

# 1 Thessalonians Bible Study

## Weekly Lessons

### Introduction

Welcome to your [1 Thessalonians Bible Study](#). This document contains lesson plans for an eight-week Bible Study.

### Steps to Prepare for Your Study

The following steps will be helpful in getting the most from your [1 Thessalonians Bible Study](#):

1. If you are leading this study on 1 Thessalonians, I would encourage you to complete our [Guide for Bible Study Leaders](#). It provides a helpful orientation to our lesson plans as well giving you some important guidelines for maximizing the impact of your Bible study.
2. Read an introduction to 1 Thessalonians in a study Bible, Bible dictionary or one-volume commentary (you can check out my [Bible Study Tools](#) page for some of my recommendations on these valuable resources.)
3. Study the 1 Thessalonians outline. Notice where the natural divisions occur.

You can view an online version here: [1 Thessalonians Outline \(Online\)](#) or download and print your own copy from our [Print Lessons](#) page. Look under 1 Thessalonians Bible Study.

4. Read 1 Thessalonians through in one sitting.
5. Keep a notebook handy with pencil to jot down questions, ideas and applications as you study 1 Thessalonians.
6. Read the short background information for 1 Thessalonians below.
7. Optional: To really jump ahead in your 1 Thessalonians Bible Study, complete our [How to Study a Whole Book of the Bible](#) lesson using 1 Thessalonians as your subject.

### Background to the Thessalonian Church

Paul and his companions planted the church in Thessalonica after experiencing trials in Philippi (Acts 16:23-34). Paul even mentions this mistreatment in his letter to the Thessalonians (1 Thess 2:2).

According to Acts 17:1-10, the church in Thessalonica was established under great duress and persecution. Paul did not spend much time with the church before he was forced to leave abruptly (Acts 17:10).

Thus, the church was vulnerable after Paul's departure: Paul did not have time to ground its faith and, just as critical, Paul's persecutors remained in Thessalonica to harass the church.

## **Occasion for The Letter**

Paul was extremely concerned for the young church after his departure even thinking that his work had been lost there (1 Thess 3:5). Indeed, he tried to re-visit the church several times but was hindered (1 Thess 2:18).

When he could no longer stand the uncertainty of the church's fate, he sent Timothy to Thessalonica to receive word (1 Thess 3:1-5).

Timothy returned with a glowing report: the young church was standing firm in its faith despite the ongoing persecution (1 Thess 3:6-10).

However, given the topics that Paul covered in his letter, it's possible there were some reports of sexual immorality among the Thessalonians and issues related to responsible work (1 Thess 4:1-14).

In addition, there was a real concern among the church members about the eternal state of their loved ones who had died (1 Thess 4:15-20).

Paul set about writing 1 Thessalonians shortly thereafter.

## **Main Themes**

Paul's letter expresses deep pastoral concern for the church. He writes to express his thanksgiving for the Thessalonians and to encourage them in their faith.

He expresses the theme of suffering on several occasions because he knew they had endured persecution / oppression for their faith from their Jewish opponents.

Paul treats the issues of sanctification (sexual purity), brotherly love and responsible work. In addition, he provides a lengthy discussion of the Lord's second coming as a way to comfort those who have lost loved ones and encourage the members of the congregation.

## **Online Access to 1 Thessalonians Bible Study**

This study is available in an online version using the links below:

- [Overview of 1 Thessalonians Bible Study](#)
- [Week 1 - Introduction to 1 Thessalonians](#)
- [Week 2 – 1 Thess 1:1-10](#)
- [Week 3 – 1 Thess 2:1-16](#)
- [Week 4 – 1 Thess 2:17 – 3:13](#)

- [Week 5 - 1 Thess 4:1-12](#)
- [Week 6 - 1 Thess 4:13-18](#)
- [Week 7 - 1 Thess 5:1-11](#)
- [Week 8 - 1 Thess 5:12-28](#)
- [Bonus Article: "New Testament Eschatology: Why Modern End-Times Teaching is Misguided!"](#)

## WEEK 1 – INTRODUCTION TO 1 THESSALONIANS

### Introduction

Welcome to Week 1 of your [1 Thessalonians Bible Study](#) .

