

1 Thessalonians

Leader Guide

(NASB and ESV)

YOU—BLAMELESS
AT HIS COMING

1 Thessalonians Leader Guide (NASB and ESV)

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USING LEADER GUIDES

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

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

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

Leader Guides include the following:

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

Practical tips for using the Leader Guide:

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

Using the Leader Guide with In & Out

When your entire group uses In & Out

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

For groups studying both Precept Upon Precept and In & Out

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

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1 THESSALONIANS LEADER GUIDE Lesson 1

Lesson emphasis:

- Overview of 1 Thessalonians

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

To begin this discussion, ask what your group learned about the historical background of 1 Thessalonians from the text.

5:27 says this is a letter.

1:1 introduces Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy as who it is from.

Plural pronouns are used frequently throughout the letter, referring to these three men. But 2:18; 3:5; 5:27 use the singular pronouns for only Paul as the author.

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

No doubt Silvanus and Timothy were in full agreement with everything said in the letter, so in a sense it was from them as well.

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

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy took the gospel to Thessalonica and stayed long enough to give further instructions in the Christian walk to those who believed.

After Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy left Thessalonica, they had desired to revisit, but were hindered, 2:18, from doing so. Therefore, only Timothy was sent, and he had returned to Paul and Silvanus with a good report about the Thessalonian believers, 3:1-2, 6-7.

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy had been to Philippi before Thessalonica and went to Athens afterwards, 2:2 and 3:1.

Tell your group to look at their At a Glance chart as a visual aid for this discussion.

1 THESSALONIANS 1

Ask what your group noted as a possible theme for chapter 1.

The gospel came, was received and sounded forth

What does this chapter say about the authors and recipients?

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy had previously taken the gospel to Thessalonica, verse 5.

Having received the word, the Thessalonians sounded it forth in Macedonia, Achaia, and other places. Before hearing and receiving the gospel they had been idol worshipers.

NOTE: There is a map in the Appendix of the PUP workbook which you might tell your group to look at as they discuss this part of chapter 1.

The description of the Thessalonian believers from this chapter indicates that they had been growing in the Lord since they had been saved.

This letter begins by stating the thankfulness of Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy for the Thessalonians because of their faithfulness in serving the Lord since their salvation experience.

Give time for your group to discuss relevant application at any point in this discussion.

The key words in this chapter are “gospel” or “word.”

It ends with Jesus’ coming. He rescues / delivers believers from the wrath to come.

1 THESSALONIANS 2

Ask what they noted as a possible theme for this chapter on their At a Glance chart.

Paul, Silvanus, Timothy—upright behavior / right conduct so Thessalonians walk worthy

What is the flow of thought in this chapter?

Verse 1 continues telling about Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy having been to Thessalonica. “Gospel / word” is also a key word in this chapter which gives more information about their visit.

While chapter 1 primarily gave information about the Thessalonians’ response to the gospel when it came to them, this chapter tells about Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy while they were there.

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy had been to Philippi before going to Thessalonica. Refer to the map.

Although they had suffered mistreatment at Philippi they still boldly spoke the gospel to the Thessalonians. Relate this to 1:6; there was tribulation at Thessalonica also.

Verse 6 says Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy were apostles of Christ. This might surprise some because of the inclusion of Silvanus and Timothy. But this is an important statement as it shows the authority they had as apostles in taking the gospel to the pagan world.

Verse 9 is a reminder to the Thessalonians that they had worked hard while proclaiming the gospel among them. This indicates Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy were there for more than just a few days.

Verses 11-12 explain the purpose of their remaining at Thessalonica for a while. Not only did they want to give the gospel to the people there, but to demonstrate it by their lives and exhort those new believers to walk in a manner worthy of God.

Verse 14 is the second use of the word “imitators,” also in 1:6. Verse 14 also gives information about the setting of the letter. The Thessalonian believers endured sufferings from the other people there.

In verses 14-16 reference is made to Jews and Gentiles. Some Jews in Judea had killed the Lord Jesus and prophets and had driven out Paul and others from there. It was a hindrance to the gospel going to the Gentiles.

There is another mention of “wrath” in verse 16, and it’s for those who prevent the spread of the gospel.

Paul stated his desire to return to Thessalonica, but that he was hindered by Satan.

This chapter also closes with a mention of the second coming of the Lord.

1 THESSALONIANS 3

What is the theme of this chapter?

Paul was comforted in affliction by Timothy’s report

How does this chapter continue the flow of thought from chapters 1 and 2?

Paul was still relating what had happened before the writing of this letter. The Thessalonians were aware of some of the events, so he was reminding them. But they might not have been aware of his great desire and concern about their welfare after he left them.

This part, segment, of the letter is a great encouragement and part of the purpose for its being written.

A key word in this chapter is “affliction(s).” “Suffering” was mentioned in chapter 2 and “tribulation” in chapter 1. Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy had suffered affliction, but also the Thessalonians had suffered tribulation, 1:6; 2:14.

Paul stated that he sent Timothy to find out about their faith because of their afflictions. He wanted to know about their “faith,” another key word in this chapter. He wanted to strengthen and encourage them in their faith.

Relate this last statement to the believers in your class. The study of this letter should be a strength and encouragement to them in their faith, especially if they are going through afflictions or are troubled by the afflictions of other believers.

Verses 11-13 are a prayer for the Thessalonians closing this segment of the letter.

1 THESSALONIANS 4

Ask about a possible theme.

Excel still more (ESV—do this more and more) in purity, love, work

How does the letter change in this chapter?

The first three chapters are reminding and encouraging,
and
the last two are requesting / asking, 4:1 and 5:12, and instructing, 4:1 and 13.

This whole letter is one of exhortation. It was written to exhort believers, all believers.

The Thessalonians were instructed by Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy when they had been to Thessalonica. The instruction had been about how to “walk” or live.

They were commended because they were walking according to those instructions, but they were also encouraged to excel still more / do this more and more, verses 1 and 10.

“Sanctification” is mentioned in verses 3-7,
“love” in verses 9-10,
and “work” in verse 11.

These are the three areas in which they were encouraged to excel / do more.

This chapter also has a portion of teaching about the second coming which continues until 5:11. This chapter focuses on the coming of the Lord, especially related to those who had already died after being saved.

1 THESSALONIANS 5

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

Be alert / keep awake and sober about the day of the Lord; encourage one another

How does this chapter continue the section about the end times?

This chapter continues the teaching about the end times, but is focused on the “day of the Lord” and “wrath” through verse 11.

The Thessalonians were encouraging and building up one another with what they had been taught.

The requests made at the end of the chapter are general in nature with a focus on how to live with each other as believers.

Verses 23-28 are the closing of the letter and mention again the coming of the Lord. Relate this to a similar closing of the first segment, chapters 1–3.

Since the letter closes both segments with a prayer and call for the Thessalonians to be without blame at the coming of the Lord Jesus, then it can be concluded that this is the main theme of this letter. It is the goal or purpose for writing it.

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy encouraged the Thessalonian believers to continue even in affliction so they would be without blame when the Lord Jesus Christ comes.

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

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

You could end your discussion by reading/praying 3:11-13 and 5:23-24.

1 THESSALONIANS
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 2

Lesson emphasis:

- Acts 15:40–18:11
- 1 Thessalonians 1

REVIEW

Tell your group to look at their At a Glance charts and ask what they remember about 1 Thessalonians. Give time for them to review the main points.

There is a map in the Appendix which you might use as a visual aid for this discussion.

ACTS 15:40–18:11

Ask what they learned from the Acts passage about Paul, Silvanus, Timothy, and the Thessalonians. They only need to discuss the main points.

Paul chose Silas to go with him, strengthening the churches already established on his first journey through Syria and Cilicia.

Silas is the Greek name for Silvanus, Latin, used in 1 Thessalonians and other letters. The two of them were sent out by the church of Antioch in Syria.

When Paul and Silas went through Derbe and Lystra they found Timothy. He was the son of a believing Jewish mother and Greek father, probably unsaved. Being well spoken of by the Christians there, he was selected by Paul to go with Silas and him.

Timothy submitted to being circumcised so that he would not cause any Jews to stumble because of uncircumcision. This showed his character and love of the gospel.

As they strengthened the churches in these areas, the number of believers increased daily.

Paul, Silas, and Timothy went to Philippi, a leading city of the district of Macedonia. They found a place of prayer on the Sabbath and spoke to the women there. Lydia was saved along with her household.

Paul cast a demon out of a slave-girl, and her masters brought them before the authorities at the market place. They had been making a profit from her divination, fortune-telling. The accusations were that Jews were proclaiming customs not acceptable to the Romans.

Paul and Silas were beaten and thrown into prison. While there, they were praying and singing praises to God. An earthquake opened all of the doors, and everyone's chains were unfastened. The jailer, in charge of the prisoners, was the one accountable to his authorities for those in his charge. He was about to commit suicide rather than face his humiliation and punishment, when Paul cried out that they were still there. As a result, the jailer was saved and his household. God uses suffering for His glory.

Paul and Silas revealed in public that they were Roman citizens who had been beaten and jailed without a trial. Therefore, they were begged to leave the city.

A church had begun, and opposition had followed.

They traveled to Thessalonica, where they were willing to speak the gospel among much opposition, even after having suffered and been mistreated in Philippi, 1 Thessalonians 2:2.

