Satan is real, he is powerful, but he is not God. He can deceive and put obstacles in our way, but he cannot thwart the purpose and plan of God. God is sovereign. God rules!

3) Read vv. 19-20. How does Paul describe the fulfillment and benefit that comes through ministry?

His joy comes, not from personal gain, but through the knowledge that others are coming to Christ. (SEE Php. 3:7-8)

4) Where was Paul when this letter was written? (3:1)

Athens

5) Since they were not all able to visit the Thessalonians, who did they send?

Timothy

6) According to vv. 2-3, what was the purpose of his visit?

To strengthen & encourage their faith. "Faith = An unwavering trust in the power, purpose, and faithfulness of God." – K.A.

7) Note that, in vs. 3, Paul says: ". . . we have been destined for this." Destined for what?

Afflictions (Gk. = tribulations).

8) Can trouble, or persecution, or suffering ever be part of God's plan for His people? Explain your answer.

Yes, in fact Jesus promised it to his disciples. READ Jn. 16:33. Also consider 2 Cor. 4:8-9 & 1 Pet. 1:6-7.

9) In vs. 5 Paul adds something else to the purpose of sending a visitor. What does he want to find out about? What is his fear?

He wanted assurance that they were standing firm. He feared that they would give way to temptation.

10) In vs. 6 we see that Timothy has returned. What kind of news does he bring?

He brought good news – the church is doing well.

news of your faith and love, and that you always think kindly of us, longing to see us just as we also long to see you, 7 for this reason, brethren, in all our distress and affliction we were comforted about you through your faith; 8 for now we really live, if you stand firm in the Lord. 9 For what thanks can we render to God for you in return for all the joy with which we rejoice before our God on your account, 10 as we night and day keep praying most earnestly that we may see your face, and may complete what is lacking in your faith?

11 ¶ Now may our God and Father Himself and Jesus our Lord direct our way to you; 12 and may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one another, and for all people, just as we also do for you; 13 so that He may establish your hearts without blame in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints.

NOTES:

11) What now brings Paul comfort? (vs. 7)

The church's faithfulness makes all of Paul's suffering and distress worthwhile.

12) Why do you think Paul is rejoicing before the Lord? (vs. 9).

He is grateful for God preservation of these saints.

We know that we are saved by grace through faith but we sometimes forget that we are kept safe by the same means.

13) What might still be lacking in their faith? (vs. 10)

The full effects of perseverance.

DISCUSS James 1:2-4: "Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything."

ALSO SEE 2 Pet. 1:5-8.

14) Notice in vs. 11 that Paul is still praying for a way to personally come and visit. What else is he praying for?

He prays that the church would:

- increase in love for one another
- increase in love for all people
- be established in holiness

1 THESS. 4:1-12

1 ¶ Finally then, brethren, we request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us instruction as to how you ought to walk and please God (just as you actually do walk), that you excel still more. 2 For you know what commandments we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus. 3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; 4 that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, 5 not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God; 6 and that no man transgress and defraud his brother in the matter because the Lord is the avenger in all these things, just as we also told you before and solemnly warned you. 7 For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification. 8 So, he who rejects this is not rejecting man but the God who gives His Holy Spirit to you.

9 ¶ Now as to the love of the brethren, you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another; 10 for indeed you do practice it toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, to excel still more, 11 and to

1) In the first verse Paul refers to instructions about Christian living. Is he saying that the church isn't living by these instructions?

No, he says they ARE.

What are they being requested and exhorted to do?

Excel even more. (The Gk. word means "overflow," or "abound.")

DISCUSS the need for excellence.

2) By what authority does Paul instruct the people?

He was given the authority to instruct by Jesus. [He was also given the instruction by Jesus].

3) The word "sanctification" is used in vs. 3.

What does this word mean? Does this verse mean that sanctification and sexual purity are the same thing? Explain your answer.

Sanctification is the process of learning to live out your holiness. Becoming more Christ-like.