Hopefully, you've had a chance to complete the steps on the first page this 1 Thessalonians Bible Study Orientation.

In this first week, you will learn some basic historical, cultural and exegetical background for the study of 1 Thessalonians. This will be extremely useful for understanding the book's individual passages.

### Date of Composition

1 Thessalonians was written circa 50 A.D., a mere twenty years after Jesus' death and resurrection.

This makes 1 Thessalonians one of the earliest New Testament books written (the gospels, by comparison, were written anywhere from 60 – 90 A.D. In addition, 1 Thessalonians is the first letter Paul wrote as well.

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#### Questions about the book / text

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- Why should it matter when a particular book was written?
- Should we place any importance on the fact that this book was written only one generation after Jesus' life and death? Why or why not?

### Author

Read 1 Thess 1:1.

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#### Questions about the book / text

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- Who wrote 1 Thessalonians? Who else is mentioned as possible co-authors?
- Who are these other contributors and how are they related to Paul and to the Thessalonian church? (See Acts 15:22; 16:1, 19; 17:4, 14)

To add depth to your 1 Thessalonians Bible study, locate and summarize the different texts where these other contributors appear in the NT. They were quite active in ministry with Paul.

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#### Questions to reflect on your life

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- Are you someone that enjoys team ministry or doing it alone?
- What are the potential benefits / drawbacks to team ministry?

- Which method of ministry do you think God prefers or does he have a preference? Explain why you think this way.
- Have you ever been part of a short-term or longer term ministry team or missionary team? Describe your experiences, challenges, benefits.

### **The Founding of the Church in Thessalonica**

Read Acts 17:1-10.

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#### **Questions about the book / text**

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- Describe the founding of the Thessalonian church as narrated in Acts 17:1-10.
- What was Paul's experience in Philippi prior to arriving in Thessalonica (Acts 16)?
- What was Paul's experience in Berea after leaving Thessalonica (Acts 17:10-14)?

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#### **Questions to reflect on your life**

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- Have you ever been persecuted, harassed or oppressed for being a Christian or for sharing the gospel? Describe.
- Have you ever purposely downplayed your Christian faith so as not to draw attention to it at work, school or other contexts? Describe.
- How does being harassed for your faith or being afraid to share your faith impact your walk with God?

## **WEEK 2 – PEACE, POWER AND SHARING CHRIST (1 THESS 1:1-10)**

### **Introduction**

Welcome to Week 2 of your [1 Thessalonians Bible Study](#).

This week we'll be covering 1 Thess 1:1-10. In these sections, Paul greets the Thessalonian church and gives a prayer of thanksgiving for the work the Thessalonian church is doing.

### **Paul Greet the Thessalonians (1:1-2)**

As previously mentioned, Paul greets the church and adds Silvanus and Timothy to his greeting.

Both were instrumental in the planting of the church and may have actually contributed to the content of the letter.

Also, Timothy had just recently returned from visiting the Thessalonian church (1 Thess 3:6).

Read 1:1-2

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#### **Questions about the passage**

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- Where else do Timothy and Silvanus (Silas) appear in the NT?
- To what parts of 1 Thessalonians could Timothy have contributed given his recent visit to the church?

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#### **Questions to reflect on your life**

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### **Jesus is Lord**

Paul refers to Jesus Christ as "Lord" in his greeting (a title that appears over 700 times for Jesus in the New Testament).

For the early Christian church this title meant one who exercised lordship over all of creation, one who perfectly reflected God's divine image, one who saves, one who was pre-existent and one who was divine.