There was a Jewish synagogue there and Paul, Silas, and Timothy went there first.

For three Sabbaths, Paul reasoned with them from the Scriptures, the Old Testament at that time. He preached the gospel of Jesus using the Old Testament. Therefore, they stayed in the city for quite some time as also indicated in 1 Thessalonians 1–3.

Some of them believed, along with a number of Greeks. Those were the Thessalonian believers who received the letter from Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy.

Jews who did not believe formed a mob and caused uproar in the city. Some of the brethren were taken before the city authorities.

Relate this opposition to 1 Thessalonians 1.

But the church had begun in Thessalonica.

Paul and Silas were sent away by night to Berea, but there is no mention of Timothy.

As usual, the synagogue was the first place they visited. The Jews there were noble-minded because they searched the Scriptures to check out what they were being taught.

The unbelieving Jews of Thessalonica followed to Berea stirring up trouble there for Paul, Silas, and Timothy. So Paul was sent out as far as the Aegean Sea, and then taken to Athens. Silas and Timothy remained in Macedonia.

Relate this to 1 Thessalonians 3:1-2. It seems that Timothy was sent to the Thessalonians at that point.

Paul was in Athens without Silas and Timothy.
He reasoned in the synagogue (Jews) and in the market place (Greeks).
He was taken to the Areopagus and taught there. Some believed and some did not.

Paul went to Corinth, met Aquila and Priscilla, and worked with them to earn his living. Relate this to 1 Thessalonians 2:9. He also reasoned every Sabbath in the synagogue.

Silas and Timothy came to Corinth from Macedonia. This was probably when Timothy gave the good report of the Thessalonians' faith to Paul.

Paul taught the Word of God; some believed and some did not. Opposition arose again because of the gospel, but Paul stayed there for a year and a half.

That was probably where he wrote the letter to the Thessalonians, prompted by Timothy's report of his visit to them.

1 THESSALONIANS 1

With the history in mind, ask what your group observed in this chapter. Give time for any application discussion also.

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

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

Paul reminded them that they were chosen of God and loved by Him, even though they were facing opposition.

There is a list in verse 5 telling how the gospel came by Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy.

in word
in power
in the Holy Spirit
with full conviction
and by example

The Thessalonians imitated Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy and the Lord.

The tribulation of the time did not prevent them from having the joy of the Holy Spirit. Relate this to the experience of Paul and Silas in the Philippian jail, praising God and singing.

They also imitated to the extent that they sounded forth the Word of God to Macedonia and Achaia. That was not a small area; the Thessalonian believers became examples because of sharing the Word.

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

Verses 9 and 10 show the joy and contentment of the Thessalonians.

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

You could discuss what your group learned about God in this chapter and how it relates to their own lives.

God is the Father of believers.

God is to be thanked.

God loves and chose believers.

Believers can imitate the Lord because of His Holy Spirit indwelling them.

Faith is toward God, not anything else.

He is living and true; compare this with the dead and false gods the Thessalonians had served and which many serve in these modern times.

He is served by those He saves.

He raised His Son Jesus from the dead. He is the living God.

Jesus will return from heaven to rescue His believers from the wrath to come.

In closing your discussion you could ask your group if they learned anything from the Thessalonians' lives that they could imitate. Let them briefly share about this. You might also ask if they live in such a way that others could imitate them.

1 THESSALONIANS LEADER GUIDE Lesson 3

Lesson emphasis:

- 1 Thessalonians 1
- True conversion

REVIEW

You might begin your discussion with a short review of what your group remembers from studying the first two lessons of this course. This helps keep the context of 1 Thessalonians before them so that when they complete this course, this letter will be in their hearts and minds.

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

A short while later, Timothy visited them to find out about their faith. He then left them to meet up with Paul in Corinth, and reported to him how the Thessalonian believers were doing. They had been growing in their faith.

They then wrote this epistle to those believers there encouraging them to excel still more (ESV—do this more and more) in their walk with the Lord and to wait eagerly for His return, even though they were suffering opposition from their own countrymen. All of this so that they would be without blame at His coming.

DELIVERING THE GOSPEL

From the assignment in Day One of the lesson, you can ask your group what they learned about how the gospel was given to the Thessalonians by Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy.

According to 1 Thessalonians 1:5 the gospel went to Thessalonica:
in word
in power
in the Holy Spirit
with full conviction
by example

At the end of this guide, there is a possible visual aid which you can use to help your group see the main points of the lesson. You can write the main points as they bring them up in the discussion.

Ask your group how they give the gospel. There might be those who have been told that they only have to live a Christian life in front of people. And there might also be those who have heard that one only needs to give out a tract or a memorized version of the facts of the gospel.

The gospel has to be communicated to the lost.
Christians are to be about witnessing, giving the gospel to those outside the church.

In power and in the Holy Spirit seem to be connected because the witness of the gospel led by the Holy Spirit will be in the power of the Lord. But the power for salvation is in the gospel message itself, Romans 1:16.

Full conviction means that the one delivering the gospel is fully convinced that what he or she is saying is the absolute truth. It is life.

Just as Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy proved to be men of integrity and Christian character among the Thessalonians, believers in this time are to be doing the same kind of witnessing.

Therefore, the gospel needs to be given by word and the example of a godly life.

Rote, lifeless repetition of the gospel facts can seem very dry and lacking to those who hear it.

If the messenger seems dry giving the message, then how effective does that message appear to be for the one hearing it?

RECEPTION OF THE GOSPEL

How did the Thessalonians receive the gospel?

In the midst of much tribulation they received it with the joy of the Holy Spirit.

They turned to God from idols. This shows the power of the gospel and salvation. It also shows that they were truly converted; therefore, no turning = no conversion.

They had a work of faith, labor of love, and steadfastness of hope in Christ. Not only did they imitate Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy and the Lord, but they also became examples to all the believers in the surrounding areas.

Give time for application discussion.

WORK OF FAITH

Ask your group what they learned from studying 1 Thessalonians and the cross-references about this.

It seems that part of their work of faith was turning from idols to serve the living and true God.

Also, sounding forth the word to Macedonia and Achaia was part of that work of faith.

1 Thessalonians 3 speaks of Timothy visiting the Thessalonians the second time to see about their faith. If they had no change in lifestyle, then Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy's work would have been in vain. But that was not the case.

They truly believed, and were standing firm in the midst of opposition.

2 Thessalonians 1 states that their faith was greatly enlarged by the time of the second letter to them. They continued to grow in their faith.

Titus 1:16–2:14 can add to one's understanding of the work of faith.

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

The older believers are to teach the younger ones how to be sound in faith and love and perseverance.

The grace of God instructs one to deny ungodliness and live righteously.

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

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

Ephesians 2:8-10 tells of the whole picture of faith and works. Believers are saved by grace through faith, but there are works which God prepared for each believer to walk in or live out. No one is saved as a result of works, but the good works come after the point of conversion, salvation.

James 2:14-26 gives a good summary of this. Faith without works is dead, not living, not true faith, not real salvation. Abraham's offering of Isaac is the example of faith working with works. He believed, and his faith resulted in good works, obedience to the Word of the Lord. So works were part of his salvation as was justification, although he was not saved by his works.

The dead faith in this passage seems to parallel 1 Thessalonians in that Paul thought that his labor might have been in "vain" if those he thought had been saved had continued in their old ways or gone back to them.

Hebrews 11 says that without faith it is impossible to please God.

Men of old gained approval by their faith. The whole chapter lists example after example of men who proved their faith by their works.

LABOR OF LOVE

Ask what your group learned about this and how it applies to them.

1 Thessalonians 1 says they had a labor of love, and they were loved by God. Their sounding forth of the gospel could not only be a work of faith but also a labor of love.

4:9-10 indicates they were doing very well in their demonstration or labor of love toward one another. They, and believers today, are taught by God Himself to love one another. The Thessalonian believers practiced that love not just among themselves but also to all the brethren in Macedonia and Achaia, but the letter encourages them to excel still more (ESV—do this more and more).

2 Thessalonians 1:3 says that their love was growing ever greater, as was their faith.

1 John 5:1-3 tells how one is to love God by keeping His commandments. That is also how one knows that he loves his brothers—how one knows if he is truly saved.

Obedience to the Word of God is connected with faith and love.

1 Corinthians 13 gives a great description of how love is demonstrated and defined. Patience, kindness, not seeking one's own or being arrogant, etc., are the ways in which love is lived out toward others. Love is a choice, choosing to be patient, kind, etc.

The Thessalonians were doing well in their labor of love.

Encourage your group to examine how they, individually, are doing in this.

STEADFASTNESS OF HOPE

Ask what they learned about this.

It seems from the context of 1 Thessalonians that hope is connected with the coming of the Lord to save from wrath. Although the Thessalonians were being persecuted, suffering opposition, they still had hope.

Paul told the Thessalonians to encourage one another with his words, relating this promise.

Romans 8:18-25 is a wonderful encouragement for believers to look to what is to come when going through present sufferings.

1 Corinthians 15:58 is a great encouragement for believers to be steadfast . . . because their labor is not in vain; it's the work of the Lord that they are to be doing.

Hebrews 3 and 6 are warnings that true believers will hold fast their hope until the end. It is the unbelieving who fall away when things get hard to handle. Believers might give way to temporary feelings of despair, but their hope is until the end.