4) The word "vessel" in verse 4 is often translated "body." The Greek idea that the body was the "container for the soul" may be the basis for this wording. Is it right or wrong to think of the body this way?

When God created Adam He first made a body and then breathed into it the breath of life. In 1 Thess. 5:23 the person is describes as spirit, soul and body.

5) There is a contrast in vv. 4-5 in how the Gentile and the believer uses his body. What is the significant difference? (Also consider vs. 7).

The believer uses his body to honor God, the unbeliever for lustful (fleshly) passion. . . the implication here is self indulgence which doesn't glorify God.

6) Verse 6 contains an explicit instruction regarding relationships within the church. How do you understand this?

The word "brother" here means a fellow-believer. The wives and daughters of other believers must be treated with care and respect.

7) A Bible teacher once pointed out that "believers do not grow *toward* sanctification, they grow *in* sanctification." What is the difference? How does one grow in sanctification?

Learn to walk according to the Spirit and how to not walk according to the flesh. SEE Gal. 5:16.

8) What does Paul say in vs. 8 about those who refuse to accept instruction?

They are, in reality, rejecting God.

9) There is continuity between vs. 1 and vv. 9-10. What do they have in common?

In both cases they are doing the right things, but could do them more and/or better.

make it your ambition to lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and work with your hands, just as we commanded you, 12 so that you will behave properly toward outsiders and not be in any need.

10) What should your ambition look like, according to vs. 11? How does this compare to the “American dream”?

Lead a quiet life (so you can hear God), mind your own business (there is probably enough there to keep you busy), work with your hands (honest work honors God).

It emphasizes the man, the modern “American dream” emphasizes his stuff.

11) What is the anticipated two-fold outcome of this kind of ambition? (See. vs. 12)

- 1. That we will be good Christians and citizens with a good reputation that won't harm our witness for Christ.**
- 2. That we won't be in need.**

1 THESS 4:13-18

13 ¶ But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. 15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

NOTES:

1) Why do you think Paul wrote “asleep” instead of “dead” in vs. 13?

“Death” is not an easily applicable term for believers; it is an event that happens in the midst of eternal life. READ Jn. 11:25-26.

2) Should Christians grieve? If so, how would their grief differ from that of unbelievers? (Consider vv. 13-14).

Of course Christians grieve. Unlike unbelievers however, they know their loss is temporary. READ Prov. 14:32.

3) What does “in Jesus” mean in vs. 14?

In means having union, an unbreakable connection, total dependence on the Lord Jesus Christ.

4) Paul writes of those who remain alive at the coming of the Lord in vs. 15. Since he says “we who are alive . . .” do you think he expected to be personally included in that group? Why or why not?

Perhaps, but probably not. Paul uses the word “we” to mean the church (in the same way he used it in vs. 14).

5) Some say that the resurrection is a New Testament idea; that Old Testament believers did not have an expectation of resurrection. Read and consider the following passages and then give your opinion:

Job 19:25-27

Isa. 26:19

Dan. 12:2

Ps. 49:15

The resurrection is definitely taught and understood in the Old Testament. Our understanding is more complete because we have an example.

6) There is a progression of events in vv. 16-17. What are the three main events in order?

1 – The Lord will descend

2 – The believing dead will rise.

3 – Believers who are alive will be “caught up.”

7) The “catching up” in vs. 17 is often called the “rapture of the church.” What do we learn about it from this verse?

NOTE: “rapture” It is not a strictly biblical word – it comes from the Latin, *raptus* that was drawn from the Vulgate. We learn that at Jesus’ return believers, living and dead, will rise to be with the Lord forever. COMPARE 1 Cor. 15:51-52.

8) According to vs. 18, what should be the consequence of knowing all this?

Believers should find comfort.

1 THESS 5:1-11

1 ¶ Now as to the times and the epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you. 2 For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. 3 While they are saying, "Peace and safety!" then destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape. 4 But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day would **overtake** you like a thief; 5 for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness;

Means
"surprise"

6 ¶ so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober. 7 For those who sleep do their sleeping at night, and those who get drunk get drunk at night. 8 But since we are of *the day*, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation. 9 For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with Him.