- Is this your perception of Jesus on a day-to-day basis? Why or why not?
- When you pray "dear Lord" or say, "the Lord this or the Lord that..." are you thinking of these titles? Why or why not?
- Which of these attributes do you need to be reminded of most today? Why?

Paul greets the church in / with God and in / with Christ.

- What does it mean to be “in” Christ?
- How does that position change your perspective, behavior, thoughts?

### **Grace and Peace**

Paul uses the double greeting of “grace” (God’s lavish favor) and “peace.”

In the Old Testament the word for "peace" is “shalom” and conveys a profound sense of completeness, wholeness, health, peace, rest, harmony and the absence of agitation or discord.

- What areas of your life are in need of God’s grace and peace (“shalom”)? Elaborate.
- Do you find it easy or difficult to accept God’s grace? Why or why not?
- Where are you lacking wholeness or harmony in your life and what needs to happen for you to return to that state of "shalom"?

### **Paul’s Thanksgiving for the Thessalonians (1:3-10)**

Read 1:3-10.

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#### **Questions about the passage**

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- Write down a list of things for which Paul praises the church in Thessalonica.
- What does it mean that the gospel was delivered to the Thessalonians with power and the conviction of the Holy Spirit? (Look up 1 Thess 2:13 for additional details on how the Thessalonians accepted the gospel.)

Note: The word “power” in this verse is *dunamis* in Greek which means power, strength, miracles or miraculous power.

- What does it mean to be imitators of Paul and of the Lord? (v. 6) (Look up 1 Thess 2:14 for additional clarification.)
- What about the Thessalonians faith impresses you given the relatively short time they have known the gospel?
- What were the Thessalonians like prior to knowing the gospel (v. 9)?
- What does “the wrath to come” mean (v. 10)?

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### Questions to reflect on your life

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- Can the things that are said about the Thessalonian church, be said about your church? Why or why not? What can be commended, what is missing?
- Do you experience the “power” (*dunamis*) of the gospel in your Christian walk? Why or why not? What would it take for you to experience that?
- How well does your church evangelize and reach out to its surrounding areas? How could it perform this task in a better way?
- What is your temperature in terms of “evangelism” and sharing the gospel with others. Share a success story if you have one, or particular strategies that you use.
- Do you find it difficult to share your faith? Why or why not?



## WEEK 3 – DOING MINISTRY PAUL'S WAY (1 THESS 2:1-16)

### Introduction

Welcome to Week 3 of your [1 Thessalonians Bible Study](#)

We will be covering 1 Thess 2:1-16, which discusses Paul's initial ministry time in Thessalonica.

### Preaching Despite Opposition

Read 1 Thess 2:1-2

Notice here how Paul references his difficult time in Philippi where he and Silvanus were jailed (Acts 16) and also the opposition he encountered in Thessalonica at the planting of the church (Acts 17:1-10).

Later in 2:14-16 he provides a blistering critique of his opponents who made his life (and that of the young church) so difficult.

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#### Questions about the passage

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- Why do you think Paul was so "bold" in preaching the gospel despite opposition and even persecution?

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#### Questions to apply to your life

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- How much opposition and persecution would you be willing to suffer for the gospel's sake?
- How likely is it that you would ever be asked to suffer this way? Discuss your current cultural context and whether Christianity enjoys a positive / negative regard.

### Paul Defends His Ministry in Thessalonica (1 Thess 2:3-12)

Read 1 Thess 2:3-12

Notice a few things:

- The different ways that Paul defends his ministry and conduct.
- The parental metaphors he uses and what they communicate.
- How Paul shares not only the gospel but his very own life with the Thessalonians (v. 2:8).
- All of Paul's ministry after sharing the gospel is so that the Thessalonians will walk in a manner "worthy of God."

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### Questions about the passage

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- List all of the ways that Paul defends his ministry and conduct in this section.
- Why do you suppose Paul goes to such lengths to defend his ministry and conduct?
- Paul uses two parental metaphors in this section. What are they? List all of the behaviors / actions that Paul directed toward the Thessalonians, which are communicated by these metaphors.