It takes diligence in being fully assured in hope. The Word and the Spirit give hope to believers, who are to be looking forward to the time of being with the Lord Himself Who delivers from the wrath to come.

IMITATORS AND EXAMPLES

Tell your group to look at the chart in the lesson and ask what they learned from their study on Day Five.

“Imitator,” *mimetes*, is one who follows another or imitates another.

The Thessalonian believers imitated Paul, Silvanus, Timothy and the Lord, and even the churches in Judea.

They received the Word.
They had the joy of the Spirit in tribulation.
They sounded forth the Word.
They became examples.
They endured in their persecutions.

“Example,” *typos* can mean a pattern.

The Thessalonians were examples to other believers because they sounded forth the Word. People heard how they turned to God from idols.

Paul encouraged the Thessalonians in 2:14 in imitating the other churches in their sufferings.

2 Thessalonians 3:6-15 gives another example for believers to follow.

Work; don't be undisciplined or unruly in the area of work.
Don't be a burden to others by living off of them or eating their food.
Believers need to work to support themselves, to feed themselves.

Philippians 3 gives Paul's example.

Knowing Christ above all was his goal, his aim.

He wasn't perfect, but he pressed on to have and be what the Lord had for him, and he counted everything else as rubbish in comparison to reaching Christlikeness.

There are those who are enemies of the cross of Christ, those who indulge in self and earthly things.

Let your group spend a few minutes summarizing from the Scriptures how people can know if they have experienced true conversion.

What does true conversion look like?

Encourage them to examine their own lives.

Then ask your group if they realize that those who have been truly converted are citizens of heaven.

Where do they place their hope, their confident assurance?

Are they waiting eagerly for their Savior who will deliver them from wrath and redeem their bodies?

How one lives shows where he/she places his hope.

<p><u>Give the gospel</u> in word in power in the Holy Spirit with full conviction by example</p>	<p>Those who receive the gospel turn sound forth the Word imitate Work of faith— Faith without works is dead Labor of love— Keep God's commands Love one another Steadfastness of hope— Eagerly wait Hold fast until the end become examples</p>
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1 THESSALONIANS LEADER GUIDE Lesson 4

Lesson emphasis:

- 1 Thessalonians 2:1-16

REVIEW

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

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy took the gospel to the Thessalonians. The Thessalonians received the gospel, became imitators of Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, and even became examples to other believers. Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy had heard reports about how the Thessalonians' lives were different; they had turned from idols to serve God.

In chapters 1–3 the Thessalonians were encouraged in their faith, especially concerning how they received the gospel and the difference it had made in them. Paul was comforted when Timothy brought good news to him of the Thessalonians' faith after he had visited with them the second time. Paul was in Corinth when he received the report; then he, along with Silvanus and Timothy, wrote this letter to the Thessalonians.

In chapter 4, the believers are urged to excel still more / do this more and more in their sanctification and love. The end of 1 Thessalonians 4 and the beginning of chapter 5 teach about the Lord's return and rescue from wrath.

Chapter 5 then gives general instructions to believers about how to live. Paul used all of this to encourage those believers to be without blame at His coming although they went through opposition and sufferings because of their faith.

1 THESSALONIANS 2

Tell your group to look at their Observation Worksheet and their Outline of this chapter. Then ask what they learned from their study.

This tells how Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy spoke the gospel to the Thessalonians. A key word in this chapter is “gospel” and its synonym “word.”

The first chapter was primarily about the Thessalonians, and the results of their receiving the gospel, but this chapter emphasizes how Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy gave it to them.

Another key word in every chapter is “God.”

The Holy Spirit is not in this chapter, and the Lord Jesus is mentioned four times.

Verses 1-8

How does this chapter begin?

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy had boldness when they spoke the gospel to the Thessalonians because they had suffered for doing that very thing in Philippi just before going to Thessalonica.

Relate this to what your group studied in Acts in Lesson 2. They were persecuted or opposed in several places where they spoke the gospel.

1 Thessalonians 1 says Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy gave the gospel in word, power, the Holy Spirit, and by example. They had the power of the Spirit to witness, and they were fully convinced about the truth of the gospel, the Word they spoke.

At any point in this discussion, give time for your group to talk about relevant application.

How did Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy not speak the gospel in verses 3-6?

No error, impurity, deceit, pleasing men, flattering speech, pretext for greed, or seeking glory from men / people

This is a simple list which your group might have just numbered in the text on their Observation Worksheets.

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy wanted to please God, the One who had entrusted them with the gospel. They could have asserted their authority over the people as apostles, but they did not.

NOTE: This is one of the places in the New Testament that mentions men other than Paul and the Twelve as being apostles. Silvanus or Silas and Timothy were apostles of Christ also.

How did Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy speak the gospel according to verses 7-8?

“But” can often indicate a contrast in the text. Verses 3-6 explain how the gospel was not spoken, and the following verses tell how it was.

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy were gentle with the Thessalonians.

They had a fond affection like a mother tenderly caring for her children and they imparted / shared their own lives / selves with the Thessalonians.

Verses 9-12

What do these verses describe?

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

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

This is another simple list in the text.

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

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

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

Ask your group what they learned from verses 1-12 about God.
Give time for application discussion.

He gives boldness to speak His gospel.
He approves those with whom He entrusts the gospel.
He examines hearts.
He is the witness of the internal.
He calls believers into His own kingdom and glory.

Verses 13-16

Ask what your group learned from observing these verses.

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

His Word performs its work in those who believe, then and now. There is a life change for believers in this time as with the Thessalonians turning from their idols.

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

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

In contrast to the apostles who were pleasing to God and behaved uprightly, those Jews were not pleasing to God and were hostile to all men by trying to prevent the spread of the gospel.

“Wrath” is used in both chapters 1 and 2 of this letter. In chapter 1 it says believers are to be rescued from it when the Lord comes. This chapter states that it has already come on those who are not saved. This wrath will be studied more in later lessons in this course.

Verses 17-20

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

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

NOTE: In a later lesson your students will study about how Satan might have hindered.

Another simple list in verse 19 must have also encouraged the Thessalonian believers.

They were the hope, joy, and crown of exultation for Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy.

In verse 20 it says that they were their glory.

What comfort these statements must have given to the Thessalonians who were undergoing opposition.

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

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

To end this discussion, you could ask your group if anything in this chapter spoke to their lives.

1 THESSALONIANS LEADER GUIDE Lesson 5

Lesson emphasis:

- Preaching the gospel
- 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12

REVIEW

You might ask your group what they remember about the gospel from 1 Thessalonians 1 and 2.

Chapter 1 says Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy gave the gospel
in word
in power
in the Holy Spirit
with full conviction
and by example

Chapter 2 gives more detail about how they did that and their reasons for speaking the gospel
to please God
because it is His Word which works in those who believe it
and so that believers walk in a manner worthy of their calling

At the end of this guide is a list of the 5Ws and H answered in this lesson about preaching, proclaiming, or giving of the gospel or witnessing.

WHY?

This gives the answer to the first question of Day One in this lesson, and it also answers “Why” tell the gospel now. Ask your group what they learned about the reasons to preach the gospel.

Paul said he was entrusted with the gospel, 1 Thessalonians 2:4.
He was under obligation, Romans 1:14.

He was under compulsion (ESV—necessity was laid upon him); woe to him if he didn’t preach it, 1 Corinthians 9:16. He had no choice.

Romans 1:16

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

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

WHAT?

What are the main points of the gospel as stated in 1 Corinthians 15?

Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.

In other words, His death for sins was predicted in the Old Testament.

The fact that He was buried, verse 4, proves His death.

The second main point is that He was raised on the third day.

Again this is according to the Scriptures, predicted in the Old Testament.

Verses 5-8 repeat that He appeared to many after His resurrection.

Those appearances prove His resurrection.

His resurrection proves that He defeated sin and death.

Verses 1-2 of this passage tell about the transforming work of believing the gospel.

Believers stand in, are saved by, and hold fast to the Word, the gospel.

Those who don't hold fast didn't truly believe it.

They believed in vain; they weren't saved.

What good news did Jesus preach?

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

He also preached the gospel, good news about God's kingdom.

Repent and believe because the kingdom was at hand.

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

The elements were that He should suffer and rise again from the dead on the third day.

Relate this to 1 Corinthians 15, "according to the Scriptures."

Repentance is part of believing the gospel. The Thessalonians turned to God from idols.

Jesus called men to repent of their sins. If there is no repentance, there is no true salvation and there is no forgiveness.

Ask your group what they learned from studying the passages in Acts.

In Acts 1:8 before Jesus ascended, He told the disciples they would receive power when the Holy Spirit came upon them. This power was for them to be His witnesses, beginning at Jerusalem.

This happened in Acts 2.

Acts 2:22-42, Peter gave the gospel to the Jews in Jerusalem. This was only 50 days from Jesus' crucifixion in the same city. Peter spoke on Pentecost to most of the same group who had been in Jerusalem at Passover when Jesus was killed.

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

Peter quoted Scripture from the Old Testament with which those Jews would have been familiar.

He explained that the coming of the Holy Spirit to indwell those who believed was promised by the Father and sent by Jesus after His ascension.