11 ¶ Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.

1) "Times and epochs" is translated "times and dates" or "times and seasons" in other English Bibles. What is meant by these terms?

This refers to general stages; times = long periods of time, epochs = briefer periods that divide them. NOT DATES! SEE Matt. 24:36 & Acts 1:7.

2) There is a simile in vs. 2. What is being compared to what? What is the meaning of the statement? (Consider Matt. 24:42-44).

Jesus' return and a thief entering a house. The Lord's return will come in a way that catches most people unaware. Also SEE Lk. 12:40.

3) There is another simile in vs. 3. What is being compared here? What is the point of this statement?

The day of the Lord and the start of birth. His coming will be sudden and compelling.

4) How, according to vv. 4-5, should the response of believers differ from that of unbelievers?

We should not be caught unaware – we should be waiting expectantly. Matt. 25:13, Mk 13:34-37

5) Previously Paul used the word "sleep" as a euphemism for death. Is he doing that again in vs. 6? **No. He is talking about awareness – watching – paying attention.**

6) What is the meaning of the word "sober" in vv. 6 and 8? **Alert = vigilant. Sober – calm and reasonable, clear headed and thoughtful.**

7) What do faith, love, and hope of salvation have to do with being sober? **They are the things that keep us calm and able to see things in a godly way.**

8) The breastplate and helmet are used elsewhere in Scripture in a fashion similar to the way they are used in vs. 8. Read Isa. 59:17 and Eph. 6:11-17. Are these passages talking about real armor? If not, then what? (Also consider Rom. 13:12-14).

Faith, love, and hope (like the fruit of the Spirit) are things that are produced in us by the presence of Christ in our lives. (Rom. 13:14).

11) Are the words "awake" and "asleep" used literally or figuratively in vs. 10?

Here they mean alive or dead – "the quick and the dead."

10) According to vv. 9-10, what is the believer's destiny? **Not wrath but salvation – the church is saved from destruction to everlasting life with Christ.**

1 THESS. 5:12-15

12 But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction, 13 and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another. 14 We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone. 15 See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all people.

1) Who are those who “diligently labor among you . . .?”

**Musicians, ushers, floor-sweepers, etc. Elders and other leaders “have charge over you.”
Pastors and teachers “give you instruction.”**

2) The word translated in vs. 12 as “appreciate” is translated in other English Bibles as “respect,” “know,” “give attention,” and “honor.” Compare this passage to Heb. 13:17 and 1 Cor. 16:14-18.

It is important that the church not only respect and honor but also submit to, and follow godly leaders.

3) How do you think authority, responsibility, and accountability apply to the role of the church leader?

It is responsibility and accountability that temper authority and keep it Christ focused – they are accountable to Christ for your spiritual welfare.

4) In vs. 13 Paul says: “esteem them highly.” Our natural inclination is to see this in terms of honor or material support – and those things are not ruled out – but the text specifically says “in love.” How can we esteem someone in love? (Consider 1 Cor. 4:1).

Love the Spirit of Christ in them?? The Gk. word is *agape*, a form of love characterized by a forgiving, sacrificial relationship

5) Why do you think that Jesus and the apostles continually remind us to love one another and to live in peace with one another? SEE Jn. 13:34-35, 15:7; 2 Cor. 13:11; Eph. 4:3; Col. 3:15; and Heb. 12:14.

Because we NEED to be reminded . . . our pride requires it!

6) There is a list of instructions in vv. 14-15. Consider what each means and how we go about following them:

- Admonish the unruly

Admonish = warn or correct

Unruly = undisciplined (like a soldier who is out of step), those who will not submit or honor leaders.

