

LESSON 7
THE BOOK OF 1 THESSALONIANS
CHRONOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT
SECOND SEMESTER

KEY VERSE: May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul, and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it. I Thessalonians 5:23-24

PRAYER FOCUS: As you look at the book of First Thessalonians this week, ask the Lord to strengthen your assurance of His return. Ask Him to show you ways to look for, long for and pray for that return. Thank God that He is the one that orchestrates our future.

First Thessalonians

(Resources: Life Application Study Bible, *The Untold Story of the New Testament Church* by Frank Viola,)

Author: Paul (also with greetings from Silvanus and Timothy)

Date of Writing: about A.D. 51 from Corinth

Purpose: To strengthen the Thessalonian Christians in their faith, and give them the assurance of Christ's return. The church at Thessalonica was very young, having been established only two or three years before this letter was written. The Thessalonian Christians needed to mature in their faith. There was a misunderstanding concerning Christ's second coming – some thought Christ would return immediately, and thus they were confused when their loved ones died because they expected Christ to return beforehand. Also, believers were being persecuted.

Background: Acts 17:1–10. Paul established the church in Thessalonica during his second missionary journey. He wrote this letter a short time later to encourage the young believers there. He wanted to assure them of his love, to praise them for their faithfulness during persecution, and to remind them of their hope – the sure return of the Lord and Savior. The return of Christ is mentioned in every chapter of I Thessalonians (1:10; 2:19; 3:13; 4:13; 5:1–11).

Overview: Paul begins this letter with a note of affirmation, thanking God for the strong faith and good reputation of the Thessalonians. Then Paul reviews their relationship – how he and his companions brought the gospel to them, how they accepted the message, and how he longed to be with them again. Because of his concern, Paul sent Timothy to encourage them in their faith.

Paul then presents his core message which is exhortation and comfort. He exhorts them to avoid sexual immorality, love each other, and live as good citizens in a sinful world. He then comforts them with the hope of the resurrection and Christ's return.

Paul concludes with reminders on how to prepare themselves for the second coming.

DAY ONE:
READ I THESSALONIANS 1-2:16

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1. What did Paul remember about this congregation (1:3-4)?

2. How did the gospel come to Thessalonica (1:5)?

3. How was the word of God sounded forth (1:8)? What had the Thessalonians become known for?

4. Describe what Paul had been going through while at Thessalonica (2:1-12)?

5. How were some displeasing God? (2:15-16)

❖ **List examples of how you see some people “heaping up their sins to the limit” and bringing displeasure to God. Are any of these convicting?**

DAY TWO:

READ I THESSALONIANS 2:17-3:13

1. Who stopped Paul and his companions from coming back to Thessalonica?

2. How did Paul describe the Thessalonians in 2:20?

Do you know of anyone who would refer to you in this way?

3. Who was sent to encourage them in their faith?

How did Paul refer to these trials?

❖ **Do you think you are “destined for trials as a Christian? Name some ways that you see Christian persecution increasing.**

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4. What encouraged Paul about the Thessalonians? (3:7-10) _____

5. What was Paul's goal for the Thessalonians as the Lord strengthens them? (3:13) _____

Use this verse as a prayer to the Lord.

DAY THREE:
READ I THESSALONIANS 4:1-12

1. What did Paul say is God's will for the Thessalonians? _____

2. What specific things did he mention to strive toward that? _____

Here Paul deals with marriage and the home. The marriage vows in heathen cities said nothing about purity, so there was great danger of immorality in the lives of these new Christians. While love and purity certainly prevailed in many heathen homes, the general atmosphere of these city-states (before the Gospel came) was one of lust and selfishness. The Christian has the responsibility of building a Christian home that will glorify God, so Paul begins here.

Immorality is basically selfishness and robbery. Paul exhorts them to live to please God and not themselves.

(from Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the New Testament.)

3. Read verse 11. List what Paul said should be their ambition: _____

4. Why should those three things be their goal? _____

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Paul wanted them to see the need to be responsible in all areas of life. Paul is encouraging them that there is more to Christian living than simply loving other Christians. Some of the Thessalonian Christians had adopted a life of idleness, depending on others for handouts. They were anticipating the soon return of Christ, so they had quit their jobs and had become “parasites” who lived off the other Christians.

❖ **Do you anticipate the soon return of Christ? _____**
What should you do while you wait?

DAY FOUR:

READ I THESSALONIANS 4:13-5:28

1. Who will “rise first” (4:16)? _____ How many resurrections will there be? _____

2. To what did Paul compare the return of Christ (5:2)? _____

3. Who will not be surprised about the Lord’s return? _____

4. Almost as a parent to a child, Paul concludes his first letter to the Thessalonians with some final words of encouragement. Glean those admonitions and list them here:

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❖ Describe the admonitions that you feel are hard to keep

5. In verse 23, Paul reminded the Thessalonians of the three parts of their being. List those here and define the difference in each:

Commit the key verse to memory and be encouraged that the One who calls you is faithful. . .and He will sanctify you through and through!