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### Questions to apply to your life

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- Of the many ways that Paul conducted himself in Thessalonica, which is most characteristic of you when serving the Lord?
  - Do you speak with boldness?
  - Avoid error and deceit?
  - Seek to please God and not men?
  - Are you caring like a mother or encouraging like a father?
  - Do you avoid flattery and greed?
- Which characteristic must you work on as you serve the Lord?
- Do you give your life to others when you serve them? Why or why not?
- Are you walking in a manner "worthy of God"? Why or why not?

## **WEEK 4 – PAUL WORRIES FOR THE CHURCH (1 THESS 2:17-3:13)**

### **Introduction**

Welcome to Week 4 of your [1 Thessalonians Bible Study](#).

In this lesson, we'll be covering 1 Thess 2:17 – 3:13, which highlights Paul's concern for the spiritual well-being of the church he had planted in Thessalonica.

### **Paul's Abrupt Departure From Thessalonica (2:17-20)**

Read 1 Thess 2:17-20

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#### **Questions about the passage**

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- What is Paul referring to in 2:17 when he says he was taken away?
- How do you think Satan hindered Paul? Or is Paul merely being symbolic here to express his difficulty in coming to visit?
- When and how exactly will the Thessalonian church be Paul's crown?

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#### **Questions to apply to your life**

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- What is your perspective on Satan and his work? Is he a real person / being? On what basis do you make your claim?
- What is your perspective on demonic activity or oppression against God's people? Have you ever had an experience that you knew was the work of the devil?
- How exactly does Satan “hinder” you with respect to fulfilling God's will for your life?
- How do you know the difference between a Satan inspired plot against you vs. normal every day difficulties or even divinely inspired trials in your life?

### **Paul's Concern for the Thessalonian Church (3:1-13)**

Read 1 Thess 3:1-13

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#### **Questions about the passage**

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- Why did Paul send Timothy to Thessalonica? Paul gives at least three reasons according to 1 Thess 3:1-5.

- 1 Thess 3:3-4 once again mention "afflictions." Why does Paul keep bringing up this theme?
- What was Paul's greatest fear regarding the Thessalonians?
- What does Timothy report back after his visit to Thessalonica?
- What does Paul pray for in relation to the Thessalonian church? List out his specific requests (3:11-13)

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### **Questions to apply to your life**

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- If Paul were writing to your church today, what would it most need as expressed by his concerns in the 1 Thessalonians letter? and why?
  - For a stronger faith?
  - Encouragement?
  - A reminder that the church is destined to experience afflictions?
  - Help in overcoming the "tempter's" temptations?
- What would change if he were writing to you individually? Please elaborate.
- What type of report would Timothy bring back about your church given what he said about the Thessalonian church? About you individually? Please elaborate.
  - That you practice faith and love
  - That you are standing firm?
- Which part of Paul's prayer in 3:12-13 do you most need to pray at the moment?

## WEEK 5 – CHRISTIAN BEHAVIOR (1 THESS 4:1-12)

### Introduction

Welcome to Week 5 of your [1 Thessalonians Bible Study](#).

In this lesson, we'll be covering 1 Thess 4:1-12 which marks a shift in tone within this letter. From now on, Paul will be mainly exhorting and teaching the church about various issues.

The first two items on his teaching list include:

1. The sanctification of the church members
2. The ethic to love one another

NOTE: In order to share intimately on the first subject (which deals with our sexuality and sexual purity) it may be necessary to split the group by gender if you are leading a mixed gender study.

### God Desires Sanctification For His People (4:1-8)

Read 4:1-8.

Notice that Paul uses the term "sanctification" three times.