- Encourage the fainthearted

Encourage = comfort, urge on

Fainthearted = hopeless, downcast, depressed

- Help the weak – SEE Rom. 15:1

Help = support

Weak = This refers to spiritual weakness – lack of faith

- Be patient with everyone – SEE 2 Pet. 3:15

Patient = willing to wait

Everyone = the good, the bad, and the ugly!

- See that no one repays evil for evil

SEE Rom. 12:17, 1 Pet. 3:9.

We are Christ’s ambassadors.

- Seek after that which is good for all

Good = godly, righteous, helpful, Christ-honoring.

All = not just the church. [Often in Scripture “all” means Jew and Gentile or believer and unbeliever].

1 THESS. 5:16-28

16 ¶ Rejoice always; 17 pray without ceasing; 18 in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. 19 Do not quench the Spirit; 20 do not despise prophetic utterances. 21 But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; 22 abstain from every form of evil. → Anything contrary to God's Word.

23 ¶ Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass. 25 Brethren, pray for us. 26 Greet all the brethren with a holy kiss. 27 I adjure you by the Lord to have this letter read to all the brethren. 28 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

KJV – “Despise not prophesyings.”
ESV – “Do not despise prophecies. . .”
GWV – “Don't despise what God has revealed.”
NIV – “. . . do not treat prophecies with contempt.”
NLT – “Do not scoff at prophecies. . .”

1) What is your definition of the word “rejoice”? Do you rejoice? If so, do you *always* rejoice?

SEE Ps. 9:2, 32:11; Php. 4:4. Be joyful, celebrate.

2) The instruction for God's people to pray is common in the Bible. Why do you think it is so important? Can anyone pray continually as we are instructed to do in vs. 17?

It is talking about having a heart attitude of constant openness and dependence on God. SEE Lk. 18:1, Eph. 6:18, and Col. 4:2

3) We find it easy to be grateful when God provides what we want in the way we want it. But vs. 18 says: *in everything* give thanks. Does that seem sensible to you? Why or why not?

God provides everything we NEED. We should be grateful that God doesn't gratify all our wants.

4) The last part of vs. 18 talks about God's will for you. Just to review, what three things does God desire for you to do?

1. That you rejoice
2. That you pray
3. That you be thankful

Why do you think Paul added the phrase, “in Christ Jesus?”

It is only in Christ (i.e., by means of our ongoing relationship with Christ) that this becomes possible.

5) How could Christians “quench the Spirit?”

They can do it through intent or through neglect. SEE Eph. 4:30, 2 Tim. 1:6.

6) What are “prophetic utterances” and why shouldn't they be despised? [Read this verse from several versions].

This is the spiritually enabled/empowered proclamation of God's Word.

7) Read vv. 19-22 as a whole. How does vs. 21 relate to vv. 19-20?

Prophecy and teaching must be prayerfully studied and considered. Don't accept everything BUT don't reject everything either. SEE Acts 17:11, 1 Jn. 4:1.

8) What is “sanctification”? Who is responsible for it?

It is the completion of the work begun in you when you were “born again.” It is how we are made more Christ-like, more fruitful. It is God's work.

9) The modern view of man is two-part, mind and body. How is the person described in vs. 23? Do you think this difference is significant? Why or why not?

It is certainly significant to omit the spirit. SEE Rom. 8:16.

10) People are always trying to “hold it all together.” In vs. 23 who does the preserving? What is the scheduled time of completion?

God Himself. At Jesus' return.

11) Compare vs. 24 with Php. 1:6.

Praise God for affirming statements like these!!

12) What's up with this “greet the brothers with a holy kiss” business??

It's cultural – Hows about we just shake hands?

2 Thessalonians

2 THESS. 1:1-12

1 ¶ Paul and Silvanus and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: 2 Grace to you and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 3 We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brethren, as is only fitting, because your faith is greatly enlarged, and the love of each one of you toward one another grows ever greater; 4 therefore, we ourselves speak proudly of you among the churches of God for your perseverance and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure.