Again Peter preached to the Jews in Jerusalem in Acts 3:12-26. He pointed out their sin—they put to death Jesus. But God raised Him from the dead. Peter called them to repent and believe so that their sins would be wiped away. A changed life is the result of faith in Him.

Scripture was quoted to them again by Peter.

Ask your group how this can apply to what they tell people as they give the gospel. Give time to discuss this.

Acts 17 is an account of the gospel being presented to Gentiles, who might be paralleled with those outside the church today, people who have no knowledge of the Word of God.

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

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

In Acts 26, Paul gave his defense before King Agrippa, a man knowledgeable of the Scriptures. Again Paul presented to those listening that Jesus died and rose according to the Scriptures. He called them to repent and believe.

Perform deeds appropriate to repentance.

Believing the gospel turns from darkness to light.

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

It gives an inheritance with others sanctified by faith.

Ask for a summary about the “what” of preaching the gospel.

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

How?

How does a person effectively present the gospel?

They can witness in the power of the Holy Spirit like the men in the New Testament did, Acts 1:8.

Paul witnessed in demonstration of the Spirit and power, not in clever speech or human wisdom, 1 Corinthians 2. It was simply the word of the cross, the gospel.

Knowing God's Word and being led by His Spirit tells the believer what to say in a witnessing situation, although one might be in fear, trembling and weak—as Paul said that he was in 1 Corinthians 2.

Paul also said in 1 Corinthians 9 that he was entrusted as a steward with the gospel. He was only giving out what had been given to him.

Who?

Who is to preach the gospel?

All believers are given the Holy Spirit at salvation.

He gives the power to witness or give the gospel.

All believers are stewards of what the Lord has given to them at salvation.

All believers are to be witnesses. Compare this with Matthew 28:18-20.

WHEN AND WHERE?

Discuss the answers to these questions from the Scriptures your group studied.

In 2 Timothy 3:15–4:4, Paul told Timothy that he should be ready to preach the Word in season and out of season. That would seem to apply to all believers. Being ready would be knowing the content of the gospel and being sensitive to the leading of the Spirit.

In Acts 16 it is recorded that Paul was prohibited by the Holy Spirit from taking the gospel to Asia or Bithynia, but was directed to go to Macedonia.

Therefore, the “when” would be whenever led by the Spirit to speak, but always being ready to do so. And the “where” would be where the Spirit leads.

In closing this discussion, help your group to evaluate how they witness or give the gospel. You might ask if any want to share—

What has God taught you from this lesson?

How has He changed your thinking?

Do you feel more equipped to give the gospel to the lost?

Preach the gospel

Why?

To please God
It leads to salvation

What?

Christ died
He was raised
Repent and believe

How?

By the Holy Spirit
Not cleverness of speech
As a steward

Who?

All believers

When / Where?

Be ready in season and out of season
Led by the Holy Spirit

1 THESSALONIANS LEADER GUIDE Lesson 6

Lesson emphasis:

- 1 Thessalonians 3

REVIEW

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

What is the first segment about?

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

Then wrote this letter to them to strengthen and encourage them, along with instruct them to be without blame at the Lord's coming.

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

Chapter 2 reminded of how the messengers had behaved among them and the heart of the three apostles toward the new believers of Thessalonica.

1 THESSALONIANS 3

What is this chapter about? How does it complete this first segment in the letter?

Chapter 3 reminded of Timothy's visit and tells of Paul's reaction to the good report from Timothy.

Verses 1-5

What are these verses about?

In these verses Paul reminded the Thessalonians of why Timothy was sent to them. Concern for them and to strengthen and encourage (ESV—establish and exhort) them

They were being opposed, but also they had heard about what happened to Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy after leaving Thessalonica.

Paul wanted to be sure that these new believers were remaining faithful even in the midst of being tempted by persecution. He also did not want them to be disturbed by the news of what was happening with him.

Affliction is a key word in this chapter. Paul wrote that Silvanus, Timothy, and he were destined for this. The same is true of all believers.

Verse 5 indicates that if the Thessalonians had turned away from the faith, then the labor of Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy would have been in vain; the Thessalonians would not have really believed the gospel but only appeared to have. Connect this with true conversion in Lesson 3.

Verses 6-10

What are these verses about?

This was Paul's response to Timothy's good report concerning his visit with the Thessalonian believers.

He was comforted by the report, although he was in a difficult situation himself.

Verse 8 is an encouragement to stand firm / fast in all situations. Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy were examples. They weren't swayed by affliction, but stood in the midst of it—as they discovered that the Thessalonians were also doing.

Another result of the report was rejoicing in the Lord because of the Thessalonians' faith and love.

According to verse 10, Paul still wanted to see the Thessalonians again to “complete / supply what is lacking in your faith.” He meant to keep on teaching, encouraging, strengthening, and exhorting them in their faith. He wanted them to be without blame at the Lord's coming, to excel more in their sanctification and love.

Before discussing the end of 1 Thessalonians 3, ask what your group learned about “follow-up of new believers” from 1 Corinthians 3:5-10 and 4:14-21.

One plants and another waters, but God causes the growth. It's His field or His building. One servant might lay the foundation, give the gospel, and another build on it by teaching the Word to new believers to strengthen and help them grow in faith and love.

In writing the epistles of 1 Thessalonians and 1 Corinthians, Paul was building on the foundation of those who had believed the gospel message.

Those who build need to be careful how they build, not with the wisdom from the world, but with the wisdom of God Himself.

Admonishment is also a part of follow-up. New believers need to be helped in their growth as much as possible by the more mature believers who know the truth. And sometimes correction, admonishment, or warning is part of what needs to be done.

Give time for your group to discuss how these passages apply to them.

Lead your discussion back to 1 Thessalonians 3.

Verses 11-13

What are these verses?

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

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

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

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

Give time for your group to discuss how this prayer can and should be prayed for all believers.

To end your discussion, ask what your group learned about prayer from 1 Thessalonians and cross-references.

1 Thessalonians 1:2; 2:13; 3:9; 5:18

Thanksgiving in prayer

Paul also mentioned the earnestness of prayer, 3:10.

“Pray without ceasing,” 5:17.

Paul asked for prayer; 5:25.

John 9:31; Proverbs 28:9, 13; Isaiah 59:1-2; and Psalm 66:18

God does not hear / listen to sinners.

The prayer of one who does not listen to God's law is an abomination.

Iniquities separate people from God so that He does not hear them.

A person's sins hide God's face from him.

John 14:13-14; 15:7, 16; 16:23-24, 26

Jesus told believers to ask of the Father in His name for whatever they need.

He also said the Father will answer those requests. Glory for His name is a result.

Asking in Jesus' name means asking for what He would ask. That comes from abiding in His Word. One result of answered prayer is joy.

Proverbs 15:8 and Psalm 34:15

God accepts and hears the prayers of the upright.

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

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

Jesus gave a pattern for prayer, and it begins with praise of the Lord, His name.
This puts one's focus on the Lord and takes it off of self.
The requests come next.

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

The prayer also ends with a focus on God.

Romans 8:26

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

James 4:1-3; 5:16

One does not receive what is requested from God because of wrong motives in asking for it, to spend it on pleasures.

The prayer of the righteous, one who does right, is effective and accomplishes much.

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

Confidence in prayer

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

Luke 18:1 and Philippians 4:6

Pray always and don't lose heart.

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

Psalms 65:2

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

To end your discussion, ask your group how these things apply to them.

1 THESSALONIANS LEADER GUIDE Lesson 7

Lesson emphasis:

- The tempter, Satan

REVIEW

You might ask your group why Paul wrote to the Thessalonians and how the subject of Satan came up in his letter to them.

As Paul wrote to encourage the Thessalonian believers to excel / do still more in their exemplary conversion and walk with the Lord, he said Satan hindered him from visiting them in 2:18. The text does not say how he was hindered, but most likely through the opposition and persecution he was suffering.

Again in 3:5, Paul expressed a concern regarding the tempter and the Thessalonian believers. He was concerned that they had been tempted to turn away from the faith and fall back into their old life of idol worship. Therefore, his labor among them of bringing the gospel would have been in vain.

You might ask your group about Paul's heart for the Thessalonians.

Relate this to why believers need to be aware of what God's Word says about Satan.

Paul's heart was for their perseverance, to stand firm, to excel, to walk in a manner worthy, to be without blame at the Lord's coming.

Believers need to be aware of Satan and his character so as not to be caught off guard, deceived.

SATAN IS THE TEMPTER

To begin this part of your discussion, you might ask what names are used in the Bible to refer to Satan or the tempter.

Matthew 4:1 says Jesus was tempted by the devil.

Revelation 12:9

the great dragon

the serpent of old (ESV—ancient serpent)

the devil and Satan

the deceiver

1 Peter 5:8

The devil is the believers' adversary, like a roaring lion seeking to devour.

Matthew 13:39

He is referred to as the enemy.

2 Corinthians 4:4

The god of this world is also a term used to describe and name the devil.

Ephesians 2

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

Ask what they learned about the devil tempting Jesus.

Matthew 4:1-11

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

He tempted Jesus to turn stones into bread, but Jesus replied or resisted with God's word about living not by bread alone but by every one of God's words.

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

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

Give time for your group to discuss the place of God's Word in resisting temptation from the tempter.

Ask what else they learned about resisting temptation.