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#### Questions about the passage

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- How does Paul use the word "sanctification" in each case? What is it describing or what action is being requested?
- Twice, Paul contrasts "sanctification" to other actions. What are those other actions?
- What does it mean to possess one's own vessel?
- How would one defraud their spiritual brother / sister on this issue of sexuality? What is the warning attached to this prohibition?

Paul's teachings in this section are fairly straightforward (with the exception of a few phrases that may be more difficult to understand...)

However, sex is a difficult subject to treat in the church primarily because:

- There is a great deal of shame often associated with sex (either outside of marriage and even among married couples).
- Many Christian men struggle secretly with sexual addictions of varying intensities and types.

- There are very few safe spaces in the church where one can deal with these struggles honestly and openly.

The following questions are meant to stimulate honesty and vulnerability on this issue but should only be answered if the group is mature enough to listen, pray for and help one another through these struggles.

It is my experience that the only way to have TOTAL victory in this area (aside from supernatural willpower) is by being brutally honest with one another, in a safe environment, with people to hold us accountable.

In other words, though you fell into this sin cycle alone, it is likely you will need your fellow brothers / sisters to help extricate you.

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### Questions to apply to your life

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- Why do you think sexual purity poses such difficulties in the lives of many men?
- How would you categorize this area of your life? Do you live in sexual purity or would you describe this as an ongoing battle in your life?
- What contributes to your being unable to move past this issue? What steps would you need to take to have victory in this area?
- What are your feelings / ideas / beliefs about premarital sex?

If you wish to delve much deeper into this issue I would commend Steve Arteburn's book to you: [Every Man's Battle: Winning the War on Sexual Temptation One Victory at a Time](#). It can even be done as a separate Bible study.

It is so perfectly honest about the subject and his advice for overcoming "a low-grade sexual addiction" is spot-on and extremely practical.

NOTE: Attention women! Though the book is geared toward men, it provides you with a tremendous amount of insight into how men view and struggle with this area of their lives. Thus, it's worth a read for the gals too if it helps you understand men, significant other, boyfriend, husband a little better.

### **Love One Another (4:9-10)**

Paul moves on from his exhortations on sanctification to one of the central commands within New Testament Christianity.

Read 1 Thess 4:9-10

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### Questions about the passage

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- What does Paul tell the Thessalonians to do in this section?
- Who are "the brethren" that Paul talks about in this section?
- According to Jesus, how does one demonstrate what Paul is asking the Thessalonians to do (John 15:13)? What characteristics define what Paul is requesting of the Thessalonians (1 Cor 13:4-7)?

Loving our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ forms a critical part of what it means to be a church.

Jesus himself commands us to "love one another" as a sign of being one of his followers.

Paul's famous passage on love (1 Cor 13:4-7) does not speak to romantic love but rather to the kind you express for those within the faith community. It speaks of a person who is patient and kind to others, who doesn't get offended easily and who is not prideful or egotistical.

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### Questions to apply to your life

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- What does loving your brothers (and sisters) in Christ look like for you? Which of the characteristics of love in 1 Cor 13:4-7 do you need to cultivate more in your relationships with other believers?
- Are there folks in church you find unlovable or difficult to love? Why is that? How does this section challenge you with these relationships?
- Do you find it difficult to be a loving person? What is holding you back from truly pouring your heart out for your fellow brothers and sisters in Christ?
- Choose a person whom you would like to love more this week. It need not be someone with whom you have a conflict (though it can be). What will you do this week to show that person you really do care for them in the way that these previous passages suggest?

If you wish to learn more about loving others and having healthy relationships be sure to sign up for our [Abundant Life Newsletter](#).

It contains a series of 10 lessons on relationships, conflict resolution and reconciliation entitled the Matthew 18 Community.

## **WEEK 6 – CHRIST IS COMING AGAIN (1 THESS 4:13-18)**

### **Introduction**

Welcome to Week 6 of your [1 Thessalonians Bible Study](#).