5 ¶ This is a plain indication of God's righteous judgment so that you will be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which indeed you are suffering. 6 For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, 7 and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, 8 dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9 These will pay the

1) Compare the opening verses of this epistle to those of 1 Thessalonians. How are they similar? How do they differ?

From the same people to the same people – essentially the same.

2) Paul often combines the words *grace* and *peace*. Why do you think he likes this combination? Do the words have any relationship to one another?

Both have their source in God. God extends His grace to us so that we might have peace with Him. DISCUSS the meaning of “grace.”

3) There are two primary components of Christian growth – 1- growth in our ability to trust God and 2- growth in our love for His people. What are the two things that Paul says he is thankful for in vs. 3?

That their faith is enlarged and that their love for one another grows greater.

4) Is Paul confessing to pridefulness in vs. 4? Why or why not?

He is proud of God's work in them. READ 2 Cor. 11:30 and Jer. 9:23-24.

5) In vs. 5 Paul writes: “This is a plain indication of God's righteous judgment. . .” What is “This”?

The reference is to the previous paragraph. Paul is talking about their perseverance through persecutions and afflictions . . . no matter what happened, they did not lose faith in the goodness or faithfulness or power of God!

6) How could these things make one “worthy” of the kingdom of God?”

Because it demonstrates that they are “standing firm” in their faith. SEE Matt. 10:22 and James 1:12.

7) Read vv. 6-7 carefully. How is God's judgment described here? When should we expect to see such judgment?

The enemies of God's people will be afflicted. God's people will find relief. This is brought about when Jesus returns.

8) Who will come with Jesus when He returns (vs. 7)?

His “mighty angels.” SEE Matt. 16:27.

9) What is the meaning of “retribution” in vs. 8? To whom is retribution to be dealt?

Retribution = repayment, payback, justice. COMPARE Isa. 34:8 and Isa. 59:17-18. Those who do not know God and do not obey the Gospel (SEE Jn. 6:28-29).

penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, 10 when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed—for our testimony to you was believed.

11 ¶ To this end also we pray for you always, that our God will count you worthy of your calling, and fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power, 12 so that the name of our Lord Jesus will be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

NOTES:

- 10) How is this retribution described in vs. 9?
Eternal destruction / ruin, separation from God and from God's power.
- 11) Who will glorify Him on that day (vs. 10)?
His "saints." (i.e., the church).
- 12) What are the things that Paul prays that God will do for the church in vv. 11-12?
 - **Count them worthy of their calling.**
 - **Fulfill every desire for goodness.**
 - **Empower every faith-based work.**
- 13) Vs. 12 begins with "so that." What purpose can be found in the verse?
So that Christ's name will be glorified in the church and the will be glorified in Him.

2 THESS. 2:1-12

1 ¶ Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, 2 that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.

3 ¶ Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, 4 who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God. 5 Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things? 6 And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he will be revealed. 7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way. 8 Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; 9 that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders,

1) Compare vs. 1 with Matt. 24:31 and 1 Thess. 4:17. Do you think that these passages all refer to the same “gathering together”? Why or why not?

Yes. The setting and the event are the same

NOTE: The Greek word used here for “gathering together” (ἐπισυναγωγή) is the word that provides the basis for the word “synagogue.” It is also the same word used in Heb. 10:25. **In every case it refers to the gathering of authentic believers together.**

2) Read the following passages that deal with the Day of the Lord:

Isa. 13:6

Eze. 30:3

Joel 2:1

Zeph. 1:18

2 Pet. 3:10.

What is the relationship between the coming of Christ and the Day of the Lord?

They are the same event.

3) The error addressed in vv. 2ff is that the Day of the Lord has already come, or is imminent. What two things must occur before Jesus’ return?

Paul refers to two things:

1. apostasy

2. the revealing of the man of lawlessness.

4) What does the word “apostasy” mean? (Consider 1 Tim. 4:1-3; 2 Tim. 4:3-4).

It can mean a fall away from authentic faith or rebellion against God.