James 4:7-8

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

1 Corinthians 7:3-5

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

HIS BEGINNING AND END

Ask what your group learned about this.

Ezekiel 28:11-19

God created the anointed / guardian cherub who was in God's garden, Eden.

He was created full of wisdom and perfect in beauty, blameless in his ways.

He sinned because of being internally filled with violence.
His heart was lifted up because of his beauty, and he corrupted his wisdom.
Therefore, he was cast from the mountain of God.

God created this angelic being perfect in wisdom and beauty, but those very things became his pride and he corrupted himself.

Verses 18 and 19 tell of his end. Revelation 20 says he'll be thrown into the lake of fire.

SATAN'S CHARACTER AND TACTICS

What are the devil's character and tactics? Why did God tell us about this?

In 1 Thessalonians 2 and 3 Paul mentions two of Satan's ways or tactics.

First, he hindered him from visiting the Thessalonians.
Relate this to 1 Peter 5:6-9 and Ephesians 2:1-3.

If Paul was hindered because of opposition or persecution from the ungodly, then how does this relate to the devil? He rules the ungodly.

Satan is like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour. The immediate context of this statement is suffering among all believers in the world.

Therefore, it is very likely that he used those under his power, the sons of disobedience—those who walk according to the prince of the power of the air—in persecuting or opposing Paul to the point of hindering his return visit to Thessalonica.

The same thing happens now with the unbelievers persecuting believers.

What is the devil's relationship with unbelievers?

John 8:44

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

He takes away the word when they hear it, Mark 4:15.
He has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, 2 Corinthians 4:4.
The whole world is under his control; he's the god of this world.
1 John 4:4 also indicates this same thing.

They walk according to his leading, Ephesians 2:1-3.

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-39; John 13:2; Acts 5:3

Even among believers, there are those who sneak into the churches, those whom he sends to do his bidding of destruction, deception, accusation, tempting, etc.

The parable of the tares among the wheat, Judas among the disciples, and Ananias trying to be part of the church in Acts are all illustrative of this.

The same happens now.

2 Corinthians 11:13-15

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

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

Ephesians 6:10-18

This tells of spiritual forces of wickedness being behind flesh and blood encounters of believers and non-believers.

NOTE: In the context of Ephesians 5:22 to 6:9 Paul taught about relationships within families and servants and masters. Sometimes believers forget that there are those in their own families or work situations who are being used by the devil to persecute them.

Give time for your group to share application relevant to this.
Encourage them to be on the alert to the devil using the world and unbelievers.

What are Satan's tactics toward believers?

Temptation

He tempts believers to sin, just as he did Jesus.
When Jesus was tired and hungry, then the devil came on the scene to tempt Him.
Believers can respond to Satan as Jesus did, with the truth of the Word of God.

Ephesians 4

Anger is an emotion which might give the devil an opportunity for tempting a believer to sin.

1 Peter

This is about anxiety in the context of suffering caused by the devil.

Believers are susceptible to temptations when temporarily controlled by their emotions instead of the Spirit of God.

Deception

The devil has his workers among believers, even in teaching and leading.
False teaching is one of the main ways that the devil tries to deceive believers.

Give time for your group to discuss how this relates to them and Bible study.

Suffering and persecution

The devil uses unbelievers to do these things.

He has been a murderer from the beginning.

Revelation 2:10 says that he will put some in prison.

Christians need to understand that the devil is trying to destroy them, and he uses people to try to accomplish his goal.

Physical affliction

Job and Paul's thorn in the flesh are indications of this.

Paul said that his thorn was a messenger from Satan, but he went to God for help.

The Lord left him with whatever affliction it was, but Paul did not keep after the devil about it. He submitted to God's will for his life.

The devil can do nothing apart from the sovereignty of God.

The verses from Job show that he needed permission to do anything to Job.

CHRISTIANS' POWER OVER SATAN

Ask what your group learned from this study.

Acts 26:18

When one is saved, he is turned from the dominion of Satan to the dominion of God.

Therefore, that believer is no longer under the devil's leadership or control.

Believers receive forgiveness for their sins and an inheritance with others who have been sanctified by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. They are no longer in the bonds of their sins, nor under the authority of the devil.

1 John 4:4 and 5:4-5 also describe a believer's triumph over the devil.

Because of being born of God by faith, the believer has victory, overcomes the world.

At the end of 1 John 3 the subject is the Spirit of God, whom all believers are given at salvation. Then the beginning of chapter 4 contrasts the Spirit of God with the spirit of the antichrist which is already in the world in the form of false prophets. Verse 4 then states that believers overcome those false prophets, those spirits working through the false prophets in deception, because greater is the Spirit of God within believers than that spirit of antichrist in the world.

Therefore, all believers are overcomers when it comes to the devil and the world.

Ephesians 1

The greatness of God's power is toward believers, according to the working of the strength of His might—the might which raised the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead.

Christ is seated far above all authority, spiritual as well as physical, and the church is His body. Every other power is under His feet.

Ephesians 6

Believers are commanded to be strong in the Lord and the strength of His might. This is what gives Christians power to stand firm against the devil's schemes, and resist him. The armor of God for believers is presented in verses 13-17. Prayer for one another is also strong against temptation.

1 Peter 5:6-9 and James 4:7

Believers can resist the devil, just as Jesus did in Matthew 4. Submit to God, be firm in faith, and resist.

He will flee, but that doesn't mean he won't return when he sees that believer in another situation where he can be tempted or persecuted, etc.

Revelation 12:11

Believers overcome Satan because of the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony. The context of this statement is the end times.

Luke 10:17-20

Although the spirits, demons, are subject to believers giving the gospel, believers are not to rejoice in that, but in the fact that their names are written in heaven—salvation.

Matthew 16:13-20

The main statement of these verses is what Peter said about Jesus—He is the Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus then said that upon that rock, that truth, He would build His church. The gates of Hades cannot overpower the going forth of the gospel to the lost. Many will be saved, building the church. Jesus gave the keys to building His church to Peter who preached the first evangelistic message in Acts 2; Peter also was the first one who took the gospel to the Gentiles in Acts 10.

Matthew 18:15-20

The context of these verses is a brother who sins, not the devil. The two or three agree on what is said and done with that brother. The binding and loosing has to do with confronting that brother.

Mark 3:27

This is the only time the binding and loosing is used in reference to the devil, but it is in an illustration of the strong man in his house. This is not a command for Christians to bind the devil.

The believer's defense is knowing his position in Christ, standing firm against the devil's schemes by knowing the Word of God, and resisting the devil by submitting and drawing near to God.

To end this discussion, ask your group how this applies to them.

SATAN	UNBELIEVERS	BELIEVERS
<p>The tempter The devil The serpent of old / ancient serpent The deceiver The adversary The enemy The god of this world Father of lies</p>	<p>Devil is their father Deceived by false teachers apostles Minds blinded Lie in devil's power</p>	<p>Overcome by faith Stand firm in God's armor Resist the devil Draw near to God</p>

1 THESSALONIANS LEADER GUIDE Lesson 8

Lesson emphasis:

- 1 Thessalonians 4
- Sexual immorality

REVIEW

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

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

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

1 THESSALONIANS 4

You could quickly discuss the main subjects of this whole chapter.

Verses 1-8 Excel still more (do so more and more) in sanctification
Verses 9-12 Excel still more (do this more and more) in love and work
Verses 13-18 Those asleep and the Lord’s coming

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

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

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

Holiness and sanctification come from the same Greek root word.
The Lord’s coming is also in chapter 4.

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

Tell your group to look at the places they marked God, Jesus or the Holy Spirit, and then discuss what the text says about each.

Verse 1	believers can please God by the way they live
Verse 2	the commands / instructions Paul gave were from the Lord Jesus
Verse 3	believers can know God's will
Verse 5	those who live in lustful passion don't know God
Verse 6	the Lord is the avenger of a brother who is defrauded / wronged
Verse 7	God called believers for sanctification / holiness
Verse 8	rejection / disregarding of this teaching is rejecting / disregarding God God gives His Holy Spirit to believers
Verse 9	believers are taught by God to love one another
Verse 14-17	Jesus died and rose again, and will return God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep There are details of this coming

Ask how knowing these things about God relate to life now.
Give time to discuss application.

SEXUAL SANCTIFICATION

What did Paul write about this in verses 3-8?

Abstain from sexual immorality.

This is a clear statement which means exactly what it says.

“sexual immorality”—*porneia*, “fornication, lewdness, or any sexual sin”¹

Know how to possess / control your own vessel / body
in sanctification / holiness and honor
not in lustful passion (ESV—passion of lust)

NOTE: Some commentators say this is a man possessing his wife as his vessel in sanctification and honor. But it seems from the context this is a statement about individuals.

Sanctification means separated or set apart.

Don't transgress and defraud / wrong a brother in this matter.

“transgress”—*hyperbaino* means “to transcend...overreach”²
literally, “go beyond, to exceed the proper limits”³

¹ Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000). G4202.

² James Strong, *The New Strong's Dictionary of Hebrew and Greek Words* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1996).

³ 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. 478.

NOTE: Since commentary study was also a part of the lesson, someone might bring up the definition of “defraud”: to claim more, to have more than one’s due . . . to selfishly attempt to gain more at all costs and with all means, disregarding others and their rights.”⁴

This might affect actions, speech and dress, among other things.