Over the next two lessons, we'll be covering 1 Thess 4:13-5:11, which deals with one of the most interesting sections of 1 Thessalonians, Christ's second coming.

This will require that we delve into what is known as New Testament eschatology (or the study of the end-times).

It is likely that you will be very surprised by how the New Testament deals with issues like the end of the world and Christ's second coming.

Let's continue to see how Paul uses this important teaching.

### **Comfort One Another With These Words (1 Thess 4:13-18)**

Read 1 Thess 4:13-18

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#### **Questions about the passage**

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It is likely that Timothy returned from his visit with the Thessalonian church with a report about the topic that Paul treats in these verses.

Essentially, there was some confusion regarding the state of loved ones who had died prior to Christ's return.

This is why Paul begins his teaching by saying, "We don't want you to be uninformed brethren (a kind way of saying "ignorant")..."

- Why does Paul use the metaphor of "sleep" to describe those who have died?
- Why would a Thessalonian's grief be different from one who did not know Christ?
- What is Paul's proof that believers who have died will be resurrected again?
- 1 Thess 4:18 culminates this section on Christ's second coming. How does Paul use eschatology (end-times stuff) in this section? In other words, what is he most concerned about when it comes to the teaching about the Lord's return here in this section?

### **Some Comments on This Section**

I have purposely left out questions related to 1 Thess 4:15-17. These will be treated later in a more in-depth study dealing with eschatology in 1 Thessalonians.



For the moment let me say this. 1 Thess 4:15-17 describes a very enigmatic process of Christ's return to earth. There are at least two problems in studying these verses:

1. The meaning of the phrases "shout", "the voice of an archangel" and "the trumpet call of God" are quite unclear (which doesn't stop people from taking a stab at them anyway).
2. The timing of Christ's return has generated a great deal of controversy in evangelical circles. This deserves a separate and lengthy discussion.

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### **Questions to apply to your life**

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- What does Paul's metaphor of death as "sleep" do for you emotionally, psychologically, spiritually?
- Do you have a different reaction to a Christian funeral vs. a non-Christian one? Why or why not? Should you have a different reaction?
- Do you ever think about your life after this earth? About rising from the dead? About living forever? Elaborate.
- How can you use 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 to comfort those who have lost loved ones in the Lord.
- If asked to speak at a Christian friend's funeral, what could you say in light of 1 Thess 4:13-18?

## WEEK 7 – NO ONE KNOWS THE HOUR (1 THESS 5:1-11)

### Introduction

Welcome to Week 7 of your [1 Thessalonians Bible Study](#).

This week we'll be covering 1 Thess 5:1-11. This section is a continuation of last week's topic on eschatology (the study of the end-times).

In this section, Paul provides a timetable and a warning for the Lord's second coming. Once again, Paul surprises us by his use of end-times teaching.

### Like a Thief in the Night (5:1-3)

Read 1 Thess 5:1-3

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#### Questions about the passage

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- Paul says that the Thessalonians know full well about "times and epochs." Who shared this knowledge with them? How and when?
- What does that imply about the importance of this topic in Paul's teaching?
- What are the two metaphors that Paul uses for the timing of the Lord's coming?
- What does each metaphor communicate about the timing of this important event?

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#### Questions to apply to your life

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- Given what is contained in 1 Thess 5:1-3, why do you think people still try to predict the date of the Lord's second coming?
- Why do you think Christians still fall prey to predictions of when Christ will return?
- Do you ever think about the Lord's coming? What feelings or perspectives are associated with these thoughts?

### Live in the Light (5:4-11)

Read 1 Thess 5:4-11

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#### Questions about the passage

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Paul uses the metaphors of "sons of night / darkness" and "sons of day / light" throughout this whole section.