5) Who or what is the “man of lawlessness” or the “son of destruction” in vs. 3? (READ Dan. 7:25).

This is Antichrist – one who takes the place of Christ / a false or Satanic messiah.

6) According to vs. 4 and vs. 9, what will this person do?

He opposes God and godliness. He claims to be God. He operates in accord with the purpose and in the power of Satan. (Remember 1 Tim. 4:1)

7) Read vs. 7 carefully. What is it that has prevented the antichrist / man of lawlessness from appearing already?

The Holy Spirit? The Civil Law? The purpose of God? All of the above?

8) What is the inevitable result of an encounter between the lawless one and Christ?

The lawless one is utterly destroyed. Christ slays Him with a word.

10 and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. 11 For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, 12 in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.

NOTES:

9) How do you understand vs. 11? (Consider Deut. 13:1-4).

God allows them to believe the lie and remain unaware of the truth.

10) What is God's purpose (vs. 12).

In order to demonstrate the basis for His judgment – to expose their true nature.

2 THESS. 2:13-16

13 ¶ But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. 14 It was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. 15 So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word of mouth or by letter from us.

16 ¶ Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace, 17 comfort and strengthen your hearts in every good work and word.

1) Compare vs. 13 with 2 Thess. 1:3. Both say that the letter writers “should” always give thanks to God” for the church. How do the two statements differ?

This verse relates to what God has done FOR them, the other with what God is doing IN and THROUGH them.

2) The believers here are called “beloved by the Lord.” Compare this to 1 John 4:10, 19. What do these passages say about the love of God?

BECAUSE God loves them (the church, the elect) He sent Jesus to be their (our) Savior.

3) What do you think is meant by the word “beginning” in vs. 13? How does this impact your understanding of the word “chosen”?

Beginning could mean from the time the Gospel was first presented in Thessalonica OR from the beginning of the world (SEE Eph. 1:4). In either case, their coming to faith is the consequence of God’s “choosing.”

4) What are the means of salvation listed in vs. 13?

Sanctification (being set apart / made holy) through the Spirit and faith (trust) in the truth (the Gospel of Jesus).

5) How was God’s call communicated, according to vs. 14? What is the purpose of the calling of God?

**Through the apostle’s proclamation of the Gospel.
PURPOSE = To gain the glory of Jesus (SEE Jn. 17:22).
Glory = honor, dignity, splendor / weight, significance.**

6) What two things, according to vs. 15, are required of those who have been called?

Stand firm and keep the traditions (i.e., the authentic Gospel). (SEE Jude vs. 3).

7) Vv. 16-17 are a benediction. What is purpose of a benediction?

A Benediction is a “good word” of blessing at the end of something; usually a service of worship. It is usually pronounced by the leader, teacher, or pastor.

8) How do grace, comfort, and hope relate in vs. 16?

Eternal (not temporary) comfort and good (pleasant, agreeable) hope have their source in God’s love and grace.

9) The conclusion of the blessing is that God would comfort and strengthen the people’s hearts. How do good works and words come into play?

Comfort and strength are found (or made evident or are produced) through good works and good words.

Re: vv. 15-17 . . . remember that these people were in the midst of trials / tribulation.

2 THESS. 3:1-18

1 ¶ Finally, brethren, pray for us that the word of the Lord will spread rapidly and be glorified, just as it did also with you; 2 and that we will be rescued from perverse and evil men; for not all have faith. 3 But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one. 4 We have confidence in the Lord concerning you, that you are doing and will continue to do what we command. 5 May the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the steadfastness of Christ.

6 ¶ Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from every brother who leads an unruly life and not according to the tradition which you received from us. 7 For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example, because we did not act in an undisciplined manner among you, 8 nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with labor and hardship we kept working night and day so that we would not be a burden to any of you; 9 not because we do not have the right to this, but in order to offer ourselves as a model for you, so that you would follow our example. 10 For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if

1) What is Paul's "prayer request" in vv. 1-2?

1- That they would be able to effectively spread the Gospel.