The Lord is the avenger in all these things, and God called believers in sanctification / holiness.

He gives His Holy Spirit to believers.

Give time for application discussion.

Ask what else your group learned from their study of this subject.

Exodus 20:14

One of the Ten Commandments which God spoke from Mt. Sinai says don’t commit adultery.

adultery—*naaph*, “sexual intercourse with the wife or betrothed of another man”⁵

Hebrews 13:4

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

adulterers—*moichos*, the noun “one ‘who has unlawful intercourse with the spouse of another’”⁶

“Fornicators” is from the same word as sexual immorality in 1 Thessalonians 4:3.

Matthew 5:28

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

NOTE: Divorce is a subject which needs more study for a valid discussion.

Leviticus 18:6-17, 23; 20:11-12, 15-17, 19-21 and 1 Corinthians 5:1-5, 9-13

Sexual immorality among family members is forbidden in Old and New Testament.

The ESV word for “incest” is “perversion” Leviticus 20:12.

⁴ 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. 478.

⁵ Leonard J. Coppes, “1273 נאִפָּה,” *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, eds. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999) p. 542, citing L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner, *Lexicon in Veteris Libros*, 2nd ed., Eng.–Ger., 1958.

⁶ 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) 14.

Hebrew—*tebel*, means “confusion”⁷

In Leviticus 18:23 it is translated “perversion,” referring to bestiality. This is another perverted sexual sin that defiles people. It is sexual contact with animals.

The *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* says, “Both instances apply to a reversal of the divinely intended order of things in the sexual realm.”⁸

The word “incest” is not used in the New Testament, but it’s referred to in 1 Corinthians 5:1-5, 9-13. Paul said to remove the person from among them.

In the Old Testament people were put to death for this, as well as for all other sexual sins.

Those who continually participate in this, a lifestyle, will also be judged by God.

Leviticus 18:22; 20:13; Genesis 19:4-11; 18:20; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Romans 1:26-27
Homosexuality is another sexual sin which God will judge.

This word is not used in the Old Testament. But the sin is described.

In the Greek it is *arsenokoites* from *arsen...*, a male, and *koite...*, a bed.
“A man who lies in bed with another male”⁹

God says that this is an abomination, a detestable act.
The law called for those participating in it to be put to death.

God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah for homosexuality.

Corinthians says those who are homosexuals will not inherit the kingdom of God; in other words—they are not saved, never have been.

But those who are homosexuals can be saved and set free from that sin, just like all other sins. Some of the Corinthian believers had been homosexuals, but they had been saved and sanctified in the Lord.

Romans says that those who participate in homosexuality receive in their own bodies the due penalty of their error.

Revelation 21:8 says that their part is in the lake of fire, the second death.

⁷ Robert L. Thomas, *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek Dictionaries: updated edition* (Anaheim: Foundation Publications, Inc., 1998), H8397.

⁸ Walter C. Kaiser, “248 אָרְסֵנוֹכֵיטֵי,” *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, eds. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999) p. 112.

⁹ Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000), G733.

1 Corinthians 6 and 7

A believer's body is for the Lord.

Immorality is a sin against one's own body.

Christians are to glorify God in their bodies which He bought with a price.

Believers' bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit.

One who is joined with a prostitute is one body with her.

“Prostitute” is *porne*, “literally, a woman who practices sexual immorality as a means of making a living *harlot, prostitute, whore*”¹⁰

Chapter 7 speaks to those who are married. Within marriage, believers are not to deny the physical acts of intimacy because that can cause the mate to be tempted. It is wrong for a married woman or man to withhold the sexual part of marriage from her or his mate. Relate this to Proverbs 5:15-23.

Believers should not hang around immorality, but flee.

Genesis 39 and 2 Samuel 11–13

Joseph fled immorality when Potiphar's wife tried to seduce him.

He considered immorality a sin against God.

David did not flee but kept on in his sin of lust until it became even murder.

Later he repented when he saw his sin for what it was, but damage had been done and his whole family suffered the consequences of it.

Amnon in 2 Samuel, lustful passion controlled him. As soon as he got what he wanted, then his love turned to hate.

Ask what your group learned about women like Potiphar's wife.
Tell them to look at their chart in the lesson.

“Strange / forbidden women” or harlots, such as Potiphar's wife, try to lead men astray.

Those lacking sense are the ones who follow, but they end up in death.

Some of the ploys of the harlot mentioned in Proverbs:

Flattery, smooth tongue, enticing

Beauty, capture with her eyelids / eyelashes

Cunning / wily, boisterous / loud and rebellious / wayward

Does not remain / stay at home

You could end your discussion by cautioning your group in this area of sexual sanctification, reminding them that it's a matter about which God is very serious.

¹⁰ Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg, and Neva F. Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, Baker's Greek New Testament Library (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), p. 324.

In the midst of immoral societies, as the Thessalonians were, great care should be taken to avoid getting caught in a trap of the devil. Relate this to him being the tempter, studied in the previous lesson.

God's will, your sanctification

Abstain from sexual immorality

Know how to possess / control your own vessel / body

Don't transgress or defraud / wrong a brother

1 THESSALONIANS
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 9

Lesson emphasis:

- 1 Thessalonians 4
- Love and work

REVIEW

Ask your group what they remember about 1 Thessalonians and especially chapter 4.

1 Thessalonians 1–3 Imitators and examples, reminder of the past
1 Thessalonians 4–5 Excel / do still more and the Lord's coming

Chapter 4 Excel / do still more in sanctification
love
work

LOVE

Ask what they learned from 1 Thessalonians about love.

1:3

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

1:4

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

Chapter 2

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

3:6

Again the Thessalonians' love is mentioned.

3:12

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

4:9

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

5:8

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

5:13

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

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

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

There is a list at the end of this lesson's guide which you can use as a visual aid.

1 John 3:10–5:3

Children of the devil are the ones who don't love their brothers.

They abide in death and don't know God.

Those who hate are murderers, and murderers don't have eternal life.

Love one another is repeated, and it's a command.

Therefore, it's an act of the will; obey.

Love to the degree that one lays down his life for his brother.

Love is to be in deed as well as with the tongue.

Sharing this world's goods with brothers in need is love.

God is love, and love is from Him.

Believers, children of God, love because He first loved them.

Christians should love one another because God loves them.

His love is to be perfected in believers because of His indwelling Holy Spirit.

There is no fear in perfect love, no fear of judgment.

Love toward God is demonstrated by keeping His commandments.

Romans 5:5-11

God's love is within believers' hearts because He gives the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Therefore, believers' love is a result of God's indwelling.

God demonstrated His love, sending His Son to die while people were His helpless, ungodly enemies—sinners.

The process of God's love:

God first loved, although people were His enemies, helpless, and ungodly sinners. He demonstrated that love by sending His Son to die for sinners, enemies.

He also sent His Holy Spirit to pour out His love in the hearts of those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, those who are born again.

Therefore, His love is demonstrated in and through believers to other believers.

This is shown toward Him by obeying His commands, by sharing material possessions with needy brothers, laying down one's life for a brother.

1 Corinthians 13

Love is:

Patient and kind

Not— jealous / envy

brag / boast or arrogant

act unbecomingly / rude

seek its own (ESV—insist on its own way)

provoked / irritable or take into account a wrong suffered / resentful

rejoice in unrighteousness / wrong doing

Love:

Rejoices with the truth

Bears, believes, hopes, and endures all things

Love never fails / ends; it is greater than faith and hope.

Romans 13:8-10

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

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

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

Give time for your group to discuss how they can increase in their love for others and for God.

WORK

Ask what your group learned about this subject.

There is also a list with the main points about this at the end of this guide.

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy worked, labored / toiled, night and day so they would not be a burden to the Thessalonians while they were there. 1 Thessalonians 2:10 says they behaved uprightly and blamelessly toward the Thessalonian believers.

In chapter 4, Paul told the Thessalonians to provide for themselves so that it would show to unbelievers, outsiders, proper behavior, and believers would not be in need.

It seems reasonable to define the outsiders as unbelievers, outside the church.

A good work ethic is proper behavior toward unbelievers.

employers
employees
coworkers
the business environment

Believers are not to be slack when it comes to work.
They should be the example of doing an excellent job.
A believer's work should not be a negative witness.

The subject is mentioned again in 1 Thessalonians 5 where Paul told the Thessalonians that they should esteem those who diligently labor among them and have charge over them in the Lord.

Leaders are defined as those who work diligently. From the context it would seem that this labor is regarding the church body, work for believers, labor of leading them.

Discuss the other cross-references.

2 Thessalonians 3:7-15

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

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

Genesis 3:17-19

Man is to work by the sweat of his face, labor or toil, because the ground was cursed following Adam's sin. To eat man has to work.

Exodus 20:9

The work-week is six days according to God.

Ecclesiastes 5:12

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

Acts 20:33-35; Ephesians 4:28

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

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

You might ask what your group learned about those who are employers.

Leviticus 19:13 and Deuteronomy 24:14-15

Pay employees on time; otherwise, it's oppression.

Jeremiah 22:13 and Malachi 3:5

God will judge employers for withholding wages.

Work done is to be paid on time.

How do 1 Corinthians 9:1-18 and Galatians 6:6-10 relate to those who lead and teach?