- Compare Paul's descriptions of those who live by night vs. those who live by day. What are the consequences or rewards for each of these groups of people?
- What does it mean to be "sober"? See 1 Peter 1:13; 4:7 and 5:8, which use the same term.
- How does Paul use the metaphor of a roman soldier's armor, "breastplate" and "helmet"? What is he trying to accomplish? What advice is he giving?
- Verse 5:11 concludes this section. How does Paul use the teaching of the end-times here in this section (Compare to 4:18).

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### **Questions to apply to your life**

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- How does the knowledge of the Lord's second coming affect your day to day existence? Are you one of the sleepers or are you one of the alert ones?
- How does Paul's use of the end-times differ from modern teachings about the end times?
- How can you share words of encouragement with others based on the Lord's Second Coming and based on Paul's instructions to do so (5:11)?

### **Conclusion**

This concludes Week 7 of your 1 Thessalonians Bible Study.

In the near future, I hope to create some supplemental material about the end-times to go along with this study.

For the moment, however, feel free to check out my article entitled ["New Testament Eschatology: Why Modern End-Times Teaching is Misguided!"](#)

## WEEK 8 – FINAL EXHORTATIONS (1 THESS 5:12-28)

### Introduction

Welcome to Week 8 of your [1 Thessalonians Bible Study](#).

This week we'll be covering 1 Thess 5:12-28. This is the last section of the letter. It includes a series of final exhortations to the Thessalonian church.

### Final Exhortations (5:12-28)

It is common in New Testament epistles to include a series of final exhortations when closing out a letter.

Typically, these final instructions include calls to moral excellence, spiritual vigilance, faithfulness in the faith and love for those within the church.

Read 1 Thess 5:12-22

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#### Questions about the passage

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- How many commands does Paul give in this final section?
- Make a list of all of the commands that Paul gives to the Thessalonian church in this final section. Can they be organized in some fashion?
- What is Paul's request with respect to those who "labor among you"?
- 1 Thess 5:19-22 is all related to Paul's instructions regarding "the Spirit." What is Paul trying to warn against in this section?

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#### Questions to apply to your life

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- Of all the commands that Paul gives in this final section, which one do you need to practice most at this point? Explain.
- Paul instructs the Thessalonians to "rejoice" "pray" and "give thanks" (1 Thess 5:16-18). How are you doing in these three categories? If you are weak in these areas, how can you strengthen these characteristics in your walk with the Lord?
- 1 Thess 5:14 gives a series of instructions having to do with you and other people. Share a story where you've "admonished the unruly" "helped the weak" or "encouraged the fainthearted." Can you think of a situation in your life where you need to put one of these exhortations into practice? Explain
- How is it possible to "quench the Spirit?" Note how in the next verse it states, "do not despise

prophetic utterances."

- Do you believe that the Spirit speaks to the church through prophetic utterances in today's world? Explain. Also share an experience you may have had with this directly.
- How else does the Spirit speak to the Church? How else has he spoken to you directly?

## **1 THESSALONIANS BIBLE STUDY - BONUS ARTICLE: “New Testament Eschatology: How Modern End-Times Teaching is Misguided!”**

### **Introduction**

A [Bible Study on 1 Thessalonians](#) automatically puts us in the realm of New Testament eschatology due to Paul's treatment of the Second Coming of Christ (1 Thess 4:13-5:11).

Eschatology is simply the study of the end-times and all that it entails (Christ's second coming, end of the world, judgment, new heavens and new earth, etc.). A popular presentation of New Testament eschatology would be the best selling series of Left Behind books.

It is my hope that sometime in the future (no pun intended!), I will be able to complete a more in-depth study of biblical prophecy and the end-times here at [free-bible-study-lessons.net](http://free-bible-study-lessons.net). This material should serve as a supplement to our 1 Thessalonians Bible Study and as an interesting study all on its own.

In the meantime, however, I did want to share an insight that is prompted by our study thus far.

### **Paul's Use of End-Times Teaching**

You will have noticed in 1 Thess 4:18 and 5:11 that Paul's use of end-time theology and teaching has a very pastoral quality to it. Both times, after a lengthy discussion of Christ's second coming and the scant knowledge we will have of this event he emphatically states: “comfort one another”, “encourage one another” and “build one another up” with these words.