2 – That they would be kept safe from ungodly men.

2) NOTE: The phrase "spread rapidly" in vs. 1 is alternately translated "have free course." The literal meaning of the word is "run," or "race." The implication is that the Gospel message would go forward like a runner on a course with no hindrances or obstructions.

Q: What, if any, hindrances or obstacles keep the Gospel from "racing" through the area where you live?

3) Vs. 2 seems to be an admission that there will be some opposition . . . why?

Not everyone has faith / is following Christ.

TRUTH – some are "offended" by the Gospel.

4) The end of vs. 2 and the beginning of vs. 3 seems to contrast some people with God. What is the point?

Our focus should be on the faithfulness of God, not on the unfaithfulness of men. And not on the evil that men might do, but the strength and protection that God provides.

5) Compare vs. 4 with 2 Thess. 2:15. Does it seem that Paul's confidence is in the church or in the Lord? Explain your answer.

Both; he trusts the Lord to provide and the church to stand firm.

6) Read vs. 5. Do you think that the phrase "into the love of God" refers to God's love for them, to their love for God, or both?

Toward a greater confidence in the love of God . . . although it could mean toward having a love like God's (agape - i.e., sacrificial, unconditional and unselfish).

7) "The steadfastness of Christ" can also be translated, "into Christ's endurance," or "Christ's perseverance." How might that apply to your life?

Jesus never wavered from fulfilling His calling and mission – and He willingly put up with a lot to do it. I need to be more willing to endure for the sake of the Gospel.

8) What is the command in vs. 6? Does this seem right? Does it seem important? Why? (Also consider vv. 14-15).

We have to be willing to minister to and associate with ungodly people ... we can't expect unsaved people to live in godly ways. This is talking about those who claim to be believers, yet refuse to live as Christians ... we can't be successful ourselves while we are yoked to them.

anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either. 11 For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies. 12 Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to work in quiet fashion and eat their own bread. 13 But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary of doing good. 14 If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of that person and do not associate with him, so that he will be put to shame. 15 Yet do not regard him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.

16 ¶ Now may the Lord of peace Himself continually grant you peace in every circumstance. The Lord be with you all! 17 I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand, and this is a distinguishing mark in every letter; this is the way I write. 18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

9) How important is discipline / self-discipline to the Christian life? Discuss “external discipline” and “internal discipline.”

READ Ps. 94:12; Prov. 1:7, 3:11-12; 1 Cor. 11:32.

External discipline – direction or correction that comes from someone in authority (parent, teacher, pastor, etc.)

Internal discipline – direction or correction that comes from one’s own heart.

10) Compare vv. 7-8 with 1 Thess. 2:9. What is the consistent point in these passages?

When God gives us the ability and opportunity to provide for ourselves we should – honest work honors God.

11) Discuss vv. 10-12. What is the essential message of these verses? Do you think this rule should be followed by the church? How does this command relate to charity? How does it relate to the church’s ministry to the poor?

Christian charity should focus on immediate critical needs. Ministry to the poor should focus on changing the heart and training the mind to help people become able to provide for themselves. Enabling laziness and nurturing dependence is not ministry!

12) Verse 13 is often quoted. Many Christians, who began in great zeal end their ministries in frustration and unfruitfulness. Why might this be? How can it be avoided? Read the following passages: **Also consider Gal. 6:9.**

Isa. 40:28-31

2 Co. 4:1

Luke 18:1

Rev. 2:3

It is possible to have great zeal but little patience.

13) Vs. 16 is another benediction. What is the word of blessing offered here? Why might this blessing be of particular significance to the first readers of this epistle?

It is a promise of the Lord’s peace regardless of the circumstances. It wasn’t always easy for Christians in the Roman empire of the 1st Century.

14) What is the significance of Paul’s statement in vs. 17?

Because of Paul’s poor eyesight, most of his letters were dictated. He signs them to authorize them.

15) How has this study of 1 and 2 Thessalonians helped you or encouraged you?