There are those called by the Lord to proclaim the gospel or teach the Word of God to believers and to receive their living from it.

The Old Testament illustration Paul used in 1 Corinthians 9 was that the priests ministering in the temple received their food from the offerings brought by the people.

Paul, several times, worked to earn his own food while teaching and proclaiming the gospel. He did this so as not to cause a hindrance to anyone hearing the gospel from him and to be a model. But he did have the right to receive his living from the gospel.

Those ministering the gospel, teaching the Word, in modern times also have the right to be supported financially by those to whom they give the truth.

Ask your group how this study applies to them and give time for discussion.

1 THESSALONIANS 5

How does this chapter flow from chapter 4?

Verses 1-11 are about the day of the Lord, continuing the teaching about the Lord's coming begun in 4:13. This is mentioned in every chapter of 1 Thessalonians. It will also be the subject of the next lesson.

Verses 12-22 contain several general instructions or commands to the Thessalonians. Verses 23-24 seem to be a benediction.

Then the closing verses are also the greeting usual in Paul's epistles.

If there is time to discuss this chapter, don't preempt the next lesson's study.

Love

God demonstrated His love
Christ died

Believers love by the Spirit

Lay down lives for brethren

Fulfills the law

Work

6 days

Work hard

Behave properly toward unbelievers

So not to be a burden

Share with believers

**1 THESSALONIANS
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 10**

Lesson emphasis:

- 1 Thessalonians 4:13–5:11

REVIEW

Ask your group to quickly review the main points of 1 Thessalonians.

- 1–3 reminder of the gospel coming to Thessalonica and the follow-up
- 4–5 excel / do still more; instructions for the future

Every chapter has in it a reference to the Lord's coming.

4:13–5:11 teach about future events, some of which the Thessalonians had already known.

1 THESSALONIANS 4:13-18

To begin this part of your discussion, you might ask your group why they think Paul wrote about this subject to the Thessalonians.

It seems that since some of the Thessalonian believers had died “in Christ,” those who were still alive at that time had concerns that the dead “in Christ” would miss His coming.

Another question in their minds might have been what would happen to others who died before the Lord returned. They were in the midst of opposition, and they knew what Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy had suffered at the hands of persecutors.

Therefore, this part of the letter was to encourage and give hope regarding the death of believers.

At the end of this lesson's guide, there are two possible visual aids. One is a chart of the main points. The other is a time line with diagrams of the Lord's resurrection and coming.

What does this text say about those believers who had died?

Those who are asleep, those who have fallen asleep, are the dead in Christ.

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

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

The immediate context determines if it does or does not.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

They, their spirits, are always with Him.

Discuss the events of the Lord's coming in 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17 along with the word studies and cross-references.

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

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

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

The dead in Christ will rise first.

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

So both will always be with the Lord.

“coming”—*parousia*, “literally, ‘a presence’”¹¹
It is from two Greek words, “*para*, ‘with,’ and *ousia*, ‘being.’”¹²

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

“caught up”—*harpazo*, “Literally, to seize upon with force”¹³
It refers to being taken away by force, caught up, snatched away.

This is what has come to be known as the “rapture” of the church.
“Rapture” comes “from the Latin word *rapio*, meaning ‘to seize.’”¹⁴

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

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

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

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

1 Corinthians 15

In this chapter, Paul reasoned about the resurrection because there were those at Corinth who said there is no resurrection.

Verses 12-19 deal with what would happen if there were no resurrection. The rest of the chapter teaches about the future resurrection of those who have fallen asleep in Christ.

Christ was raised—the first fruits of those who are asleep.
After that
those who are Christ’s at His coming will be raised.

Then comes the end.

¹¹ 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) 111.

¹² 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) 111.

¹³ Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000). G726.

¹⁴ H. L. Willmington, *Willmington’s Bible Handbook* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1997) 724.

So the coming of Christ for His believers is not the end.

The end consists of Christ delivering up the kingdom to God.
It is when He has abolished / destroyed all rule and authority and power.

He must reign until that time of the end when all enemies are under His feet.
The last enemy to be abolished / destroyed is death. So there will be dying during the time of His reign until those enemies of God are abolished / destroyed.

The events then are:

Christ raised as the first fruits;
He comes, and His asleep and His alive are raised;
He reigns until the end when His enemies are abolished / destroyed.

NOTE: There is much in this chapter which could take your group away from the main points of this lesson. Don't let too much discussion of this chapter take your time from 1 Thessalonians 5.

Verses 35-50 teach about the kind of bodies the resurrected will have.
First there is a physical body which dies, then it is resurrected to a spiritual body.

There are different kinds of bodies, earthly and heavenly.
Different kinds of earthly bodies, all flesh is not the same flesh

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

Paul tells a mystery here.

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

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

The trumpet will sound.

The dead will be raised.

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

It seems that this takes place when the Lord comes from heaven and the dead in Christ are resurrected; their spirits are reunited with their resurrected bodies. It will be the same time that believers who are alive will be changed. They won't die, but their bodies will be changed from perishable to inherit the imperishable kingdom. All believers then will be with the Lord from that time onward.

But it is not the time of the end because Christ must reign to abolish / destroy all enemies of God and deliver up the kingdom to God the Father.

You might ask your group if they can understand why 1 Corinthians 15 ends with verse 58. How can that be an encouragement and warning to them? Relate it to 1 Thessalonians 4:18.

1 THESSALONIANS 5:1-11

What are these verses about?

There is a change of subject to “times and epochs / seasons,” which the Thessalonians already knew full well / were fully aware. Paul informed them about what would happen to the dead in Christ, but they already knew about the day of the Lord. Although the subject still relates to the times of the end, it is not the same event as in chapter 4.

It seems that Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy had taught the Thessalonian believers about the day of the Lord when they were with them, but had not taught what would happen to those who died before the Lord’s coming.

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

“the times”—*chronos* is “an extended period,”¹⁵
and
“the epochs / seasons”—*kairos* is “a definite space of time.”¹⁶

Help your group to interpret what they observed about the pronouns in these verses.

“You” refers to believers, specifically to the Thessalonian believers.

“They” refers to unbelievers.

Believers should know that the day of the Lord is coming like a thief in the night.

Unbelievers are the ones who will be taken by surprise, not believers. The text of 1 Thessalonians 4:13–5:11 indicates that the Lord will come for believers before the day of the Lord comes upon the unsuspecting unbelievers.

Unbelievers will be saying there is peace and safety / security; then the destruction of the day of the Lord will suddenly come upon them, and they will not escape.

Contrast this with verse 4. The day will not overtake believers because Christians are not destined for the wrath of the day of the Lord but for salvation. Relate this to 1:10; Jesus will deliver believers from the wrath to come, the wrath of the day of the Lord. Relate this to chapter 4; believers will be with Him always.

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

¹⁵ A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1933) 1 Th 5:1.

¹⁶ A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1933) 1 Th 5:1.

You could ask your group if believers need to be afraid of the future. Why not? Relate this to the series of events presented in 1 Thessalonians.

1:10 says that the believers were waiting for God's Son from heaven, who delivers believers from the wrath to come. There seems to be anticipation about the future, not fear.

4:13-18 speaks of the time to come, future, when Jesus will return for the bodies of those who have fallen asleep in Him, as well as for those believers who are alive and remain. Then they will always be with Him.

5:1-11 continues the teaching about the time to come and seems to follow 4:13-18 in a logical, sequential manner. The day of the Lord will come like a thief, destruction on those of the night, unbelievers. But believers are sons of the day and are not destined for this wrath but salvation. They will already be with the Lord, 4:13-18.

What is the believer's responsibility, as stated in verses 1-11?

Don't sleep, but be alert / sober.

The context of this use of "sleep" does not allow for it to be death of a believer.

Since it is contrasted with being alert, it indicates the opposite of alertness, not alert to the times, not alert to the severity of the times, temporarily more interested in the things of the world instead of the things of the Lord.

"Sleep" is a different Greek word from chapter 4. Here it can mean moral indifference. Literally it says, "Let us not go on sleeping," and "let us be alert" / "let us keep awake."