In other words, for the Apostle Paul, who thought quite a bit about Christ's second coming (virtually all of his letters contain some direct or indirect reference to it), he never really spends any time in speculation, silly predictions, prophetic timelines or in seeking to understand the "signs" of the times.

No one knows the hour or time he states emphatically on more than one occasion, a message repeated by none other than Christ himself in the gospels. But you would be hard pressed to find a similar usage of eschatology (or a humble admission of ignorance of the prophetic timeline) by modern day preachers and prophets.

Quite the contrary, what you find is an endless parade of end-of-the-world predictions, prophecy camps and speculations that purportedly coincide with world events.

### **The Nature of New Testament Eschatology**

It is a curious thing that the nature of New Testament eschatology (teaching having to do with the end-times) has more to do with present actions than it does about future events.

For example, if we listen to the message of the Book of Revelation (often a favorite target of wrong and silly predictions), even amidst its strange symbols and cosmic events, what we find is a call for Christians to maintain a strong and faithful witness TODAY despite the beastly forces that array themselves against God and his people.

The primary message that comes through again and again in New Testament eschatology has to do with the present: be alert, stay awake, comfort one another, encourage one another, avoid immorality, work responsibly, work for the Lord, take care of other people, etc.

### **Matthew 25 as a Test Case**

We can see many of these messages quite clearly in Matthew 25, yet another apocalyptic section of the New Testament: Here we find several vignettes: The parable of the ten virgins, the parable of the talents, and the sheep and the goats.

The parable of the ten virgins is a call to alertness (like in 1 Thessalonians 5), the parable of the talents is a call to use the things that God has given to you **IN THIS LIFE**, and the parable of the sheep and the goats states that entry into eternal life has to do with visiting prisoners, clothing the naked and feeding the hungry. (Yikes! Under this scenario we all might be trouble.)

The whole chapter is about the end-times, but its concerns once again have moral and ethical implications for the **HERE** and **NOW**.

### **Conclusion**

So what is my advice? Avoid the endless speculations, chart chasers and doomsday scenarios.

Do not worry about the future. Live a radical life for Christ today! Live it to the fullest, with passion, with compassion and in a state of expectancy and readiness.

Besides, when Christ really comes for his people, you'll be one of the first to know (if you are dead) or you'll catch up to the rest in the twinkling of an eye. So why worry! :)

## **A Couple Special Requests...**

We've come to the end of our 1 Thessalonians Bible Study. I hope you have been greatly blessed by taking a closer look at some of the major themes of this exciting book.

In closing, let me remind you that we have many additional Bible study resources on our [website](#) (see footer). As you know, most of that material is provided free of charge in order that it might reach the widest possible audience.

However, if you have found this material useful in your life, I'm going to ask you for two small favors that will require little effort on your part, but will be a great blessing to us:

1. Would you consider promoting our site through your social media networks, website or blog. You can link to our website or simply hop onto any of our pages and use the Facebook or Twitter share buttons to post our pages to your networks.
2. If you are thinking about purchasing bible study resources, books, commentaries and the like, please consider using our affiliate search boxes on our [website](#) or the following [Amazon.com](#) or [Christian Book Distributors \(CBD\)](#) links as your entry into those sites (Check out [CBD's bestsellers](#) and [CBD's great deals!](#))

We receive a small percentage of any purchases you make through those links, which go directly into funding [theological education](#) for majority world pastors in Latin America.

You not only pickup more resources for understanding the Scriptures, but you help an important cause in the process without any additional cost to you!

Please feel free to drop us a line on our site to let us know how we can improve this document, to tell us how God has blessed you or simply to say hello.

We are committed to your spiritual growth and are here to help in any way that we can.

All of God's blessings to you,

*Gustavo*