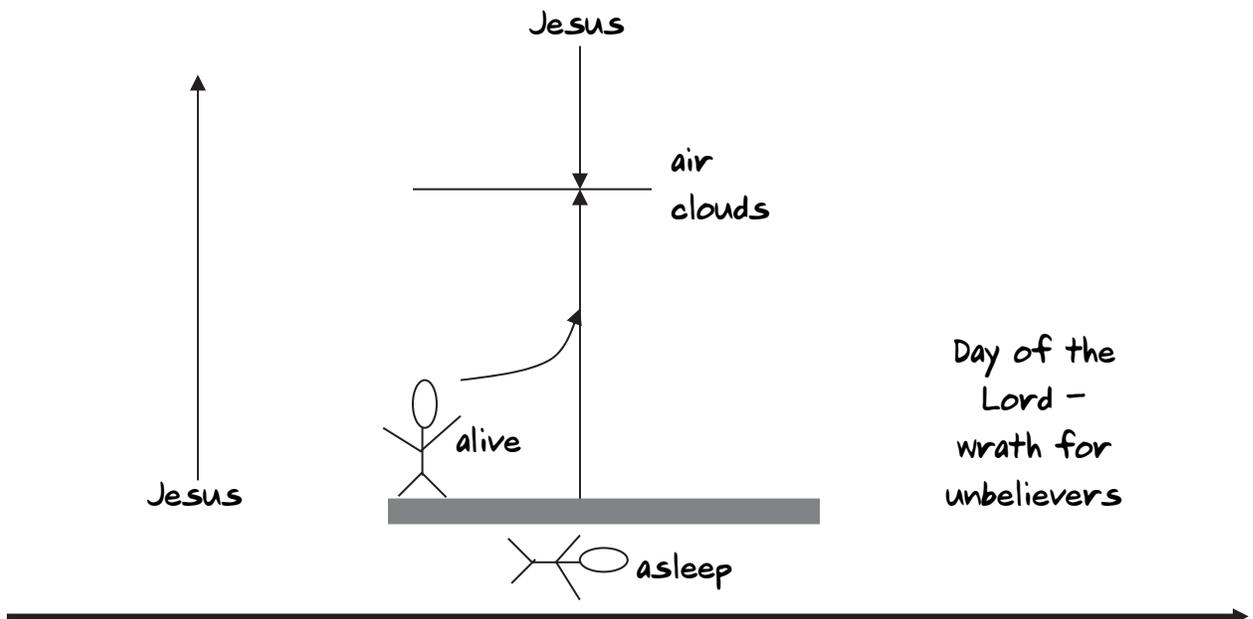
"Be sober" indicates the need for watchfulness. The breastplate and helmet were protection for the Roman soldier. The believer's protection is faith, love, and hope of salvation.

Encourage one another.

Build up one another.

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

When a Christian dies	When the Lord comes	The day of the Lord
Absent from the body Present with the Lord	Dead in Christ raised Alive caught up with them All bodies changed Meet Lord in the air Always with the Lord	Like a thief in the night Not overtake believers Destruction for unbelievers Believers not destined for wrath



1 THESSALONIANS LEADER GUIDE Lesson 11

Lesson emphasis:

- 1 Thessalonians 5:12-28

REVIEW

To begin this discussion, tell your group to look at their At a Glance chart, and ask what this letter is about.

Paul wrote 1 Thessalonians as an encouragement and a reminder to those new Christians at Thessalonica. He reminded them in the first three chapters of how they had responded to the gospel message so that they had sounded forth the Word themselves, having become “imitators.”

In chapter 2, he reminded them of how Silvanus, Timothy, and he had behaved when they were with them, as a mother and as a father. They worked night and day so that they would not be a burden. Again he called them “imitators” as they were enduring suffering at the hands of their own countrymen.

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy were examples for the Thessalonians to imitate.

In the third chapter, Paul shared his concern with the Thessalonians. He had sent Timothy to find out about their faith and was encouraged by the good report from him.

He closed the first part of the letter with a prayer for them to be without blame at the Lord’s coming.

In chapter 4, he began to request them to excel / do still more in their walk regarding sanctification, love, and work. He encouraged them by teaching what happens when Christians die.

He continued about this in chapter 5 and reminded them of what they already knew about the coming of the day of the Lord. Then he again made request regarding how they lived with each other as believers.

He closed this segment as he did the first, with a prayer for them to be without blame at the Lord’s coming.

Tell your group to look at the chart at the end of the Precept lesson as a visual aid for the rest of this discussion.

1 THESSALONIANS 5:12-28

What are the specific instructions in verses 12-13?

Appreciate / respect those who diligently labor among you
and have charge over you in the Lord
and give you instruction / admonish you
Esteem them very highly in love

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

“Appreciate / respect,” is *eidō* from *oida*, “to know . . . strictly means to have seen, perceived, apprehended.”¹⁷ *Eidō*, in 1 Thessalonians 5:12 means “to acknowledge the high status of a person or event—‘to honor, to show honor to, to respect.’”¹⁸

Ask how these instructions relate to the church now. Give time for your group to discuss personal application.

How do the cross-references on Day One add to these instructions?

Romans 12:8

This is in the context of spiritual gifts in the body of Christ. There are those whom the Spirit has gifted to be leaders in the church; some are leaders and some are followers.

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

Hebrews 13:7, 17

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

Those who follow are to obey and submit.
Causing grief for spiritual leadership is unprofitable to the one who does it.

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

Galatians 6:6, 10 and 1 Corinthians 9:1-18

This is about sharing material possessions and/or money with those who teach the Word.
The apostles had the God-given right to be supported by the churches.

¹⁷ Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000), G1492.

¹⁸ Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 734.

Many times Paul did not take advantage of that right, so that he would present no hindrance to the gospel.

Who and what are verses 14-15 about? Discuss definitions and cross-references, also. Tell your group to look at the chart in the lesson on Day Two.

- Admonish the unruly / idle

“admonish”—*noutheteo*, means to “instruct...warn”¹⁹
“to put in mind”²⁰

“unruly / idle”—*ataktos*, “out of order”²¹
“lazy, idle”²²
“neglect of duty”²³

Contrast this with the diligent labor of the others.

Proverbs 15:31-32; 27:5-6 and 28:23

Reproof given to others is sometimes what will cause them to listen. Sometimes an open rebuke is needed.

Ecclesiastes 8:11

Sentence against evil should be carried out quickly.

1 Timothy 5:19-21

Rebuke in the presence of all, elders who continue in sin so that others will be fearful of it.

Matthew 18:15-17

This is the order of “church discipline” if a brother sins.

First, tell him in private. If he listens, then no one else knows.

If he doesn’t listen, take one or two with you to confront him the second time. They are witnesses of every fact.

If he still doesn’t listen, then tell it to the church.

¹⁹ James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), G3K3805.

²⁰ James Strong, *The New Strong’s Dictionary of Hebrew and Greek Words* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1996). G3560.

²¹ Robert L. Thomas, *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek Dictionaries: updated edition* (Anaheim: Foundation Publications, Inc., 1998), G813.

²² Barclay M. Newman Jr., *A Concise Greek-English Dictionary of the New Testament*. (Stuttgart, Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1993) 28.

²³ Cleon L. Rogers Jr. and Cleon L. Rogers III, *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1998), p. 480.

If he still doesn't listen, then the church is not to associate with him so that he'll be put to shame, 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14-15.

Admonish him as a brother, not as an enemy.

Galatians 6:1

The reason for going to a brother is to restore him.

The attitude in going should be gentleness and humility.

Give your group opportunity at any point to discuss relevant application.

What else does verse 14 say?

- Encourage the fainthearted

“encourage”—*paramutheomai*, “from *para*, ‘with,’ and *muthos*, ‘counsel’”²⁴
“to speak to”²⁵

“fainthearted”—*oligopsuchos*, “discouraged”²⁶
“literally, ‘small-souled’”²⁷
“fretful, worried”²⁸

There are believers in the body who are, for whatever reason, fainthearted.

These are ones who need to be verbally encouraged by the stronger brothers.

Sometimes the tendency might be to avoid them, but the opposite needs to happen.

Hebrews 12:1-3

There are those who lose heart when they become weary.

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

Ephesians 6:4

As with bringing up children, the fainthearted need nurture, discipline, and instruction in the Lord. Relate this to what the leaders do, 1 Thessalonians 5:12.

Maybe some are fainthearted temporarily by circumstances, but maybe there are those who are mainly fainthearted when it comes to any trial or situation.

²⁴ 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) 198.

²⁵ James Strong, *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2001), G3888.

²⁶ James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), G3901.

²⁷ 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) 222.

²⁸ Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000), G3642.

- Help the weak

“help”—*antecho*, “to hold firmly to”²⁹
“weak”—*asthenes*, “without strength”³⁰

Matthew 26:41

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

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

Luke 22:31-32

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

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

1 Corinthians 8:7-13

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

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

1 Peter 3:7

A wife is a weaker vessel than her husband; therefore, he should understand that fact and live accordingly.

Acts 12, 15 and 2 Timothy 4:11

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

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

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

²⁹ 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) 306.

³⁰ Robert L. Thomas, *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek Dictionaries: updated edition* (Anaheim: Foundation Publications, Inc., 1998), G772.

Give time for your group to discuss application of what they've learned from this study.
Lead your discussion back to 1 Thessalonians 5.

Verse 15

Ask what they learned from this verse and related cross-references.

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

Proverbs 24:29 and Matthew 5:38-48

These verses teach the same thing as 1 Thessalonians 5:15.
Jesus said to love not only one's neighbor, but also one's enemies and pray for them.
Be perfect as the heavenly Father is; therefore, love those who hate you.
Demonstrate love by giving or doing more than is asked.

Give time for application discussion.

Verses 16-28

What are these verses about? Also discuss cross-references.

Rejoicing and prayer and thanksgiving are subjects Paul interwove throughout this letter.
Relate this to 1:6; 2:19-20; 3:9.

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

“Prophetic utterances (ESV—prophecies)” from God are those of His Spirit and according to His Word.

But the Thessalonians were called to be like the Bereans, to examine / test everything carefully. But don't just apply the test; hold to that which is good.

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

Acts 20:17-38

Paul repeated that he did not shrink from declaring the whole purpose or counsel of God, anything that was profitable. He called all of the local flocks to be on guard, work hard, take care of the weak, and serve the Lord with humility.

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

A good way to end your discussion is to pray verses 23-25 together for one another.